

**NEW JERSEY HUMAN RELATIONS COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING**

June 3, 2015

The regular meeting of the New Jersey Human Relations Council was held March 18, 2015, at the New Jersey State Police Museum, NJ State Police Headquarters, State Police Drive E., West Trenton, NJ 08628.

HRC Officers and Appointed Public Members in attendance were as follows: Tawfig Barqawi, Kay Delp, Kathy Esquiche, Richard Rivera, Joe Santagata.

Those serving on the Council and guests in attendance were the following: Ed Correa, Valerie Gurba, Tonya Hobson, Eli Honig, Walter Hudson, Christopher Iu, Edward Kerr, Emiliano Lemos, Concetta Milton, Laura Morana, Gregory Williams.

Those serving on the Advisory Board and guests in attendance were the following: Pauline Bey, Ashton Burrell, Angeline Dean, Mahonrry Hidalgo, Terence Jones, Yumiko Mishima, Karen Positan, Reisa Sweet, Paul Winkler.

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Chairperson Richard Rivera called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m. All assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Open Public Meeting Act Statement

Chairperson Richard Rivera referred to the Public Meeting Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et. seq. and the posting of a notice on the meeting in newspapers.

General Announcements

Rich Rivera reminded all attendees to sign in, and stated that an e-mail request had been sent asking that voting members have preference for seating at the table so their votes could be more easily counted. A subsequent count verified that 14 voting members were present at today's meeting. Elie Honig, Director, Division of Criminal Justice asked the number that would constitute a quorum. It was determined that this should be clarified as soon as possible. Kay Delp, Secretary, spoke regarding sign-in sheet/table tents and asked speakers to please state names when talking, as the meeting is being recorded.

Chairperson's Report

Rich Rivera announced that the planned speaker would not be making a presentation, and that the meeting would (hopefully) wrap up by 11:00 am. He has reached out to the Governor and the Assembly regarding the currently vacant appointed Public Member positions, of which they are responsible to fill. The Governor has filled his positions and there are some holdovers. However, the appointed County HRC Members have not been appointed. Assemblywoman Nancy Munoz has just resigned, stating other pressing job responsibilities. Rich is expecting to meet with the House Speaker next week.

Rich spoke of his recent attendance at the Commemoration of Selma. Reisa Sweet, Advisory Board Vice Chair, mentioned that she had marched in the original Selma march.

Kay Delp, HRC Secretary, spoke of the website, NJHRC.ORG. She had met with Paul Kraml, Chief Graphic Designer and Creative Director for the Department of Law and Public Safety, and Enrique Pinas, Graphic Designer, to work on improving the website. They are currently updating the screen formats, directories and notices, and plan on creating a Community Bulletin Board for free postings of relevant events. Issues still being worked on include how to best facilitate the public attendance for future meetings and the subsequent security issues that are created for the NJ State Police Museum staff. A suggestion was made regarding the possibility of cross posting the .gov and the .org to both NJHRC websites.

Advisory Board Report

The members who were present announced that they did not have an official meeting just before the Council's 10:00 am meeting time because their Chair, Steve Landfield, was unexpectedly unable to attend. Those in attendance expressed that they feel that they are of value to the Council and want to remain functioning as an advisory board. Some members on this board have been there for over 12 years, and this allows members whose terms have expired to remain; they want to be part of the Council's future. Meeting with each other also permits the sharing and networking among the county HRC's.

Old Business

Rich announced that the Executive Committee has decided that there will be no May conference this year. They will be working to format and to gain support for a budget for the NJHRC, as currently no funds are allocated.

New Business and County Reports

Pauline Bey, Camden County HRC, spoke of their recent Junior HRC activity. 75 students from 8 schools were involved. They held a conference this February, and plan to have another conference in May. She mentioned possibly bringing a student to a meeting. Rich suggested that the summer is a good time to get students involved.

Karen Positan, Union County HRC, announced that they are having an awards presentation on May 4, 2015, and to let her know if attending. They also have paperwork to share regarding foreclosures. They met with Monmouth County HRC, who subsequently gave a presentation. Union County HRC is very active in the community, and has helped to facilitate police engagement with youth. She discussed the "2 Train the Trainers" as a program that involved officers from the police academy.

Reisa Sweet, Ocean County HRC, read a newspaper article about the Hasidic Community and bias incidents which were posted to a Twitter account. The OCHRC did a local presentation about the Hasidic Community. The Ocean County Prosecutor has been very helpful with outreach. There will be a Transgender Program in the future. Kay Delp asked Reisa to forward the event info.

Elie Honig, Director, Division of Criminal Justice, stated he met two weeks ago with Rich Smith from the NAACP and members of NOBLE. They will be meeting on 3/25/15 at Mercer County

Community College at 6:30 p.m. as a follow-up to the meeting he attended at Shiloh Baptist Church in December, 2014. Their focus is on bias crimes and the need for increased minority hiring in law enforcement. Wanda Moore from the Attorney General's Office is the contact person for these meetings, and she will give Kay Delp info for web site posting.

Concetta Milton announced that there will be a Holocaust presentation on April 14, 2015 at the East Brunswick HRC.

Rowena Madden, New Jersey Department of State representative, proposed a retreat to think about strategies because so many organizations are working on the same things. As an example, the Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness has a council that discusses hate issues, and they had a meeting of thought leaders.

Elie Honig discussed the Bias Crimes ruling by the Supreme Court, and Rich Rivera asked what the council can do to help defend this. Elie said that they have new mechanisms to hire minorities in law enforcement; there have been more minorities in the last three classes. He requested that resumes be sent to him personally if you know of anyone who is interested in applying for employment with DCJ.

Terence Jones, Advisory Board, spoke of Pedro Rodriguez, a Paulsboro Police Officer, who is the only Hispanic officer in his police force. He has reportedly received offensive e-mails which went to all his fellow employees. He filed a whistle blower complaint and notified the Mayor and the Gloucester County Prosecutor. Terence did an investigation in Atlantic City and said that there were 200 excessive force issues and not one was investigated. He asked what the Attorney General's Office is going to do about that. He said that they send complaints to the Attorney General's Office but the AG's Office said they do not have them. Elie Honig offered that the NJ Division of Criminal Justice has a Bias Crimes Unit and Prosecutor's Supervision Unit for these types of issues.

Yumiko Mishima, Advisory Board Vice Chair, commented that when public members serve or work on the Advisory Board, it keeps people involved. Rich Rivera said that he wants everyone included in the process and to share. Kay Delp suggested that due to a complete change in executive officers who are also new to the NJHRC, roles are being explored and redefined on the Boards and Committees. Mahonrry Hidalgo spoke of the by-laws and recording of meeting.

Greg Williams, New Jersey State Police representative, said he is working with the Capitol City Coalition. They will be meeting on March 23, 2015. They are also having a Public Safety Career Meeting on June 13, 2015 for the Muslim Outreach Committee working with Dave Frankel from the Office of the Attorney General. This will be their fourth meeting.

Rich Rivera stated the FBI will be reaching out to him with what they have. They will also be coming to speak. He spoke of an update regarding the Cumberland County meeting. He has attended two marches since the last meeting. There was an incident at the February 28, 2015 march in Bridgeton, NJ. Lawsuits have been filed. Rich announced that he has been retained by one of the parties. He mentioned that he feels the Cumberland County sheriff is a resource for the Bridgeton officers.

Approval of Minutes

Concetta Milton requested that she be added as an attendee to the minutes from the January 18, 2015 meeting. Minutes will be so amended. Phil Freeman motioned to approve and Kathy Esquiche seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion was carried.

Floor Opened to the Public

Rich Rivera stated that the presentation will be rescheduled and that he had e-mailed all members a draft notice regarding serving on the Committees. Kay reminded the council that space and time is available for the committees to meet before and after the regular meeting. Rich said that the committee can set up phone conferences for free; that they are a working group and should work it out amongst themselves.

Angeline Dean has volunteered to head the Junior HRC, and this was met with approval from the other attendees.

A discussion followed on the newly formed committees, voting and quorum issues. Rich Rivera said that to vote, you should have a Chair with 1 ex-officio and 1 regular member to each HRC Committee. All agree that the Council needs clarification on this as a priority. Elie Honig said that Article 10, Section B states: you must have 15 council members for a quorum. It was asked if the HRC could modify the number of people needed for a quorum. Yukimo Mishima said that a 2/3rd quorum vote was needed to change the current by-laws. Kay Delp questioned whether votes could be captured via e-mails, and stated that current member slots are 38. Holdovers remain active unless they resign or are asked to step down. Article 7 states you need 15 members. Rich Rivera asked voting members to raise hands; 14 people did so. Greg Williams wondered if we could make Advisory members alternate Council members so that there were enough people to vote. Mention was made of meeting more than every 2 months and of conference calls and voting by proxy.

Emiliano Lemos, Morristown HCR, spoke of discrimination regarding immigration issues in schools in Morris County. Rich Rivera and Mahonrry Hidalgo said they would like to address these issues going forward. Mahonrry said the ACLU is addressing these issues, and they can be discussed at the next meeting.

Adjournment

A motion was made and approved to adjourn the meeting at 11:38 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Kay Delp

Kay Delp, Secretary, HRC

In conjunction with Val Gurba, AGO liaison administrative support.

Next Meeting May 20, 2015