

Chairperson
Edward G. Robinson

Vice-Chair
Jeremy Fontain

Clerk
Julie Feeney



**City of Worcester
Human Rights Commission**

Members:
Cara Berg Powers
Harry Danso
Kathleen Gervais
Edward Kwiypup
Eduardo Rivera
Barbara Zerillo

Meeting Summary for April 7, 2014
Worcester City Hall, Esther Howland Chamber

Members Present: Jeremy Fontain, Harry Danso, Edward G. Robinson, Barbara Zerillo, Kathleen Gervais, Cara Berg Powers

Members Absent: Edward Kwiypup, Eduardo Rivera, Julie Feeney

Staff: Jayna Turчек, Director of Human Rights & Disabilities

1. Call to Order:

There being a quorum the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

2. Introductions:

Commissioners introduced themselves.

3. Approval of December 2nd, 2013 meeting minutes:

The Commission unanimously voted to approve the minutes as written.

4. Old Business:

a) Youth Essay and Poster Contest: Vice-Chair Jeremy Fontain shared posters submitted by students at the Grafton Street School. Commissioners decided the deadline for the contest will be mid-may and finalize the contest in June. Jeremy Fontain will complete the poster contest guidelines and Director Turчек will share announcement with schools. Cara Berg Powers suggested opening it to all grade levels 1-12. Director Turчек will create certificates for Gold, Silver and Bronze winners for contest.

5. Championing a Cause – a discussion on future Commission Projects:

Chairperson Edward G. Robinson suggested commissioners find one cause to champion while on the commission. Commissioners agreed to come prepared to share what cause they have selected to champion by next month.



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6. The Human Rights Commission Then and Now: A Conversation with former Human Rights Commissioner and current City Manager Edward M. Augustus, Jr.

City Manager Edward M. Augustus, Jr. met with commissioners, answered questions and discussed goals for the upcoming year related to the commission which included working to increase the Human Rights Campaign equality ranking for the City of Worcester to 100% by Worcester Pride in September 2014. The City Manager was asked what his greatest achievement was while on the Human Rights Commission and responded that it was working together to create the Eleanor Hawley Human Rights Award. In response to where he sees the city going the City Manager focused on embracing who we are as a city and the diversity and opportunities in the community. In response to what the goals and priorities should be for our commission, he responded that the goal of the committee is to make people know that if they have not been treated well that there is a way to have their voice heard with an additional focus on prevention and education. The City Manager encouraged commissioners to get out into the community and listen and to think outside of the box, survey communities and have experts comes in.

7. Commissioners' Reports: Edward G Robinson stated that the Worcester Policy Department now has a LGBTQ Community Liaison, Lt. Richard Bates. He and Lt. Bates attended meetings with: PFLAG, Worcester Pride, Pastor Judy from the Hadwen Church that represents the LGBTQ Asylum Taskforce and SWAGLY. Cara Berg Powers attended the Peace Park Earth Day Cleanup, which is a social and civic group, and Veg Fest. The Worcester Youth Center is working on action projects – videos and is coming up on their 25th anniversary. Shepard King Crime Watch Meeting discussed an increase in police walking, new recruits and motorcycles added to that area, cameras in stores and shot spotter, a gunshot detection system used in several areas. Kathy Gervais attended the Women of Consequence Award ceremony hosted by the Advisory Committee on the Status of Women. Jeremy Fontaine attended the Worcester Youth Center for an event.

8. Location of Next Meeting (May 5th, 2014): City Hall

9. Public Comment:

Scott Ricker, City resident and access advocate, asked if the Human Rights Commission represented individuals with disabilities. Several commissioners responded with a description of the work and scope of the Commission, which does include individuals with disabilities. Scott Ricker asked if the Human Rights Commission was sent an architectural access complaint. Commissioners responded that this has not been brought before them.

10. Adjournment:

Cara Berg Powers motioned to adjourn.