

**NEW JERSEY HUMAN RELATIONS COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING
JANUARY 16, 2013**

The regular meeting of the New Jersey Human Relations Council was held on January 16, 2013, at the Richard J. Hughes Justice Complex, Market Street, Trenton, New Jersey. Chairperson Jim Peeler called the meeting to order at 10:25 a.m.

Those serving on the Council in attendance were the following: Mr. Bobby Battle, Mr. Richard Biolsi, Ms. Kay Delp, Rabbi Adam Feldman, Mr. James Ford, Major Wendy Galloway, Mr. Eric Higgins, Det. Robin Powell, Mr. Chuck Stein, Ms. Rudene Vaught and Ms. Linda Spagnuolo, Administrative Support.

Those serving on the Advisory Board in attendance were: Mr. Reginald Johnson, Mr. Corbett Klein, Mr. Steve Landfield, Ms. Mary McGowan, Ms. Yumiko Mishima, Mr. Craig Sashihara, and Ms. Reisa Sweet

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

All assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Introductions

Council, Advisory Board members, and guests introduced themselves and briefly told of their affiliations. Rabbi Adam Feldman reported on the death of valued Council member Morton Rosenthal.

Jim Peeler announced that the Council has moved from the Division of Criminal Justice (DCJ) to the Division of Civil Rights (DCR). He introduced Craig Sashihara, Director of the DCR, who stated that by statute, the Council is an in-but-not-of agency within the Department of Law & Public Safety, and that the Department has decided to make an administrative change: DCR will take over the role of staffing the Council meetings, providing room and parking accommodations to attendees, and providing administrative support to the Council members. Mr. Peeler then introduced and welcomed Linda Spagnuolo from DCR, who will be assisting the Council.

Chairperson Report

Jim Peeler stated that he believe that there is a great deal to be accomplished. He said that he continues to be very concerned about the children of incarcerated parents and he plans to make their well-being the theme of the annual conference in May. He said that he and DAG Hester Agudosi discussed developing a manual for incarcerated parents, including an addendum for children, that would be presented to the Governor and the Attorney General and be disseminated to a number of agencies throughout the state. Jim would like to have more council members involved in the project.

Committee Reports

Jim Peeler indicated that we need volunteers for the Community Outreach and Public Relations Committee and the Policy and Reports Committee. He asked the Council members to think hard about joining and becoming active on committees.

Major Wendy Galloway, Chair of the Law Enforcement and Community Relations Committee, reported that a Dr. Martin Luther King commemorative will be held at the War Memorial on January 20, from 3 until 5. The Lieutenant Governor will be one of a number of impressive speakers. She also reported that she has been appointed to the Sandy Recovery Committee to focus on cultural areas. Finally, she stated that the NJ State Police are having success at further diversifying their force in the upcoming recruit classes.

Steve Landfield, Chair of the Housing Committee, said that he is currently a committee of one and is need of members.

Presentation by Pastor Keith Davis, Director of the Dream Center in Camden, NJ

The focus of the Dream Center is on helping incarcerated individuals to make a successful transition back into the community upon release. Pastor Davis stated that when an excessive number of young males in a community are incarcerated, it desimulates that community. He said that in the United States, 1 of 3 African American males up to the age of 24 have been incarcerated and the numbers are much higher in Camden. He said that under such conditions, incarceration becomes a right of passage and prisons are a part of the socialization process of that community. He said it has a salient impact on the psychological development of children.

He said that the Dream Center builds partnerships with public and private resources. They then go into the prisons as mentors to offer and teach tools for successful reentry. They have found that they must make a long term commitment to the family and not just the reentering individual.

Pastor Davis referred to an article, "The Social and Moral Code of Mass Incarceration in African American Communities," by Dorothy E. Roberts, in The Stanford Law Review.

Jim Peeler reiterated that he wants the Council to work on programs to help reentering individuals and would like to see local HRC's address the issue. He asked that members of the Council email or call him with ideas on the topic. An announcement concerning our conference in May will be coming out soon.

Advisory Board

The Advisroy Board was unable to meet because of illness and the weather.

Old Business

There was further discussion on the development of a manual for incarcerated parents.

New Business

Steve Landfield announced that he has opened a twitter account that could be used to publicize the Council and its activities. He asked that it be attached to the official website.

Corbett Klein said that, through his work at a rescue mission in Trenton, he has obtained a flyer on how formerly incarcerated people can register to vote.

Announcements

Detective Robin Powell, Bias Crime Officers Association - Continuing trainings on discrimination and harassment. Members are welcome to attend.

Bobby Battle, Administrative Office of the Courts – Working on an outreach program to acquaint Asian and Hispanic immigrants with career opportunities.

Rudene Vaught, Human Services – Working on Sandy recovery. Involved with housing for individuals with mental illness.

Reisa Sweet, Ocean County HRC – Seeking funding to bring the Kidsbridge Museum of Tolerance to Lakewood to provide programs for youth, with an initial focus on stereotyping.

Reginald Johnson, Toms River Police Department - The department is going through an assessment process. 11% of the force is staffed by minority individuals.

Kay Delp, Greenwich – A GED program has begun at the Cumberland County Department of Corrections. NJHRC was credited with inspiring the program.

Corbett Klein, Mercer County HRC – New officers have been installed in the Mercer County HRC.

Chuck Stein, NJ Principals & Supervisors Association – He is offering his office to assist in facilitating contacts when members of the NJHRC are reaching out to local schools.

Larry James, Camden County – Referred to a law in Philadelphia in which employers may not question prospective employees about their arrest records as part of the interview process.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:04 p.m. by Chairman Jim Peeler.

Respectfully submitted,
Richard Biolsi, Secretary

THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE MARCH 20, 2013