

**Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations  
Minutes of Meeting  
April 2, 2018**

Attendance: Winford Craig, Chair                      Wasiullah Mohamed (by phone)  
                 Helen Gerhardt                                      Richard Morris (by phone)  
                 Sharyn Henry    Mariana Padias (on phone)  
                 Eric Holmes    Allyce Pinchback (by phone)  
                 Eric Horwith    Lori Roth  
                 Marian Lien    Jessica Ruffin (by phone)  
                 Gabriel McMorland

Absent:                      Gwendolyn Young

Staff:                      Carlos Torres, Director                      Rachel Salem, Secretary to Director  
                                    Sheron Clark                                      Megan Stanley, Deputy Director  
                                    Richard Rogow, Commission Rep.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Commissioner Craig called the meeting to order at 3:35pm.

**II. PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment.

**III. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

Commissioner Horwith made a motion to adopt the minutes as written, seconded by Commissioner [REDACTED]. The motion carried with one abstention from Mariana Padias, who was not present at the March meeting.

**IV: DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

- Director Torres introduced the new Deputy Director, Megan Stanley, recently moved to Pittsburgh from the D.C. area with a background in public policy, and consulting for nonprofits to improve social services programs. She worked as social worker for about ten years, including as a housing case manager and supervisor of men's transitional shelter, then as a policy consultant in a researcher role.
- Annual report is finished, waiting for it to be printed and should be ready for the April 11th Fair Housing Anniversary Celebration,
- About 200 people are registered for the April 11th Fair Housing celebration. registered. A gallery of photos will be displayed, including some by Teenie Harris, some that the Commission owns, some brought from the Carnegie Museum, some printed, as well as photos from decades housing development by the Housing Authority of the City of

Pittsburgh (HACP) starting in 1932. HACP and the Realtor's Association are helping underwrite the April 11th event for the public.

## **V. FINANCE REPORT**

Commissioner Young was not present. The Director reported that the budget process would begin next month. He will be meeting with the Finance Committee next month to go over the Commission's budget request for 2019, due to the City in July of 2019, then to be presented to City Council in September, then voted on in December. The Director will be requesting the creation of an Outreach and Education position funded completely by Community Development Block Grant funds (an allowed expense by that source of funds) so that the Commission will have our own in-house staff to conduct all our outreach and education, particularly related to Fair Housing, throughout the year at a wide range of events.

## **VI. COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

Commissioner Henry reported that the committee had a met to discuss creating a narrative to accompany the Human Rights Assessment and that there would be another meeting in two weeks.

## **VII. HOUSING COMMITTEE REPORT**

Commissioner Morris reported a conference call regarding submitting a Commission statement of support for the HACP regarding its efforts to reform Section 8 rental policy in terms of the fees and how they are calculated. A draft will be completed by the Director and Chair, along with a request to be part of a committee that they are forming to develop the final proposal.

## **VIII: PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

Commissioner Holmes stated that he had received the City's non-union evaluation forms, with four different attachments, in relation to the Director's evaluation. The Personnel Committee will consider whether we want to use the standard City process for non-union employees, or create a hybrid of the City process and what the Personnel Committee did last year. Chairman Craig stated that Commissioner Holmes would make a presentation to the Executive Committee with his recommendations.

## **IX. PUBLIC HEARING SECTION**

Commissioner Gerhardt stated that there was nothing to report at this time. She made an apology regarding postponing a meeting to discuss possibility of having a Public Hearing on public transit as a civil right, but stated that she has been fully engaged with the AFFH Task Force.

## **X. BYLAWS AD HOC COMMITTEE**

Commissioner Roth stated that there was nothing to report at this time.

## **XI. AD HOC COMMITTEE FOR YOUTH HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION**

Commission Pinchback reported that Commissioner Mohamed had made her aware that there were other areas of youth engagement by the City. They are arranging meetings to better understand the extent of those efforts and to prevent duplication of efforts. She is also following up with clarifying our committed work with Liberty school under Commissioner Morris' leadership.

## **XII. NEW BUSINESS**

New Commissioner Liddy Barlow, Executive Minister for Christian Associates of Southwest PA introduced herself. Commissioners and staff also introduced themselves.

Rachel Salem stated that later this month on Thursday, April 26th from 11am-1pm, we will be taking part in a Take Your Child to Work Day, with a series of interactive exhibits down in the lobby of the City-County building. Commissioners are invited to join us at our table where we will use the same exhibit the Commission used at the Girl's science event in October, with a timeline of women in civil rights, where kids will match up women with their achievement on the timeline, to win a prize.

Commissioner Gerhardt stated that members of the AFFH Task Force had requested a public hearing on one of the recommendations of the Task Force, on Good Cause eviction standards and funds for legal defense for tenants facing eviction proceedings. The hope would be to have the hearing on the evening of the April 11th and we are waiting to hear back from City Council President Bruce Kraus to see if the hearing will work for other Council members' schedules.

The Director reported that they have new t-shirts from small to 2X so that Commissioners can wear them at tabling events.

Commissioner Morris asked if the Commissioners will be updated regarding the Source of Income (SOI) case in the courts, regarding a legal challenge to City legislation which forbade discrimination based on source of income, especially discrimination against the use of Housing Choice vouchers (also known as Section 8 vouchers.) Such discrimination creates clear disparate impact for several of the protected classes. The Court of Common Pleas ruled against the City, but it is not known yet if the City would appeal the case. Commissioner Gerhardt stated that the Home Rule Charter give explicit powers to the Pgh CHR to uphold civil rights addressed in the SOI legislation and that there is hope among members of the AFFH Task Force and other housing advocates that the City will appeal to the PA Supreme Court, which if ruled on in the City of Pittsburgh's favor would create precedent for the entire state in support of enforcement of Civil Rights. Commissioner Morris stated that the outcome of the court case is very important as the HACP moves forward on developing its policy on Section 8 vouchers and calculating them by neighborhood, because these reforms would be useless if the City is not able to prevent landlords from excluding renters who pay with these vouchers in neighborhoods [with more access to amenities] such as Point Breeze. Commissioner Gerhardt noted that right now landlords blatantly advertise "no Section 8."

Director Torres reported that he had amended the Commission's complaint regarding Gateway, that he has sent the amendment to the PghCHR Solicitor for his feedback, and is waiting for his response and for consideration by the Motions Commissioner, Mariana Padias. The Director stated that the Commission will definitely proceed with the case.

Motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Gerhardt with a second from Commissioner           .