

# Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations

## Minutes of Meeting

September 16, 2019

### ATTENDANCE:

**Commissioners:** Liddy Barlow, Acting Chair      Wasiullah Mohamed  
Tracy Baton      Jennifer Presutti  
Sharyn Henry      David C. Bush  
Zack Block      J. Matthew Landis  
Michael Bartley

*Absent commissioners:* Sonya Toler

**Staff:** Megan Stanley, Director  
Jam Hammond, Rita Porterfield

**Guests:** Ed Roback, Dan Przybylak

### I. CALL TO ORDER

Acting Chair Barlow called the meeting to order at approximately 3:37pm.

### II. PUBLIC COMMENT

University of Pittsburgh Masters of and Library Information Sciences candidates Ed and Dan were introduced to the Commissioners. These are two of the five students who will be helping to organize, archive, and analyze the civil rights history and data collected by the Commission since its inception in 1955.

### III. ADOPTION OF MINUTES – 3:41 p.m.

Corrections to the minutes were as follows: Commissioner Bush's attendance was noted; Commissioner Baton's absence was noted.

***Motion to approve minutes as corrected by Commissioner Henry; Seconded by Commissioner Presutti; unanimous voice vote in favor, motion carried.***

### IV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

N/A

## V. COMMITTEE & STAFF REPORTS

### Director's Report

- ☞ Met with Open Door, a data visualization non-profit organization. There is a desire to cooperate by scouting out community needs and community resources
- ☞ Certified Welcoming City: Welcoming America, Welcoming Week is this week. CHR looking on how to improve relations and establish trust with immigrant community
- ☞ There is some concern about CHR entering into research contracts. Terms are nebulous without deadlines or concrete deliverables. For example, CHR contracted with University of Pittsburgh regarding research about implicit bias in housing (Fair Housing Assessment and Update). In that study, there were no statistically significant findings of bias in community housing. This is believed to be an error in the methodology. However, there were interesting findings that Director Stanley has asked the Pitt research team to mock up and create infographics.
- ☞ As the Commission needs to have a community meeting per its own order, Director Stanley has suggested that the Pitt Report and the CMU archival project be presented together and at the community meeting. Director Stanley and Commission Representative Hammond are developing event details.

### Community Relations Committee

- ☞ Human Rights Cookout was a successful demonstration of community presence with over 50 people attending.
- ☞ Career and Information Fair for the City of Pittsburgh was an event attended by CHR and reached over 20 new people.
- ☞ There is a meeting with State Representative Inammorato regarding housing issues
- ☞ Commissioner Mohamed initiated a discussion about an incident at a high school soccer game between Allderdice High School and Connellsville Area High School earlier this month. During the game, Connellsville student athletes allegedly used racial slurs against Allderdice student athletes. There were outside of play physical altercations and alleged grabbing of sexually intimate parts during these physical exchanges. While there were penalties issued for the outside of play physical roughness, neither the coaches nor the referees appear to have been aware of or actively responded to the allegations regarding the use of slurs. This is the second such accusation against Connellsville. Penn

Hills High School reported something similar last year. Connellsville denies all allegations. WPIAL/PIAA have not acted as of yet. Allderdice parents have written an open letter and started a petition and are looking for support. Jurisdiction appears to lie with the Pennsylvania Commission. This is an identifiable community tension issue, within the City Commission's purview. Outreach of rights awareness and bias training may be useful tools. Otherwise, the Commission or parents may look to DOJ, state, or civil rights organizations for further support. There are no complaints pending at this time.

- ☞ Fair Housing Month April 2020: initial concept is to have a beta rapid learning course for the public
- ☞ Connecting Communities Event is postponed until needs assessment and feedback sessions can be held in each area; 5 or 6 meetings will be planned throughout the City and County, and 1 meeting will specifically address youth and youth needs.

#### **Personnel Committee**

- ☞ After rounds of interviews for a new Deputy Director, the position was offered to and accepted by Wesley Speary, with a starting date of September 30, 2019.
- ☞ While Rachel Shepherd is out of the office, Kevin Carroll will be working as an office temp at approximately 25 hours per week.

#### **Finance Committee**

- ☞ There is an upcoming budget meeting with Councilman Coghil
- ☞ The budget meeting with the Mayor's Office was a very positive interaction, and are anticipating support with financial asks.
- ☞ There will be a central pool for citywide translation needs instead of money allotted on a per department basis
- ☞ Commission is receiving a settlement check from a case to be deposited into funds.

### **VI. OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

- ☞ Elections
  - Nominations:
    - Commissioner Mohamed – Chair
    - Commissioner Barlow – First Vice-Chair
    - Commissioner Henry – Second Vice-Chair

- Commissioner Landis – Secretary
    - Commissioner Bush – Treasurer
  - Voting: **Motion to vote on slate as presented by Commissioner Baton; seconded by Commissioners Bartley and Block. Unanimous voice vote in favor to carry the motion.**
  - Committee assignments will be finalized within a week. Commissioners are to send any interests to Commissioner Barlow. Committee Chairs shall call a meeting at least once per month.
- ☞ MLIS Graduate Students
- Refer to Public Comment Section.
- ☞ Sponsorship – All for All Summit
- All for All is requesting sponsorship from PCHR. \$500.00 sponsorship would provide significant presence and strengthen outreach to the immigrant community. Money is readily available.
  - **Commissioner Baton moved to expend \$500.00 for sponsorship; seconded by Commissioner Henry.**
  - **Voice vote in favor carried the motion; Commissioners Mohamed and Barlow abstained.**
- ☞ *Ad hoc* rules and regulations committee
- Discussion of creating an *ad hoc* commission for the reformation of procedural rules being redrafted by staff and solicitor.
- ☞ FBI human trafficking information session
- Date TBD, but looking to participate

## VII. ADJOURNMENT

**Motion by Commissioner Mohamed; Seconded by Baton; Adjourned 4:51 p.m.**