

**Office of Equity and Civil Rights
Community Relations Commission
Public Session Minutes
January 15, 2020**

Participating in the meeting were Commissioners Todd Yeary (Chair), Nadine Finigan-Carr, Adote Akwei, Stephen Ruckman, Phillip Farfel. Also present were staff: Darnell Ingram (Director), Raemond Parrott (Deputy Director) Lisa Kelly (Supervisor), and Investigators Danielle Crawley, Lauren Jackson, Zelma Ortiz, and John Barnes.

I. Welcome/Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at approximately 12:12 pm. Chair Yeary call for the review and approval of the Minutes first followed by the Director's Report.

II. Approval of the Minutes

It was moved and seconded by Commissioners Finigan-Carr and Ruckman that the December 18, 2019 Public Session Minutes be approved with one amendment to page 4, Action Item #2 to add a timeline that Annual Reports will be issued for the fiscal year 2020 and Quarterly Reports will start in January. All were in favor and the minutes were accepted into record with the above-mentioned addition.

III. Director's Report

A. Outreach

- a. Fair housing webinar December 18th at 2 pm on Facebook Live by Lauren Jackson followed by a live Q & A.
- b. There will be a "Can We Talk?" at the Baltimore Food Project on January 21, 2020 at 6 pm at 424 S. Pulaski Street.
- c. The staff are preparing for Civil Rights Week 2020. Director Ingram is asking for suggestions for speakers.
- d. Staff will be marching on the 20th in the MLK parade. Commissioners are welcome to march and can reach out to Deputy Director Parrott.
- e. The Staff are undertaking an Equity Initiative. More information will be forthcoming.

B. Data Analytics

- a. 238 inquiries
- b. 102 intakes
- c. Investigations since January
 - 1) 84 completed investigations
 - 2) 46 settled investigations
 - 3) 11 withdrawn investigations (w/o settlement)
 - 4) 15 NPC's
 - 5) 0 PC's

Commissioner Ruckman asked about the vacancies for the Commission. Director Ingram stated that applications are still pending in the Mayor's Office. Deputy Director Parrott stated that the applicant that was forwarded to CRC will be meeting with Director Ingram before going through the legislative process with City Council.

Chair Yeary asked about the status of housing in Baltimore City due to changes with regard to disparate impact standards and the new proposed housing legislation. He reminded the Commission that there was a discussion at the previous meeting about looking more intensely at housing concerns. Deputy Director Parrott and Director Ingram said that the Office would not be affected since they investigate under Article IV and not under the Fair Housing Act.

Commissioner's Report and Open Forum

Chair Yeary spoke about having a follow-up discussion on meeting with agency heads.

- a. Draft a report on having conversations with the order agency heads
- b. Commissioner Farfel is concerned with how 1) the school district counts poverty, 2) the discriminatory impact on schools with a high percentage on immigrants losing Title I, and 3) he believes this warrants a Commission led complaint based on ethnicity and national origin.
- c. Commissioner Finigan-Carr stated that there is a chronic homelessness issue in the school system that contributes to discriminatory practices as well.
- d. Chair Yeary suggested that the Education Committee meets with the City School CEO.
 - Education Committee – Farfel, Ruckman, & Finigan-Carr
 - **Action:** Deputy Director Parrott will draft a letter to meet with Dr. Sonja Santelises
 - i. Alternative person – Chief Equity Officer of BCPS – Dr. Tracey Durant

- Director Ingram spoke about the Commission led complaints.
 - i. DPW – a meeting was set to meet with Ms. Linda Batts
 - ii. Chair Yeary asked to let the Commission know when the meetings are scheduled
 - Commissioner Akwei suggested a meeting with City Officials regarding the crime in Baltimore City.
- e. Commissioner Finigan-Carr reminded everyone that there is a workforce Wednesday event on January 29 for victims of trauma who may be seeking employment, primarily those who have been trafficked. **Action:** She will send that flyer to Dr. Ingram and the Commission for distribution.
- f. Health Department and meeting with the new health Commissioner

Director Ingram stated that 2020 is the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage and the right to vote. Dr. Ingram welcomes any ideas on events or activities during that month. **Action:** Chair Yeary and Dr. Ingram will follow-up on Larry Gibson's idea.

Ms. Lisa Kelly (supervisor) introduced Mr. John Barnes as the contractual CRC representative, and Ms. Shainfny Wooden as the fair housing intern.

Commissioner Farfel asked about the legislation on childhood trauma sponsored by Councilman Zeke Cohen. He asked if the Commission should be involved or look for areas of expertise. Director Ingram stated that he did meet with Councilman Cohen on how the Office might support the Bill as regards to equity.

Commissioners and staff discussed Dr. Wynn's health discussion and the trauma informed approach. Chair Yeary would like to review the Bill. Director Ingram stated that it is Bill #19-0410 will be in third reader on February 13, 2020.¹

Deputy Director Parrott announced the Law Department's Equity and Assessment Plan at 5 pm. **Action:** Dr. Finigan-Carr asked if Deputy Director Parrott could notify the Commission of the Equity presentation for February.

Chair Yeary spoke about a bid to redevelop McCulloh Homes.

There was no further business to discuss.

¹ Granicus, Inc. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://baltimore.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4068857&GUID=9C48A666-88A8-4D49-A794-AC0D1C3D49B9&Options=ID|Text|&Search=>

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 1:00 pm and moved into Executive Session.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Drummond