



HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

April 24th, 2013 at 4:30 pm
Council Chambers

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Gil Palmer, Chairperson
Ian Kohen, Vice Chairperson
John Roberts, Secretary
Trena Carter, Treasurer
Greg Lewis
John Stroh
Tony McClendon
Annette Barnes
Rhea Baker-Ipek
Kelly Benjamin
Richard Gold

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

STAFF PRESENT

Frances Jordan, Deputy Director
Betsy Schuette, Secretary

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

GUESTS PRESENT

Jeff Logston, City Attorney, Tim Shuffett, City Council Liaison, Sabel and Sierra, observers from the Columbus Signature Academy and the children of staff member Schuette.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Commissioner Barnes reported a correction to the April minutes, she attended the April 17th CAMEO meeting in addition to Commissioner Lewis and Chairperson Palmer. **Commissioner Stroh moved that the April meeting minutes be approved with correction. Commissioner Benjamin seconded. Motion carried. April minutes were approved.**

TREASURER'S REPORT

Commissioner Carter reported a total balance of \$4809.37 in the Donation Account after ticket revenue and Annual Dinner expenses. In the Non-Reverting \$716.37 and with both accounts totally \$5525.74. The Heritage Fund Grant account has a balance of \$3040.40. The costs of the Adventure into DiversCity finale will be on the report at the June meeting. **Commissioner Roberts moved to adopt the Treasurer's Report with questions answered. Commissioner McClendon seconded. Motion carried. May Treasurer's Report was approved.**

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Chairperson Palmer extended a formal Welcome to the two newest Commissioners Kelly Benjamin and Richard Gold. The Commissioners gave a brief introduction. Commissioner Benjamin introduced Jeff Logston, City Attorney, who has replaced her as City Attorney.

Chairperson Palmer reported to the Commission the incident on Werner Street involving the police who arrested a 17 year old male. One minister alleged that race may have been an issue. Chairperson Palmer, Vice-Chairperson Kohen and Deputy Director Jordan have been involved with this case for the last month or two, providing technical assistance. Chairperson Palmer described the citizen review process which includes the 15 day deadline that residents have to file a complaint if they feel that their rights have been violated by police or if they believe that the police didn't follow procedure. As part of the internal investigation, Chairperson Palmer described how police are equipped with body microphones and that the cars are equipped with video cameras which document any given situation and can be used as investigative tools. He further described how residents can appeal a decision within 30 days if they are dissatisfied with the police's investigation of the complaint; that appeal goes before the Citizen Review Sub-committee of the Audit and Review Committee. Chairperson Palmer is an Audit and Review committee member along with Commissioner Barnes, Rick King, City Attorney Jeff Logston, City Council Member Dascal Bunch. Chairperson Palmer, who discussed the need to allow the process to progress, stated that the meeting with police Chief on the issue was more of a discussion of preventative measures and future processes to minimize, if not eliminate these kind of interactions between the community and CPD. Discussion ensued.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Cases:

The following is a case activity update:

- 1 CHRC Race filing - Mediation scheduled with Commissioner Stroh, Commissioner Benjamin will be observing.
- 1 CHRC Disability, Complainant interviews
- 1 CHRC Race, Complainant interviews scheduled
- 2 EEOC Disability, filings
- 1 FMLA Disability, filing scheduled

MACDA:

The next meeting for the Mayor's Advisory Council on disability and Accessibility (MACDA) will be July 1st at 2:00 PM in the Meeting Hall at City Hall. The Six-Sigma project was discussed at the previous meeting. The Six-Sigma project was originally organized to analyze accessibility in the schools then continued to include the entire community of Columbus. MACDA will be using some of those recommendations as guidance on the goals and strategic planning for the council.

Adventures in DiversCity:

The 'Adventures in DiversCity' finale was a success. Katelyn Diehl was the Grand Prize winner of the iPad. The final report is due to the Heritage Fund Committee on June 30th. A reporting on the finale will be available at the next Commission meeting.

Other Activities:

Deputy Director Jordan reported she attended the Pride Alliance meeting Thursday, May 23rd. Cummins has another project called a Columbus Area Welcoming Community Initiative for LGBT residents and has asked Director Smith and Deputy Director Jordan to assist with this project. Deputy Director Jordan will attend that kick off May 30th and will have more information at the next Commission meeting.

Commissioners discussed the need for a Commissioner liaison to the Pride Alliance. Their meetings are once a month on the 3rd Thursday at 7pm at the Bartholomew County Public Library. Commissioner Barnes volunteered to be liaison for Pride Alliance.

Chairperson Palmer and Deputy Director Jordan reported an update on Director Smith regarding her recovery. She is on track and doing well with her recovery and her projected return to the office is on Tuesday June 4th.

DISCUSSION

Annual Dinner:

Survey Results:

Deputy Director Jordan preliminarily reported the Annual Dinner Wrap-up to the Commissioners.

Of the 102 evaluations completed, 46 were new attendees. The previous year, 56 attendees completed evaluations. Overall the evaluations were positive regarding the actual arrangement of the Annual Dinner. However, lower ratings were noted in regard to attendees' lack of knowledge about the function of the Human Rights Commission and the need to learn more.

Financial Update:

Deputy Director Jordan provided a preliminary estimate of the financial update on the dinner:

Staff estimates that tickets sold were 372 with the comp tickets there was 385 attendees. Last year the attendance was 222 but 230 was the estimated amount given to the caterer. Estimates of the Annual Dinner Expenses were approximately \$11,717.36. There are still outstanding ticket payments still coming in and the figures still need to be finalized.

ACTION ITEM

Threads of Diversity:

The Human Rights Commission in collaborated with IUPUC, Pride Alliance and ICC to produce another Oral History Project which was funded with a grant awarded by the Heritage Fund. This will be a second part to the first Oral History Project, "Lifting Up A Voice", which is available through a link on the Human Rights web site. The LGBT group provided a short clip of their completed portion of the video "Threads of Diversity", for the Commissioners to preview. Deputy Director Jordan proposed to the Commissioners that the Human Rights Commission host a screening and invite the community. Discussion ensued. Commissioners decided to have a special meeting to view the video before they decide on hosting the screening as an action Item.

LIAISON REPORT

Commissioner Ipek-Baker reported the Interfaith Forum has partnered with Columbus Regional Hospital to institute a public phone number for any community member to call in and leave inspirational messages for family or patients. The messages will be screened by the Columbus Regional Hospital.

The Sustained Dialogue group hosted a last minute community meeting May 19th with community leaders and community members regarding the issue of poverty in the community. The speaker was Dr. Phil Stewart and he is volunteering his time. Commissioner Ipek-Baker was unable to attend but will give updates since it will be an ongoing topic.

Congratulations to Commissioner Ipek-Baker who reported she passed her bar exam!

Commissioner Lewis reported that he attended the CAMEO annual meeting in addition to several other Commissioners where Director Smith was awarded the Benjamin "Mickey" King Award which was accepted by her son David Smith. The meeting had a great turn out and is exceeding in attendance every year. Tom Harmon the current president of CAMEO stepped down and was replaced by Rocio Rodriquez.

Commissioner Stroh reported he was out of town and unable to attend the last Transit Authority Board meeting. He will get an update of the meeting and report at the next Commission meeting.

ADJOURNMENT:

Commissioner Stroh moved that the meeting be adjourned. Commissioner Carter seconded. Motion carried meeting adjourned.