

**Office of Civil Rights & Wage Enforcement  
Community Relations Commission  
Public Session Minutes  
January 16, 2019**

Participating in the meeting were Commissioners Rev. Todd Yeary (Chair via Phone), Adoté Akwei, Stephen Ruckman, A. Adar Ayira, and Karsonya Whitehead (phone). Absent: Commissioners Stephanie Maddin-Smith, Nadine Finigan-Carr, and Phillip Farfel. Also present were staff: Darnell Ingram (Director), Raemond Parrott, Danielle Crawley, Shavey Blackwell, Troy Pumphrey, M'Balu Bangura, and Lauren Jackson. Meeting was called to order at 12:13 pm.

**I. Welcome**

In the absence of the Chair, Commissioner Ayira initially called the meeting to order and conducted the meeting until Chair Yeary called in and was asked to take over at 12:15 p.m.

**II. Approval of the Minutes**

It was moved and seconded by Commissioners Whitehead and Ruckman that the November 21, 2018 public session minutes be approved as written. All were in favor and the motion carried.

**III. Director's Report**

1. Director Ingram stated that the Office of Civil Rights is preparing for the Annual Civil Rights Breakfast. He stated that a survey was created by Ms. Bangura and Mr. Wesley sent out to attendees regarding their preference for an A.M. breakfast vs. an evening gala. The location is scheduled at Druid Hill Arboretum which is cheaper than the Hilton. In addition, he was trying to reach the younger population by changing to the evening. He is seeking confirmation of the Mayor's attendance. He stated that nothing has changed and that the program is basically the same; he is only sending out a poll early to see the interests.

Chair Yeary asked about breakout sessions:

- Speakers
- Special topics
- Educational seminars
- Director Ingram said "yes" to the breakout sessions.

Director Ingram spoke about having joint sessions throughout the City as a part of outreach which includes having all Commissions meeting together as a community forum. This would give citizens an opportunity to know the Commissions and what they do.

Mr. Parrott spoke about Town Halls. He stated that Lauren Jackson and he spoke to Dr. Lawrence Brown, Morgan's Professor on Housing. He would like to talk to CRC Commissioners, but then it was decided to make it open to the general public in February 20<sup>th</sup> during the Public Session, 2:30-5:00 p.m. in the Curran Conference Room at City Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor. The plan is to have a Q & A session during CRC's Executive Meeting to include Commission Chairs.

There were questions about the nexus of having Dr. Brown and the work of the Commission vs. the previous discussions on meeting with agency heads. In addition, there were questions about whether or not he should speak before or after the Executive Session. Mr. Parrott stated that Dr. Brown's research on housing segregation in Baltimore is timely with the City Council's legislation that prevents Landlords from turning away individuals in certain areas of the City with Section 8. There is still a plan to meet with the agency and department heads. However, he stated that most of the agency heads that CRC is scheduled to meet with are in transition and that there may not be long lasting ramifications to meet with those in an interim or acting capacity. The only agency not in transition that is slated to meet with CRC is the Baltimore City Public Schools.

Chair Yeary asked about the status of speaker presentations going forward. Director Ingram stated that this will be a single event to take place during a CRC meeting.

Director Ingram spoke about Baltimore City Public Schools which is the only Agency not in transition at this time. The others are in transition of Department Heads.

Director Ingram encouraged the Commissioners to engage in the CRC events, outreach, and public hearings in the communities. In addition, he spoke about the internship program which includes a student ambassador program for middle and high school students for the summer on how to work in an office. He also stated that some students will be attending the Board meetings and executive sessions to learn about the Commission and to ask questions. In addition, there will be internships in law clinics for college and law students to gain college credit and Commissioners are encouraged to engage those students.

Regarding the meetings with agency heads, Mr. Parrott asked if Director Ingram will be facilitating the conversation about their engagement with the Commission. Director Ingram asked about the issues to be raised at those meetings. Chair Yeary stated that the Commission should send formal letters of invitation to the individual agency heads for the purpose of documentation. He also suggested that Director Ingram could also follow-up with a reminder as he is doing his round of meetings with agency and department heads.

Mr. Parrott asked questions about how the Commission would like the letter to be drafted, i.e. a universal letter, a more detailed letter similar to their Ban-the-Box letter to DLLR. Mr. Parrott gave a brief overview of the DLLR for Director Ingram.

**Action:** The staff will draft a letter to the individual agency heads and then forward to the Commission for edits, feedback, and approval:

Commissioners Ruckman and Ayira gave suggestions for the language:

*“we would like to hear from you on how you are doing, we have received a high volume of cases from your agency. We would like to give you an opportunity to meet with us to share the work that you are doing and discuss improvements going forward.”*

Commissioner Ruckman asked about how the Commission would like to structure the February 20<sup>th</sup> meeting with Professor Brown. Chair Yeary suggested the meeting first and during the February 20<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Commission could decide and announce a date for the Town Hall meeting.

**Action:** Ms. Lauren Jackson stated that her impression was that Professor Brown had asked to have a conversation with CRC Commissioners regarding the housing segregation legislation rather than to engage the public. She stated that it is unclear and will ask Professor Brown about his preference. Director Ingram agreed that it is best to reach out to Professor Brown for clarity on the scope of his conversation (public forum, town hall, or meeting with CRC during the Executive Session) before asking Commissioners to decide on how to move forward on February 20<sup>th</sup>.

Chair Yeary stated that a more helpful dialogue with Professor Brown would be in the meeting to talk about his concerns and to give him the opportunity to walk through the legislation. The Commission could then give accurate feedback to the Council members about this legislation.

Chair Yeary asked about the status of the Bill. Mr. Parrott stated that the Bill is on the floor but can still be amended.

#### IV. Commissioners' Report

Chair Yeary asked about the MLK Parade logistics and whether or not there would be availability of Commissioners to participate. Director Ingram stated the Mayor had extended an invitation to the Cabinet Members to walk with her in the MLK Parade. He also stated that Mr. John Wesley had sent out a poll to see who wanted to participate, and he did not get much feedback. Director Ingram welcomed staff and all Commissions to

participate with him and they will be meeting at 11 a.m. on Monday, 1/21 and once he has the information he will have the staff email each Commission.

V. Open Forum

There was no further business to discuss. It was moved and seconded by Commissioners Ayira and Ruckman that the Public Session be adjourned and move into the Executive Session.

There being no further business, Chair Yeary closed the Public Session and moved into the Executive Session at 1:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Drummond  
Secretary III