

**NEW JERSEY HUMAN RELATIONS COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING
November 14, 2012**

The regular meeting of the New Jersey Human Relations Council was held on November 14, 2012, at the Richard J. Hughes Justice Complex, Market Street, Trenton, New Jersey. Chairperson Jim Peeler called the meeting to order at 10:17 a.m.

Those serving on the Council in attendance were the following: DAG Hester Agudosi, Assemblywoman Mary Pat Angelini, Mr. Tawfiq Barqawi, Mr. Bobby Battle, Mr. Richard Biolsi, Ms. Kay Delp, Ms. Gabrielle Gallagher, Major (Ret.) Wendy Galloway, Mr. Ed Haas, Ms. Renee Herron-McKithen, Ms. Jacqui Greadington, Chairman Jim Peeler, Det. Robin Powell, Rabbi Morton Rosenthal, Mr. Craig Sashihara, Mr. Chuck Stein, Sgt. Greg Williams and Ms. Holly Lees, Administrative Support for PS&CB.

Those serving on the Advisory Board in attendance were the following: Ms. Melisha Anderson Ruiz, Mr. Larry James, Mr. Corbett Klein, Ms. Yumiko Mishima, Ms. Karen Positan, Dr. Joan Rivitz, Chair of Advisory Board, Ms. Felicia Smith, Ms. Reisa Sweet and Brett Waters.

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

All assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Open Public Meeting Act Statement

Chairperson Peeler reviewed the statement that pursuant to the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et. seq., notice of the meeting was filed with the Secretary of State, the *Asbury Park Press*, *The Times*, *The Courier Post*, *The Star-Ledger* and posted in the Office of the Attorney General.

Reading of Mission Statement

Chairperson Peeler reviewed the Mission Statement: "The purpose of the New Jersey Human Relations Council shall be to promote prejudice reduction, education and address the problems of bias and violent acts based on the victim's race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation gender or disability."

Introductions

Council, Advisory Board members and guests introduced themselves, and briefly told of their affiliations.

Minutes

Chairperson Peeler advised minutes of September 19, 2012 meetings would be posted to the NJHRC web page.

Meeting Presentation

- *N.J. Law Against Discrimination (LAD) and Bullying: An Overview for the NJ Human Relations Council.*
Presented by DAG Edward H. Haas, Division on Civil Rights
 - Craig Sashihara, Director, Division on Civil Rights was asked by Rabbi Morton Rosenthal if he believed that the LAD should be expanded to make it illegal for an employer to discriminate against job applicants based on a prior felony conviction. Director Sashihara said that his opinion was irrelevant because as a sworn member of the executive branch his role was to enforce the law. However, he said that his personal opinion and he emphasized that he was not speaking on behalf of the NJ Attorney General or in his professional position as Director of the Division on Civil Rights that it was not unreasonable to consider an applicant's felony history when weighing competing job applicants. Mr. Sashihara said that he did support re-entry programs, but noted that a person's decision to commit a felony was not an "immutable characteristic" like someone's race, gender, or sexual orientation.
 - Jacqui Greadington, NJEA, addressed teacher's difficulty with distinguishing between what is truly bullying.
 - It has difficult to distinguish between actual bullying incidents and just normal life
 - There is an overkill of reporting of incidents that are just normal life
 - Chuck Stein, NJ Principal & Supervisors Association, further addressed the bullying issue by stating
 - It is more than overwhelming for teachers, and principals
 - It appears that most have taken the stance to do more than less to protect themselves and their schools/districts

- Assemblywoman Angelini, District 11
 - Prime sponsor of the Anti-Bullying Legislation
 - Overwhelmingly feels as if common sense regarding these matters has “gone out the window.”

Chairperson’s Report

- Chairman Peeler opened meeting at 10:17 a.m.
- Encouraged attendees to promote consistent attendance and promote attendance by others.
- This year as the State Human Relations Council Chairman Peeler would like to see a great deal of advancement in getting the NJHRC name out in the communities.
- The emphasis this year will be the children of incarcerated parents.
- Chairman Peeler is working on the HRC Mission Statement and duties of Council members. Mission Statement will incorporate the Legislation that created the NJ HRC.

OTHER BUSINESS:

- Traffic and Parking were an issue, again. Holly to speak with SSgt. Kellam and Guard Chris regarding bi-monthly meeting parking.
- Director Craig Sashihara, Division on Civil Rights announced that effective immediately DCR will be charged with the oversight of the NJ HRC.
 - Holly will assist with the transfer of the Council
 - Holly will train the incoming support staff regarding the Council’s “moving parts”
 - The Council and Advisory Board presented SDAG Hester Agudosi with a plaque of appreciation
 - The Council and Advisory Board presented Holly Lees with flowers
- Jacqui Greadington, NJEA, requested information regarding exactly what the NJ HRC is charged with.
- Rabbi Morton Rosenthal questioned and suggested that new members/designees of the Council receive some kind of an orientation. Agreed by all attendees that this has been lacking.
- Rabbi Morton Rosenthal also addressed the issue of the HRC’s continued focus regarding the 16th Annual Conference and the gross inefficiencies reported in the New York Times regarding the re-entry issues in the last couple weeks.
 - Suggested the Council move on 2-fronts
 - Transition Places
 - Families of incarcerated persons and ex-offenders
 - Believes the Council needs a structured focus
 - Suggested someone from Department of Justice be invited to attend a meeting to speak
- Wendy Galloway, Secretary of State
 - There is a Donations Management Center being developed to assist with the Sandy Relief Effort. Information may be found at:
 - www.nj.gov (New Jersey Government)
 - www.njsp.org (New Jersey State Police)
 - www.state.nj.us/state (Department of State)
 - <http://www.ochungerrelief.org/> (Ocean County Hunger Relief)
 - www.211.org (Mental Health efforts & human services related)
 - Governor’s office will proceed with their Annual Coat and Toy Drive
 - January 12, 2013 at the Trenton War Memorial there will be a Martin Luther King Commemoration event.
 - Consent Decree
 - NJSP lead the nation on ending racial profiling
 - The Consent Decree was lifted after 10-years
 - COLEA certifies the function and training of the NJSP
 - The Bureau Chief of the Office of Professional Standards, NJSP, should be invited to speak to the NJ HRC.
- Dr. Joan Rivitz received the American Coalition on Diversity Humanitarian Award.

Hester Agudosi:

- Hester reviewed the process of voting for the Election of Officers.
 - Ballots were distributed to Council Members/Designees
 - Ballots were retrieved
 - Ballots were tallied, outside of the room, by Holly Lees
 - Holly certified the tally of the votes, charted same and provided results
- Election results announced
 - Slate won as presented without opposition
 - Chair Jim Peeler – Accepted Appointment
 - Vice-Chair Tawfiq Barqawi – Accepted Appointment
 - Secretary Richard Biolsi – Accepted Appointment
 - Treasurer – No Move Forward

Committee Reports ~ No Reports

Advisory Board:

- Advisory Board recommends the focus project for next year to be Human Trafficking.
 - Cape May County HRC (Felicia Smith):
 - Trying to be more visible in the County
 - Have been having panel discussions regarding Bias Crimes and Child Abuse
 - January 2013 there is a Prescription Drug Conference planned, will offer CE credits for attendees.
 - Ocean County HRC (Reisa Sweet):
 - Working with Lakewood regarding KidsBridge
 - Requires 3-year commitment
 - Starting program with intermediate and high schools.
 - Camden County HRC (Larry James):
 - Emphasis on what is happening with families of incarcerated parents
 - Robert Johnson, has been out of prison for 1 ½ years, has given a lecture regarding his insight on the real life issues of ex-offenders returning to the family and community. (Suggested he be invited to speak to the NJHRC at January's meeting)
 - Mercer County HRC (Corbett Klein):
 - Trenton Mission – Working with international program to help make change in peoples lives to regain their self confidence.
 - Pamphlet about homeless persons being able to vote
 - Cumberland County HRC (Kay Delp):
 - County jail does not have a GED Program.
 - Able to locate federal funding for teachers
 - Will roll out program in either December 2012 or January 2013
 - Able to secure volunteers for program also

Announcements

Next Meeting Date: January 16, 2013

Meeting adjourned at 12:08 p.m. by Chairman Jim Peeler

Motion to conclude by Hester Agudosi, second adjournment motion by Tawfiq Barqawi

Respectfully submitted,
Holly A. Lees