

# NEW JERSEY HUMAN RELATIONS COUNCIL MINUTES OF MEETING

September 26, 2018

The meeting of the New Jersey Human Relations Council was called was held on September 26, 2018 at the Hughes Justice Complex, 25 Market Street, Fifth Floor, West Wing, Trenton, New Jersey 08625

HRC Officers in attendance: None at this time (elections to be held next meeting)

Those serving on the Council were as follows: Ashton Burrell, Tonya Hopson, Leila Lawrence, Karen Positan, Vanessa Lawson, Jennie Lamon, Elizabeth Parchment, Yumiko Mishima, Joe Santagata. Jennifer Stonerod, Bryn Whittle, LaVar Young, and Valerie Gurba as supporting staff.

Those serving on the Advisory Board were as follows: Terence Jones, Reisa Sweet, Pauline Bey, Tommy Parker, and John Wenz.

Guests in attendance were as follows: David Leonardis, Samantha Mazarelli, and Cliff Simon

## **Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance**

Yumiko Mishima, representing the Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:13 am.

Each person present introduced themselves.

## **Open Public Meeting Act Statement**

Yumiko referred to the Open Public Meeting Act, **N.J.S.A.** 10:4-6 et. seq. and recited the posting of the notice of this meeting that was published in the newspapers on September 06, 2018.

## **Approval of Minutes:**

- **A motion was made by Karen Positan and seconded by Reisa Sweet to accept the minutes from the May 16, 2018 meeting.**

## **Chair's Report (currently vacant)**

### **Old Business – Past Conference Report**

Yumiko noted that the last NJHRC conference -- "And Justice For All" held at Kean University on November 16, 2016 -- was successful.

Attendees numbered over 108, with 127 people pre-registered and 19 walk-ins.

The evaluation surveys had 25 out of 30 respondents rating the conference excellent or very good. No unsatisfactory ratings were given.

When asked what type of conferences attendees would they like to see in the future, they named:

-- Racism/Bias

- Cultural Competence
- LGBT gender identity/expression/orientation issues
- Women's issues
- Mass incarceration

She also noted that the Conference only came to fruition due to generous contributions (complimentary Kean University venue), coffee pots (thanks to David Leonardis), and that she is still waiting to be reimbursed by the State for the purchase of breakfast, coffee, and light refreshments.

She added that past conferences were an important educational tool and key highlight of the NJHRC for the past two decades. She added that we need to begin thinking about and planning for a future conference. We need to put together a conference committee to select topics and venues at our next meeting.

### **New Business**

Election process/Nominations of Officers; Conference Committee development

In Philip Freeman's absence, Yumiko noted that elections are held the last meeting each year, and that they will be held at our next meeting in November.

She noted that officers must be nominated, and that only public members can be nominated -- not ex-officio members. She clarified that anyone who has been appointed is eligible to serve as an officer.

Yumiko asked those present if anyone would be interested in serving. She noted that she, Dr. Paula Rodriguez Rust, and Karen Positan, who have all been involved with the NJHRC for over 12 years, would be willing to serve. It was reported that Joe Mazza, who was not able to be at today's meeting, also expressed an interest. Ashton Burrell asked that his name also be added. Members were asked to notify Val of their interest prior to the November meeting.

### **Advisory Board Report**

Yumiko noted she was previously the Chair of the NJHRC Advisory Board, and Reisa Sweet and Karen Positan were the Co-Chairs. She noted that Reisa will take over responsibilities as the Advisory Board Chair.

She encouraged members to recommend new members to join the Advisory Board, to invite them to a meeting, and to have them submit a brief letter or resume outlining their background, interest, and potential contributions.

### **Presentation by David Leonardis, Training & Outreach Liaison, Prosecutors Supervision & Training Bureau, Division of Criminal Justice**

Dave stated he was happy to accept DAG Bryn Whittle's invitation for him to speak about the good work being done with community justice. He noted he has spent his career in law enforcement, but law enforcement cannot do the job by itself. It needs the help and involvement of the community.

His presentation addressed what the state is currently doing with regard to community outreach, specifically different events, strategies, programs, and projects the Attorney General and his Office

are focused on, including the 21/21 project and CLEAR Institute, which are designed to bring law enforcement closer to the community.

He noted that law enforcement officers are receiving cultural diversity de-escalation training, with sexual assault training planned for 2019 to help them learn how to collect evidence. Future courses include understanding drug addiction, the LGBTQ community, the Sikh culture, and the Orthodox Jewish religion.

Another current initiative is to bring anti-bias training to school students.

Additional work is being done with faith-based leaders to help outreach to the community to, among other things, promote peace and reconciliation; better understand problems, issues, and concerns of the congregation and community; to identify solutions, to model and preach non-violence to a large audience; to address ignorance and indifferences; and to mitigate intolerances and hostility.

Yumiko and the members thanked him for an excellent presentation and broad overview.

**Adjournment:**

- **A motion was made by Yumiko Mishima to adjourn the meeting and seconded by Karen Positan. The motion was unanimously carried.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Karen Positan and Yumiko Mishima.**