

MICHIGAN CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING

Monday, November 23, 2020 ~ 4:00 P.M.

Virtual Meeting: Zoom web conferencing platform; Livestreamed via You Tube and Facebook

In compliance with the State of Michigan's Open Meetings Act, "the minutes must show the date, time, place, members present, members absent, any decisions made at a meeting open to the public, and the purpose(s) for which a closed session is held; the minutes must also include all roll call votes taken at the meeting." The minutes are limited to these requirements and do not reflect all subject matter that occurred during the Commission meeting. Meetings are audio recorded and kept on file with the MDCR.

MINUTES

PRESENT: Commission Chair Stacie Clayton
Commission Vice Chair Laura Reyes Kopack
Commission Secretary Jeff Sakwa
Commissioner Ira Combs, Jr.
Commissioner Regina Gasco Bentley
Commissioner Denise Grim
Commissioner Zenna Elhasan

EXCUSED: Commissioner Portia Roberson

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

The meeting of the Michigan Civil Rights Commission was called to order by Chair Clayton at 4:01 P.M. Roll Call of the Commissioners was taken by Clerk Dan Levy to determine a quorum. Commissioner Clayton, Commissioner Kopack, Commissioner Sakwa, Commissioner Grim, Commissioner Elhasan were present. With five of eight Commissioners present, quorum requirements were met.

WELCOME

Chair Clayton welcomed participants to the meeting by way of Zoom web conferencing and Facebook / You Tube livestream platforms.

OPEN MEETINGS ACT RESOLUTION

Chair Clayton asked Dan Levy to provide an overview for the Commission.

(4:03 p.m. - Commissioner Gasco Bentley joined the meeting.)

MOTION: Move to Adopt the Resolution to allow the MCRC to meet remotely through December 31, 2021, and to update the MCRC meeting guidelines.

ROLL-CALL VOTE

Clayton – Y	Combs – Not Present
Kopack – Y	Roberson – Not Present
Sakwa - Y	
Gasco Bentley - Y	
Grim - Y	
Elhasan - Y	

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On Motion duly made (Elhasan) and supported (Grim), the Resolution was Adopted. Motion carried unanimously.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

Chair Clayton called for a moment of silence to honor the life of Justice Dalton Roberson, Sr., who passed away on November 10, 2020.

"Judge Roberson was appointed to lead the Michigan Civil Rights Commission in 1972 by Lieutenant Governor James Brickley. The state has lost an icon of Michigan jurisprudence, and Commission members -- past and present -- are mourning the loss of one of our own. Judge Roberson was a man of deep convictions, whose commitment to justice, fairness and equity guided his actions throughout his remarkable life. He will be remembered as a mentor to many, generously guiding young lawyers and aspiring leaders, always looking to lift up those who followed after him. His generous spirit and dedication to helping others ensures his reach will extend long past his lifetime and into the future. We are grateful for his leadership on our Commission and to his lifetime of service to the people of Detroit and the State of Michigan. We extend our deepest sympathies to Judge Roberson's family, especially his beloved daughter and our esteemed colleague on the Commission, Portia Roberson."

HOUSEKEEPING RULES FOR MAKING PUBLIC COMMENT

Deputy Director Mary Engelman provided instructions regarding Public Comment.

APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA

MOTION: Move to Approve the Meeting Agenda as submitted. No discussion initiated. On Motion duly made (Sakwa) and supported (Kopack), the Meeting Agenda was Approved. Motion carried unanimously.

(4:10 p.m. - Commissioner Combs joined the meeting.)

ADOPTION OF CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION: Move to Adopt the Consent Agenda as submitted. No discussion initiated. On Motion duly made (Gasco Bentley) and supported (Elhasan), the Consent Agenda was Adopted. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 30, 2020 MEETING

MOTION: Move to Approve the Minutes as submitted. No discussion initiated. On Motion duly made (Grim) and supported (Kopack), the September 30, 2020 Commission Meeting Minutes were Approved. Motion carried unanimously.

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PUBLIC COMMENT

Michelle George – Ms. George, representing an organization of registered nurses brought concerns regarding wrongful arrests and discrimination due to Facial Recognition, and requested that the Commission consider holding a hearing.

Gwen Swanigan, CEO and Founder of S.H.A.R.P. (Society Harmonizing Against Racial Profiling) Foundation, Benton Harbor – Ms. Swanigan brought concerns regarding starting a citizens' review board on Racial Profiling; Ms. Swanigan asked that the Commission support this effort. This issue will be taken up on the agenda during the Benton Harbor City Commission's next meeting.

Sean Bennett – Mr. Bennett brought concerns regarding the function and performance of the Department in handling of complaints, asked that the complaint process be reviewed.

PRESENTATION BY POPPY HERNANDEZ, Equity and Inclusion Officer, Governor Whitmer's Executive Office

Ms. Hernandez described her position and goals as Equity and Inclusion Officer in the Governor's Office; shared that the Governor and Lieutenant Governor are committed to creating a more equitable and inclusive workforce and state; discussed collaborative efforts with multiple task forces, advisory boards, and equity officers in each state department.

DIVISION REPORTS

Director's Report, James White, Executive Director

Director White submitted his written report to the Commission; reported on the Director's activity from September to November.

COMMISSION BUSINESS

Chair Report, Stacie Clayton

Chair Clayton gave an overview of the Commission's major priorities and accomplishments for 2020 (Education Report-completed, Contract Compliance-not completed, Minority Women Owned Businesses-not completed); offered the option of carrying over incomplete priorities from 2020 as goals for 2021:

- Look to see which state departments have Title VI programs and how they are used and how those programs differ or complement the MDCR statutory requirements for contract compliance
- Research into possible legal avenues for implementation of a Women and Minority Business Program in the state of Michigan.

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2021 Commission Meeting Schedule

MOTION: Move to Adopt the 2021 Commission Meeting Schedule as submitted. Following discussion, on Motion duly made (Sakwa) and supported (Elhasan), the 2021 Commission Meeting Schedule was Adopted. Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting Dates are as follows: January 25, 2021; March 22, 2021; May 24, 2021; July 26, 2021; September 27, 2021, November 22, 2021. These dates will be posted to the Commission’s webpage.

Appointment of Nominating Committee for January 2021 Election of Officers
Commissioner Kopack (Chair), Commissioner Elhasan and Commissioner Sakwa volunteered to serve on the Nominating Committee for the January 2021 Election of Officers.

Attorney General Report, Ron Robinson, Assistant Attorney General
Mr. Robinson submitted his written report to the Commission; provided a status update on the following case: **Riverbrook v. Fabode**.

Amicus Brief Proposal: **Riverbrook v. Fabode**, Court of Appeals
MOTION: Move to Approve the Commission’s submission of an Amicus Brief in the case of Riverbrook v. Fabode.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Clayton – Y	Roberson – Not Present
Kopack - Y	
Sakwa - Y	
Combs - Y	
Gasco Bentley - Y	
Grim - Y	
Elhasan – Y	

Following discussion, on Motion duly made (Gasco Bentley) and supported (Kopack), the Amicus Brief Proposal was Approved. Motion carried unanimously.

ONGOING BUSINESS

There was no ongoing business.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

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COMMISSIONER COMMENT

Commissioners provided remarks congratulating Denise Grim on her retirement after 34 years of public service, as she resigns from the Commission.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Move to Adjourn. No discussion initiated. On Motion duly made (Kopack) and supported (Grim), the meeting of the Michigan Civil Rights Commission Adjourned at 5:04 P.M. Motion carried unanimously.

A Special Meeting: "Continuing the Conversation on Education Equity in Michigan" will follow immediately at 5:00 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Michigan Civil Rights Commission will convene on January 25, 2021 at a time and location to be determined.

MINUTES APPROVED AT JANUARY 25, 2021 MEETING.