

Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations

Minutes of Meeting

January 6, 2020

ATTENDANCE:

Commissioners: Wasiullah Mohamed, Chair

Michael Bartley

David C. Bush

Rev. Liddy Barlow

Rabbi Sharyn Henry

BJ Samson

Zack Block

Tracy Baton

J. Matthew Landis

Staff: Megan Stanley, Director

Wesley Speary, Deputy Director

Rita Porterfield

Jam Hammond

Guests: Alaa Mohamed, Policy Coordinator Office of the Mayor

Hillary Roman, ADA Coordinator, City of Pittsburgh

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Mohamed called the meeting to order at approximately 3:52 p.m.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

III. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

☞ Motion by Commissioner Bartley; Seconded by Commissioner Henry; unanimous voice vote in favor of the motion

☞ No abstentions; no votes in opposition

IV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

☞ Called 4:50 p.m., ended 5:00 p.m. to discuss research and report contract with the University of Pittsburgh

- ⌚ Share 2020 Commission Goals with Mayor: Motion made by Commissioner Baton; Seconded by Commissioner Barlow; unanimous voice vote in favor of the motion; no abstentions.

V. COMMITTEE & STAFF REPORTS

Director's Report

- ⊖ Mediation Training for Commissioners – 4 hours presented by The Conflict Lab
- ⊖ Director presented her report in a table format and a narrative format; Commissioners expressed a preference for narrative format
- ⊖ Article about the Commission appeared in the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation newspaper
- ⊖ New HUD Training
 - ⌚ Focus on specific local protections
 - ⌚ Gap in disability and reasonable accommodations in public housing, over 30 day wait time; temporary accommodations are a best practice but may be a challenge to implement
- ⌚ Citywide training on hiring and promotion practices to resolve dispute
 - ⌚ Problem emphasized by a lack of standardized interviewing/hiring procedures
 - ⌚ Standardized question script is now included in interview materials
 - ⌚ Policy to counteract off-the-record hiring and favoritism
 - ⌚ HR/Commission are jointly monitoring training progress
- ⌚ Councilperson Strassburger has expressed an interest in informing healthcare workers, particularly those working with SEIU, of their rights and Commission services. Commissioner Baton suggested that there be a three prong approach for education on knowing rights; on the spot filing for complaints; and one on one intake interviews.
- ⌚ If community outreach/intake expands, could begin piloting a program where a dedicated staff member serves as a liaison between council and Commission.
- ⌚ PublicSource is writing an investigatory report on how complaints to the Allegheny County Health Department can result in evictions and its impact.
- ⌚ Enforcement of marijuana complaints criminally and in employment:
 - ⌚ Lack of local policy
 - ⌚ State level training is needed
 - ⌚ City does not enforce Federal Law at this time
- ⌚ Commissioner Baton cited need for Service/Support Animal Training

- ⌚ Upcoming meeting with Chair, Executive Director, and Mayor. Set to discuss:
 - ⌚ Transparency in appointment process
 - ⌚ Including bus fare Commissioners' travel (suggested by Commissioner Baton)
- ⌚ Quarterly community based meetings suggested; can be a collaborative effort with Community Relations Committee
- ⌚ Has relayed feedback from the Commissioners/Housing Committee to CREATE Lab; conversations are ongoing and very open
- ⌚ Ethics training was provided to Staff
- ⌚ Director has been requested by the United States Congress to discuss research and findings regarding disability forms and other inquiries of the Social Security Advisory Board
- ⌚ Pittsburgh Human Rights: focus on housing and employment barriers to those with a criminal history
- ⌚ Oral Argument scheduled for Source of Income protections in January 2020; expect a decision in the summer
- ⌚ Deputy Director Speary discussed the following:
 - ⌚ Externships:
 - ⊖ January 3rd launched the advertisement for law student externships at the Commission
 - ⊖ 2 positions available
 - ⊖ students will review rules, regulations, and City Code
 - ⊖ Has worked with local law schools and the Allegheny County Bar Association to seek diversity recruitment
 - ⌚ Staff is updating community resource spreadsheet/handout
 - ⊖ Commissioner Barlow suggested 2-1-1
 - ⊖ Commissioners are welcome to add specific organizations and specific contact persons
 - ⊖ Commission Baton suggested that missions and actual resources be verified as part of being added
 - ⌚ Participation in Military/Veteran family book drive; Commissioners expressed some interest in discussing military status as a protected class

Finance Committee:

- ⌚ None

☹ No 2020 spending to date

Community Relations Committee

☹ The committee has not yet met but expressed goals.

☹ Meeting will be scheduled within the next 30 days.

☹ Focus will be on youth community development and curriculum that could be expanded to adults.

☹ Youth essay/writing contest

☹ City video production for Facebook ads, PSAs, and Critical Community Outreach

Housing Committee

☹ Fair Housing assessment done by the University of Pittsburgh is completed, but product raises questions of methodology in data gathering

☹ Contract documents related to the project are available for Commissioners to review

Personnel Committee

☹ None

☹ Plans to meet before February meeting

Public Hearing Committee

☹ None

☹ Interest in receiving training from solicitor/staff who are attorneys

VI. NEW/OLD BUSINESS

☹ No old business outstanding

☹ Outreach log:

1. GPNP Summit
2. Thrive 18 (part of Project Destiny) working to pool North Side neighborhoods' resources for common goals
3. JCC Collaboration is possible, especially for a community base intake or commission meeting
4. Department of Justice collaboration is in a holding pattern at the moment

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Baton; Seconded by Commissioner Henry; unanimous voice vote in favor, no abstentions. Adjourned 5:30 p.m.