

Human Rights Commission
Monday, November 1, 2010 Meeting Summary
Esther Howland Chamber, Worcester City Hall, revised

Present: Cheryl Pope, Chair; Eduardo Rivera, Vice Chair; Mable Millner, Clerk; Kathy Gervais, Trin Huynh, Edward Kwiyp, Cara Lisa Berg Powers, Edward G. Robinson

Unable to Attend: Maria Florez

Members of the Public: Herbert S. Cremer, Gordon and Gwen Davis, Bob Dube

Staff: Fran Manocchio, Ines Beron, Yung Phan

Meeting called to order by Chairperson Pope at 6:02 PM.

1. October meeting summary accepted with one change. Kathy Gervais was present.
2. Appreciation for Yung Phan. Yung served as part-time Southeast Asian Outreach Worker for the past 5 years. Commissioners expressed their appreciation for her work and accomplishments. Yung expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to learn from Commissioners and staff.
3. Old Business:
 - a. “Know Your Rights When Stopped by the Police”: David Moore, City Solicitor, approved language.
 - b. Update on Liveries: Eduardo Rivera reported that there are two new services operating: MTC, an African owned company, and Nicko Limo, another Latino company. There appears to be overwhelming need for services and Worcester Police Department is working cooperatively with the new companies.
 - c. Arizona Law/Immigration Issues: Gordon Davis from We The People, requested that the Human Rights Commission develop a statement against the AZ law which has been labeled a legal version of racial profiling. It has been reported that 13 other states are looking at similar legislation. The ACLU and the U.S. Department of Justice are suing the state of Arizona regarding this law. On behalf of We The People, Mr. Davis asked the HRC:
 - i. To condemn this type of legislation. Being an undocumented person is not a criminal offense; it is a civil offense.
 - ii. To write a letter for support for ACLU’s court cases.

Cara Berg Powers raised a question about “Secure Cities”, the opposite of “Sanctuary Cities”. She heard that Spencer and Holden may be “secure” towns. Fran will do some research on the topic. Cara wondered about state legislation that authorized an anonymous hotline to report undocumented people. Further discussion; Commissioners suggested that the Office of Human Rights and Disabilities invite the Chief of Police, State Senators Chandler and Moore and Attorney Randy Feldman to an upcoming meeting (January or February) to discuss these topics.

- d. December 10th Program: Will devote most of December's Commission meeting to details of the program which includes the Eleanor T. Hawley Awards and a panel discussion on employment rights and discrimination.
- e. Southeast Asian Outreach Worker Position: No news yet on filling position.
- f. Social Justice Roundtable: Next meeting on Thursday, November 18, 2010 at the YWCA.

4. New Business

- a. New Materials: Eduardo and Cara will work on new brochure/materials in January.
- b. Liveries Bill of Rights: Eduardo would like Commissioners to work on Bill of Rights for livery/taxi patrons.
- c. Police Training: Cara asked that we have representatives from Worcester Police Department discuss their policies and protocols regarding restraints. We will invite WPD to a future meeting.
- d. Cheryl reviewed her list of "unfinished business" in light of her term expiring in April 2011:
 - Response to Arizona Law
 - Letter to City Manager regarding move back to City Hall (completed)
 - Succession Plan for New Chairperson
 - Brochure and Other Materials
 - Special Event Planning (December 2010 Event)
 - What To Do When Stopped by the Police Cards and Educational Forums
 - Public Hearings

Discussion: Cara posed the idea of a retreat/additional meeting to provide full background. Cheryl Pope asked Commissioners to consider Cara's request.

5. Other Business: None

6. Director's Report:

- a. Kareem Abdul-Jaber Event: It was an extraordinary event at the Hanover Theatre on October 17, 2010. Fran, Mable and Cara attended; all learned a lot from his excellent presentation and interested question and answer period. He noted many parallels in the struggles between Blacks and Jews. There was a packed and mixed audience.
- b. November 17, 2010 Educational Forum: Reminder about the educational forum on bias and hate that will take place at the YWCA, sponsored by the City Manager's Community Coalition on Bias and Hate. Panelist include: Ted Merritt, U.S. Assistant Attorney with the Department of Justice, Maura Healey, Office of the Attorney General, Ed Karcasinas, Office of the District Attorney and Ed McGinn, Worcester Police Department. Mable Millner, Chair of the Community Coalition, will serve as Moderator. Kathy Gervais and Ed Robinson will assist with registration.

- c. ADL's Annual Community Conference: Fran and Margaret Hurley from the Attorney General's Office attended the ADL's annual Community Conference for "No Place for Hate" communities on October 28, 2010. The major focus was on bullying with a PowerPoint Presentation on the new state legislation. ADL has programs and materials available.
- d. Annual Goals and Accomplishments: City Council reviewed the combined document, Annual Goals and Accomplishments, for the Office of Human Rights and Disabilities, at the October 19, 2010 meeting. Report was distributed to Commissioners.

7. Public Comment:

- a. Herb Cremer raised concerns about bullying. He requests that the HRC have a sub-committee on bullying. He noted that the Shrewsbury School Board invited graduated to discuss bullying in schools. He expressed concern about the state law which does not penalize teachers if they do not report bullying. He further noted the importance of mentors/peer supports for students with disabilities who are often isolated and have social challenges.
Brief discussion regarding peer mediation/peer support programs. Ed Robinson wondered about a wrist band (like silly bands) that have been used in Great Britain. Fran reported that the Center for Nonviolent Solutions in Worcester will conduct conflict mediation training in the Spring and are doing some work with Worcester Public Schools. Bob Dube noted that there was an active peer mediation program in Worcester Public Schools in the past.
Eduardo Rivera inquired: "Can we develop a pilot program for a school and then work on other schools?" Cheryl Pope noted that this is a questions for the Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Melinda Boone. Bob Dube also noted that the anti-bullying law has several unfunded mandates.
- b. Mr. Cremer does not feel that a response to Arizona immigration law fits the mission statement of the Worcester HRC.

Meeting adjourned at 7:55 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Fran Manocchio
Director, Office of Human Rights and Disabilities

December 3, 2010