

Office of Civil Rights & Wage Enforcement
Community Relations Commission
Public Session Minutes
June 20, 2018

Participating in the meeting were Commissioners Rev. Todd Yeary (Chair), Adote Akwei, Stephen Ruckman, Karsonya Whitehead (conference call), A. Adar Ayira, and Commissioner Designee Nadine Finigan-Carr. Also present were Acting Director Sharita Thomas, Raemond Parrott (CRC Supervisor), Gregory Logan, Troy Pumphrey, Danielle Crawley, and Shavey Blackwell. The meeting was called to order at 12:09 p.m.

I. Welcome

Chair Yeary welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.

II. Approval of the Minutes

A motion was made by Commissioners Whitehead, seconded by Commissioner Ruckman that the May 16, 2018 minutes be approved with one correction on the spelling of Commissioner Designee Finigan-Carr's name. All were in favor and the motion carried.

III. Commissioners' Report

Commissioner Ayira gave an update on her meeting with Councilman Scott. She stated that the piece of legislation regarding the equity Bill passed. There will be a Committee Meeting to go over the definition of equity and its implementation. The second reading is scheduled for June 25th. The Committee will wait one year to look at this piece of legislation before implementation is accepted. Commissioner Ayira stated that it would be helpful to have the support of CRC. In addition, she stated that the Committee had questions about capacity and training.

Action: Commissioner Ayira has been working with the Councilman to write a clear definition of equity. She will bring a clean write-up of the Bill to CRC for review.

Action: Chair Yeary and Commissioner Ayira will draft a letter to the sponsor (Councilman Scott) proposing an amendment to the Equity Bill before the Second Reader date.

Chair Yeary asked Mr. Parrott whether the CRC staff had any concerns with regard to the Equity Bill. Mr. Parrott said that he did not believe the CRC staff would be affected unless the legislature fell within the purview of Articles 11 or 4.

Chair Yeary asked about the status of Civil Rights Day. Mr. Parrott stated that the Office has identified 3 locations and they are working to solidify one. He had a meeting with MIMA to get quality feedback on how to target certain populations and how to best plan Civil Rights Day. The updated date and time for Civil Rights Day is July 28th, noon to 4 p.m. at the Under Armour House and the backup plan is the Enoch Pratt Free Library (Southeastern Branch).

Action: Chair Yeary asked Commissioners to mark July 28th on their calendars for Civil Rights Day.

Commissioner Ayira asked a question about the Commission making a statement of support or commitment to civil rights regarding the issue of immigration. Chair Yeary said that the Commission could reaffirm their commitment to human rights broadly. Otherwise, it would be at the discretion of the Mayor and City Council President.

In follow-up to the Hopkins and data analysis, Mr. Parrott spoke about his meeting with Mr. Moses Pounds regarding the collection of data. However, he stated that currently he is in the process of extracting data out of the system manually because he is unable to turn over that data due to State, Federal and local protections. However, he has been able to compile data and release it to Hopkins to analyze where the respondent is the City of Baltimore. He said that CRC has 716 cases that have been filed over the last 6 years that are against Baltimore City Agencies. At the end of the month Mr. Parrott would have Mr. Pounds come back and look at that data and determine what kind of analysis he will be able to perform. However he stated that the cost of the analysis might be a factor.

Commissioner Ruckman stated that he followed up with Mr. Pounds. He stated that there are things that can be done to keep the costs to a minimum.

Chair Yeary asked if there will be a written or verbal report. Mr. Parrott stated that there will be a written report. In addition, he has a report that will be due to members of the City Council that will address similar issues. That report should address both CRC staff as well as City Council.

IV. Director's Report

Acting Director Sharita Thomas gave an overview of the status of the Office. She stated that she is assuming the role of Acting Director as of May 21st and that things are still in transition. Currently, the Office will report to the Solicitor's Office. She had a meeting with the Solicitor regarding the needs of OCR with regard to staffing, equity issues, and obtaining counsel for public hearings. She stated that CRC has a few cases that will be coming up for public hearing and the Solicitor has agreed to provide counsel.

Chair Yeary asked about how the scheduling of the public hearings. Mr. Parrott stated that there is no timeline at this time. However, there are four cases for probable cause which are in the early conciliation stage. If there is no conciliation, there will be not be a public hearing.

Commissioner Ruckman asked about the status of the staffing. Acting Director Thomas stated that for FY19 she hopes to get additional awards for CRC.

Action: Acting Director Thomas will continue to keep the Commission updated on the status of the Office.

V. Open Forum

Commissioner Adoté Akwei asked questions about the Civil Rights Day. He wanted to know if OCR had been able to get the information out to the non-English speaking communities. Mr. Parrott stated that he had been working the MIMA agency, and they had been assisting with reaching out to non-English-speaking communities that they serve directly.

Commissioner Akwei stated that the best time to reach the French speaking community is during their monthly meetings on the last Sundays or first Sundays of the month in the afternoon.

Action: A date and location for the Civil Rights Day should be solidified by the end of June or first week in July to allow for publicizing the event. It would only be pushed into August if CRC is unable to meet with all the involved parties. In addition, there will be a flyer posted.

There was no further business to discuss.

There being no further business, Chair Yeary closed the Public Session at 12:35 p.m. and moved into the Executive Session.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Drummond
Secretary III