

Office of Civil Rights & Wage Enforcement
Community Relations Commission
Public Session Minutes
July 18, 2018

Participating in the meeting were Commissioners Rev. Todd Yeary (Chair), Adote Akwei (Conference Call), Stephen Ruckman, Karsonya Whitehead (conference call), A. Adar Ayira, and Commissioner Designee Nadine Finigan-Carr, Commissioner Farfel. Also present were Acting Director Sharita Thomas, Raemond Parrott (CRC Supervisor), Gregory Logan, Troy Pumphrey, Danielle Crawley, John Wesley. The meeting was called to order at 12:14 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 Finigan-Carr, seconded by Commissioner Ruckman that the June 20, 2018 minutes be approved as written. All were in favor and the motion carried.

III. Commissioners' Report

Commissioner Farfel asked for clarity 1) on the Equity Legislation and the one-year wait to implement the policy, and 2) on OCR reporting the Solicitor's Office. Chair Yeary stated that there would be answers and further discussion during the Director's Report.

Commissioner Ayira expressed concerns about a possible conflict of interest in reporting to the Solicitor and the public perception that the Office is no longer a stand-alone agency.

IV. Director's Report

Acting Director Sharita Thomas gave an overview of the status of OCR under the Solicitor's Office. She stated that she is assuming the role of Acting Director as of May 21st and that there was an executive reorganization and that the OCR now reports to the Solicitor. The discussion with the Solicitor was mainly about the needs and functions of the office and how they can support the daily operations. In addition, Acting Director Thomas stated that she has been given autonomy to run the office. She would only need to ask the Solicitor for The City Solicitor is also in the process of providing hearing officers for CRC when the Respondent is a City Agency and there is a need for outside counsel.

Acting Director Thomas stated that the current status of the OCR, 1) CRB – no staffing changes – no real case management system; 2) Wage – hope to receive a wage compliance tracking system; 3) CRC – issues with pay equity; and 4) Disability – had one staff person who passed away – will be housed in the OCR Office.

Chair Yeary and Commissioner Ruckman asked questions about the Law and where it applies to the Office reporting to the Solicitor. Chair Yeary asked Robin to pull a copy of Article 4 and stated that Article mainly speaks about the Community Relations Commission and not the Office.

There were questions from Commissioners:

- Commissioner Nadine Finigan-Carr asked if there is a possibility of asking City Council to advocate on behalf of CRC to gain another compliance officer position.
- Commissioner asked questions about the Vision and the timeline of moving forward with the Vision.
- Commissioners Whitehead and Ayira asked for clarity on the flier and the Civil Rights Day Event scheduled for July 28th and whether it would be a program vs. entertainment.
- Mr. John Wesley gave an overview of the purpose of Civil Rights Day and program.

Chair Yeary stated that there was a previous discussion concerning the obligation and deadline for this event based on the available funds from EEOC. He also stated that the event was to be scheduled around the Civil Rights Breakfast, and there was not enough time to plan for the suggested Public Hearings and more intensive discussions concerning civil rights issues happening within the local communities. However, he stated that the purpose of the scheduled working session was to plan the public hearings and discussions and to come with a Mission to help address the issues within the impacted communities based on Article IV to include issuing subpoenas as needed and report back to City Council.

V. Open Forum

There was no further business to discuss.

There being no further business, Chair Yeary closed the Public Session at 1:23 p.m. and moved into the Executive Session.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Drummond
Secretary III