

MICHIGAN CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING

Monday, May 22, 2017 ~ 4:00 p.m.

Samaritas Community Center

3145 Russell St., Saginaw, MI

MINUTES

PRESENT: Commission Co-Chair Rasha Demashkieh
Commission Co-Chair Laura Reyes-Kopack
Commission Secretary Deloris Hunt
Commissioner Mumtaz Haque
Commissioner Ricardo Resio
Commissioner Jeffrey Sakwa
Commissioner Linda Lee Tarver
Commissioner Bradley Voss

EXCUSED: none

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Commission Co-Chair Rasha Demashkieh.

A Roll Call of the Commissioners was taken to determine if a quorum was present. Commissioner Resio, Commission Co-Chair Reyes-Kopack, Commissioner Hunt, Commission Co-Chair Demashkieh, Commissioner Sakwa, Commissioner Tarver, Commissioner Voss, Commissioner Haque. With all commissioners present, a quorum is established.

Welcoming remarks were provided by Daniel Soza, Executive Director of Samaritas Community Center.

APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA

MOTION: Move to Approve the Meeting Agenda as submitted.

On Motion duly made (Commissioner Sakwa) and supported (Commissioner Hunt), the Meeting Agenda was Approved. *Motion carried unanimously.*

ADOPTION OF CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION: Move to Adopt the Consent Agenda as submitted.

On Motion duly made (Commissioner Tarver) and supported (Commissioner Hunt), the Consent Agenda was Adopted. *Motion carried unanimously.*

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 17, 2017 MEETING

Commissioner Tarver proposed an amendment to the Minutes: under "PRESENTATION: Flint Water Crisis Report", the language of the Motion that read "Congressional Legislation" should be changed to "Congressional Delegation".

MOTION: Move to Approve the Minutes from the February 17, 2017 Meeting with amendment proposed by Commissioner Tarver.

On Motion duly made (Commissioner Tarver) and supported (Commissioner Hunt), the amended Meeting Minutes were Approved. *Motion carried by majority vote; Commissioner Sakwa abstained.*

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM APRIL 25, 2017 SPECIAL MEETING

MOTION: Move to Approve the Minutes from the April 25, 2017 Meeting Agenda as submitted.

On Motion duly made (Commissioner Sakwa) and supported (Commissioner Tarver), the submitted Meeting Minutes were Approved. *Motion carried unanimously.*

DIRECTOR'S REPORT, Executive Director Agustin V. Arbulu

Following Director Arbulu's report, Commissioner Tarver proposed that with regards to the racial equity collaboration that there be outreach to the Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC) and the State Court Administrators Office (SCAO) as it relates to obtaining information on racial inequities in the criminal justice system. Commissioner Hunt congratulated the Department on the Employee Engagement Survey Most Improved award, as well as the improvement in the Enforcement and Investigation Division. Commissioner Demashkieh proposed that a budget update be provided to the Commissioners once the final funding for the Division on Deaf, Deaf Blind and Hard of Hearing is determined.

CO-CHAIR REPORT, Commissioner Rasha Demashkieh

Following Co-Chair Demashkieh's report, the floor was opened for discussion on topics that the Commission wants to focus on for the remainder of this year.

Commissioner Tarver – Proposed that the Commission focus on the criminal justice system as it relates to Michigan, disproportional number of African-American men in prison, sentencing guidelines, challenges for felons/ex-convicts with re-entry to society, challenges and discriminatory actions as relates to job placement, housing and education.

Commissioner Sakwa – Proposed that the Commission focus on acknowledgement of the 1967 Detroit Riots; learning more about the causes of the civil unrest, determine where we are now, and are we headed in the right direction.

Commissioner Hunt – Proposed that the Commission focus on Michigan's education system, how we prepare our students for the future, and opportunities available to them in post-secondary education and employment. Requested presentations on these matters.

Commissioner Reyes – Agreed with Commissioner Hunt regarding analysis of the education system, opportunities for college and work (skilled trades), re-entry of felons/ex-offenders to society and challenges with employment opportunities.

Commissioner Resio – Proposed that the Commission focus on challenges of Native Americans and education.

Commissioner Haque – Proposed the Commission hold hearings on the education system, equity in education, lack of resources in some school districts, and the emphasis on student educational assessments.

Commissioner Demashkieh – focus on other aspects of the students such as their home life, i.e. as it relates to immigration and the daily anxiety and stress the students endure of not knowing what they will find when they arrive home from school.

Commissioner Tarver – Added exploring the intersect of religious liberty and the LGBT community, public housing versus private ecclesiastical housing, public services versus religious entities services, and that MCRC take leadership on exploring these issues and providing guidance to our community as it relates to honoring one’s religion and honoring the LGBT community. Commissioner Sakwa suggested a possible collaboration with the Department of Education.

MOTION: Move to direct the Department to explore the issues presented today on Education issues that intersect with civil rights, and to provide guidance by the July 24th meeting on what we can delve into for future meetings or through hearings.

On Motion duly made (Commissioner Tarver) and supported (Commissioner Hunt), the Motion was Approved. Motion carried unanimously.

ANNUAL REPORT

After discussion on the current content of the report, and recommendations from Commissioner Tarver and Co-Chair Reyes-Kopack, the following Motion was proposed.

MOTION: Move to direct the Department to establish a series of conference calls with the commissioners to solicit ideas to comply with what the law has stated for a comprehensive report of issues and items necessary for the governor and the legislature to absorb, in addition to the items already included in the draft annual report.

On Motion duly made (Commissioner Tarver) and supported (Commissioner Reyes-Kopack), the Motion was approved. Motion carried unanimously.

Director Arbulu indicated that he will send an e-mail to the Commissioners to respond with a list of recommended ideas; conference call scheduling will follow. Co-Chair Demashkieh asked Director Arbulu that the Commission be kept apprised of the upcoming activities/events of the Youth Civil Rights Academy.

NEW BUSINESS

Portable Looping System (PLS) for Hard of Hearing demonstration, Annie Urasky, Director of Division on Deaf, Deaf Blind and Hard of Hearing (DODDBHH)

FOIA / OPEN MEETINGS ACT / ADMINISTRATIVE RULES, Director Arbulu, Carol Viventi, Dan Levy

After a brief presentation and discussion, the following Motion was proposed.

MOTION: Move to Adopt the proposed Resolution regarding the Administrative Rules.

THE COMMISSION having determined that the administrative rule set entitled “Civil Rights Commission; Organization, Practice and Procedure” (Rules 37.1-37.27) is outdated, and that changes to these rules could improve the effectiveness and efficiency of both the Commission and the Department of Civil Rights without substantively changing the legal requirements for substantiating a complaint;

IT IS RESOLVED that the Department work cooperatively with the State's Office of Regulatory Reinvention (ORR) to draft appropriate changes to the rules.

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED that at the Commission's first public meeting following August 1, 2017, the Department shall present the Commission with a report identifying the changes recommended, that at the first public meeting held thereafter the Department present proposed rules for the Commission's approval, that upon approval by the Commission (and ORR as to form) that the Department hold one or more public hearing(s) on the proposal, and that at the Commission's first public meeting more than 45 days following the public hearings the Department report back to the Commission with a final draft of the proposed rules and all supporting documentation necessary for presentation to the Legislature's Joint Committee on Administrative Rules (JCAR).

On Motion duly made (Commissioner Tarver) and supported (Commissioner Resio), the proposed Resolution was Adopted. *Motion carried unanimously.*

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Move to Adjourn the Meeting.

On Motion duly made and supported, Adjournment of the meeting of the Michigan Civil Rights Commission at 6:47 p.m. was Approved. *Motion carried unanimously.*

The meeting Adjourned at 6:47 p.m.

Secretary

Executive Director