

## Meeting of New Jersey Human Relations Council

November 28, 2018

The meeting of the New Jersey Human Relations Council was held on November 28, 2018 10:00 a.m. at the Hughes Justice Complex, 25 Market Street, Fifth Floor, West Wing, Trenton, New Jersey 08625.

HRC Council members and guests in attendance were: Ashton Burrell, Chairman, Yumiko Mishma, Vice Chairwoman, Karen Positan, Treasurer. Also in attendance were Reginald Bledsoe, Clark Coe, Phil Freeman, Valerie Gurba, Tonya Hopson, Jennie Lamon, Darlene Hicks, Rowena Madden, Elizabeth Parchment, Joe Santagata, Jennifer Stonerod, and Bryn Whittle.

Advisory Board members and guests in attendance were: Reisa Sweet, Chairwoman, Pauline Bey, Gladys Redd, and John Wenz.

The meeting was started by Phil Freeman who acted as temporary Chairman. He asked for nominations of officers. He explained the officers must be chosen from the public members of the Council. First nomination was for Chairperson. There were two nominations: Dr. Paula Rodriguez-Rust and Ashton Burrell. Ashton Burrell was elected. Yumiko Mishima was nominated and elected as Vice Chair. There were no nominations for Secretary and so the filling of that position was postponed until next meeting. Karen Positan was nominated and elected as Treasurer.

After the election the meeting was turned over to Ashton who began the agenda and starting with introductions of those present:

*Ashton Burrell, John Wenz, Joseph Santagata, Jennifer Stonerod, Joanne Romelson, Tonya Hopson, Bryn Whittle, Yumiko Mishma, Reisa Sweet, Pauline Bey, Gladys Redd, Clark Coe, Reginald Bledsoe, Elizabeth Parchment, Rowena Madden, Jennie Lamon, Valerie Gurba, Phil Freeman.*

**Chairperson's Report:** Ashton invited people to contact him about any initiatives they were making so that everyone could be made aware of them. This is also true of those willing to volunteer for projects. Ashton reported on one of his initiatives, Operation 100, a project with Spring Lake, North Carolina, affected by Hurricane Florence. He will be heading there with 100 toys December 21-23 to make a holiday possible for 25 families.

**Committee Reports:** There were no reports but Phil Freeman suggested a review of the bylaws to make sure everyone understands the mission. The Policy Records committee has approved an attendance policy; a proxy system is in place. The proxy system was instituted because of some difficulties they have

had getting a quorum. Any public member can designate a proxy who can vote in their absence.

There is need for an auditing of the membership list.

There was a question about the role of the Advisory Committee. Ashton read the sheet that had been given out to the members. There was a discussion about the committee which meets a half hour before the Human Relations Council. There are reports about what each member is doing in their county.

Next was a discussion of the sub-committees only three of which are active: Education, Housing, and Community Outreach. Other sub-committees are Law Enforcement, Community Relations, Crisis Intervention, Policy and Reports Committee, Human Relations Committee and Liaison Committee. Housing will be increasingly high profile in this administration. It was agreed the sub-committees need to be reviewed.

**Advisory Board Report:** Report from Ocean County Human relations on the influx of Orthodox Community to study at the Lakewood yeshiva, one of the largest in the world. There have been meetings with the clergy and police departments where they have talked about concerns. A big initiative with religious groups is called "Love Your Neighbor" focusing on how free speech becomes hate speech which then can become bias crime.

**New Business:** Formation of new committees.

**Discussion of Proposed Topics for Annual Conference:** There was a report at the last meeting. There is no longer a budget for the conference. The committee requested money from Administrative Support which provided \$250. About 130 people attended the November conference. The topic was Police and Community Relations. Generally Council decides what issue it would like to concentrate on. It generally is in May. At the last conference there was a survey which asked for recommendations for the next conference. The suggestions were Racism, Implicit Bias, Cultural Competence, LQBT Issues, Women's Issues and Mass Incarceration. there was a discussion about Mass Incarceration, Hate Crimes and safety of students from elementary to college.

**Minutes:** It was suggested everyone read the copy they were given. The minutes were approved.

**New Business:** Report of State Commemoration Commission Celebration of Martin Luther King's Birthday on January 20. The theme will be Economic Empowerment and Economic Justice with reference to Dr, King's Poor People Campaign. Speaker being approved on various levels. It would have been his 90th birthday this year. Does the Council want to be a named partner? The

Council indicated yes. There also is a website with all the commemorations by the Department of State.

**Public Comments:** Mention of Two Programs. Suggested that there be a list of legislative actions appropriate to the Council.

Meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted, Ashton Burrell.