

**Office of Equity and Civil Rights
Community Relations Commission
Virtual Meeting
Public Session Minutes
May 12, 2021**

Participating in the virtual conference were Commissioners Todd Yeary (Chair), Adote Akwei, Nadine Finigan-Carr, Phillip Farfel, and Stephen Ruckman. Also present were staff: Dana Moore (Chief Equity Officer and Director), Cedric McCray (Deputy Director), Lisa Kelly (Supervisor), Lauren Jackson, and Zelma Ortiz.

I. Welcome/Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:34 am.

II. Approval of the Minutes

A. April 28, 2021

- a. The April 28, 2021 Public Session Minutes were approved.

III. Director's Report

A. Director Moore spoke about the potential of the office and possible ways to help improve the City.

a. Funding

- i. Funding opportunities
- ii. American Recovery Plan
- iii. Projects

b. Backlog

- i. No events until backlog is addressed
- ii. Negotiation of contract with EEOC
- iii. Staffing issues

B. Deputy Director McCray presented the office metrics

a. Staff participation

- i. Fair Housing & Civil Rights virtual conference - 4/13/21-4/15/21
- ii. Fair housing legal update provided by the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights - 4/27/21

b. Trainings

- i. OECR conducted 9 training events in April funded through HUD with 115 individuals trained

C. Deputy Director McCray gave the data and outreach reports.

a. Outreach –

- i. April
 - 1. CRC hosted a fair housing art installation during the month of April 2021 which was a visual summary of fair housing in Baltimore City.
- b. Board Metrics for CRC:
 - i. April 2021 – May 12, 2021
 - 1. Open Investigations – 192
 - 2. Employment complaints - 174
 - 3. Housing complaints – 16
 - 4. Public accommodation complaints - 2
 - ii. April 2021
 - 1. Presentations and trainings - 14
 - 2. complaints authorized for investigation - 5
 - 3. complaints closed per investigator – 2.5
 - 4. % of complaints closed within 250 days after authorization - 40%
 - 5. % of complaints closed through negotiated resolution – 30%

D. Discussion

- a. Commissioner Akwei asked, 1) if the Fair Housing training was still going on, 2) how to get a fair housing invitation and training for his community, and 3) if there is a Covid-related campaign that his community can participate in.
 - i. Deputy Director McCray responded that the training was over but specific training could be arranged by Ms. Kelly and Ms. Jackson. Also there was a Covid-related marketing campaign that was funded through HUD. The signage was posted in different languages and placed on MTA bus benches.
 - 1. Action: Deputy Director will give a timeframe for this training in a 2-3 days.
- b. Chair Yeary spoke about 1) the moratorium on housing, 2) funding for Covid resources & renter displacement, and 3) vaccine access.
 - i. Commissioner Finigan-Carr and Director Moore commented on vaccine distributions and disparities in certain communities.
- c. Ms. Kelly gave an overview of the backlog.

IV. Commissioners' Report

- A. Commissioner Farfel spoke about the need for a plan to address educational equity and vaccine distribution among city schools. In addition, he would like to see a collaboration with Universities and to find ways to help build resources.
- B. Commissioner Akwei asked if the office is allowed to partner with government institutions and colleges.

- a. Director Moore would like to would like to address the partnerships on a case by case basis as there are organizational affiliations. She advised that if there is a question, it is best to ask before establishing a partnership.
- b. Commissioner Akwei proposed that staff bring awareness to the issue of vaccine distribution by sending a letter, and if it is ignored, then start the legal process.
 1. Rev. Yeary asked if the Commission needs to consider the propriety of a complaint against the State tied to the distribution of the vaccines. This process would only be considered if equity continues to be a concern.
 2. Director Moore suggested a letter to Baltimore City Public Schools and to the State Department of Health expressing concern and asking for data and a plan on how the issue will be addressed. The letters should inform them that the Commission is here to help and willing to be a partner.
 3. Note – the Commission has not met with Dr. Dzirasa.

V. Open Forum

- A. The next meeting is scheduled for June 16, 2021 at noon am via Teams.

There was no further business to discuss.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 9:54 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Drummond
Office of Equity and Civil Rights