

Michael V. O'Brien  
City Manager



CITY OF WORCESTER

Human Rights Commission  
Meeting Summary  
Monday, June 4, 2012, 6pm  
Worcester City Hall, Conference Room 401

**Members Present:** Edward Robinson, Harry Danso, Kathleen Gervais, Cara Berg Powers, Mable Millner, Jeffrey Miller.

**Members Absent:** Chairman Eduardo Rivera, Udeme Ukpong, Edward Kwiyup.

**Staff:** Jayna Turchek, Director of the Office of Human Rights and Disabilities

There being a quorum the Clerk, Jeffrey Miller, called the meeting to order at 6:20pm. (Cara Berg Powers arrived after the meeting began).

Commission members and members of public introduced themselves and Clerk reviewed agenda.

**Minutes:**

On a motion that was duly made and seconded, the Commission voted to approve the meeting minutes from the May 7, 2012 meeting as written, by a vote 5-0-0. (Cara Berg Powers arrived after the vote was taken).

**New Business:**

Calendar scheduling

After a motion, and duly seconded, the commission voted 5-0-0 to prioritize the “new” and “old” business and insert into the planning calendar.

After a motion that was duly seconded, the commission voted 5-0-0 to place the following as “first priority” in the planning calendar:

- (a) Know Your Rights
- (b) Youth and Human Rights
- (c) Bi Annual E. Hawley Award Ceremony

(6:50pm Cara Berg Powers arrived and assumed the role of presiding of the meeting, and the Clerk was relieved of the duty).

After a motion that was duly seconded, the commission voted 6-0-0 to insert a comment section in the planning calendar, to state the current status of each item.

Jayna Turchek proposed that the planning calendar be attached to the minutes, and all of the present commissioners agreed.

Annual HRC Report

Cara Berg Powers volunteered to work with Jayna Turchek to put the Annual HRC Report together. A motion was set forth and duly seconded, and voted upon 6-0-0.



### HRC commitment to antiracism

This topic was briefly discussed as to its purpose. It was proposed that the Commissioners receive training in this area to provide the Commissioners with the necessary tools to help others and to supplement their understanding of structural racism and anti-racism work. Jayna Turcek shared her knowledge of different agencies that offer this type of training, and Mable Millner was considered a resource due to her knowledge, skill and training in this area as well. Mable Millner will reach out to other trainers and report back on possible trainings. Jayna Turcek will also investigate further and report her findings at the next meeting.

It was discussed that the educational materials currently under development for the Youth Human Rights Certificate program incorporate a commitment to anti-racism. Some discussion on how to reinforce this message throughout the City, tabled for further discussion.

It was motioned that the HRC receive anti-racism training, (the specifics to be further decided), and the motion was duly seconded. A vote was taken, and the motion was allowed. (6-0-0).

### **Old Business:**

#### Bi Annual E. Hawley Award

The Commission discussed an appropriate time to hold the event, and the Commissioners agree to hold the event in the evening, Monday December 10, 2012, from 6:00pm to 8:00pm.

Other items to be decided are the “Topic of the Panel”, and the possibility of granting a second award, the Thurgood Marshall Essay Contest.

The Commission discussed the possibly of creating and showing a short video presentation. Cara Berg Powers offered to provide the equipment and training to create such a video along with the Mayor’s Youth Council. Cara Berg Powers requested that the Commissioners come to the next meeting with a “Top Five” list of suggestions.

Harry Danso offered to help, and provide cultural dancing, and music, if requested. It was proposed to have the entertainment provided by youths if possible.

A Bi-annual E. Hawley Award Sub-committee was formed: Harry Danso, Cara Berg Powers, and Mable Miller. This sub-committee will work on putting the award event together.

### Youth and Human Rights

The sub-committee met prior to the Human Rights Commission meeting.

Below is the summary as reported in the general meeting:

There were three members out of four were present. (Eduardo Rivera was absent), and the meeting was called to order, by Jeffrey Miller at approximately 5:45pm.

An introduction letter to the Center for Nonviolent Solutions was written by Jeffrey Miller and was brought to the sub-committee for review and acceptance. Jayna Turcek had informed the sub-committee that she had already made contact with the Center for Nonviolent Solutions. After this information, the sub-committee agreed that the letter needed to be re-drafted. Jeffrey Miller will draft another letter. The letter is going to address a request for a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between HRC and the Center for Nonviolent Solutions.

Jeffrey Miller presented the proposed table of contents of the new Youth and Human Rights lesson plan. It was motioned and duly seconded that the table of contents remain as is, with the exception of changing a question mark to an exclamation point on the final chapter.

Kathleen Gervais volunteered to write the sub-headings for Chapter 1.  
Edward Robinson volunteered to write the sub-headings for Chapter 2.  
Jeffrey Miller volunteered to write the sub-headings for Chapter 3.  
(The sub-headings for the Chapters will be brought to the next monthly meeting for review, and acceptance by the sub-committee).

The sub-committee will meet again, 15 minutes prior to the July 2<sup>nd</sup> HRC meeting.  
After a duly seconded motion, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:05pm.

#### Foreclosure Update

The sub-committee did not have an opportunity to meet in the month of May, and the sub-committee members scheduled a meeting for June 14<sup>th</sup> at 6pm at the Pleasant Street Neighborhood Network Center, and will report to the Commission at the next Human Rights Commission meeting.

#### Know Your Rights / Voting Rights

The Commission agreed to wait for the report from the Chair, Eduardo Rivera, regarding the Know your Rights brochure. There was a brief discussion about including voting rights in with this brochure and training. The commission requested further information regarding what voting rights information consists of prior to making a decision to combine it with the proposed Know Your Rights program.

It was suggested that the Know your Rights presentation be recorded at City Hall, and posted online for the public to access. The Commission tabled decision to when the Chair, Eduardo Rivera is present.

#### **Commissioners District Report:**

##### **Office of Human Rights Director's Report:**

Jayna Turcek announced some important days in the coming month that are relevant to Human Rights.

Loving Day, June 12, (celebrating the freedom of interracial marriage in the U.S.)

Juneteenth, June 19, (honoring the day when slaves in Texas and Louisiana heard they were free)

Gay Pride Day, June 24, 2012

Jayna Turcek passed along information on the Annual Attorney General's Civil Rights Conference on June 26, 2012, that is open for registration and free of charge and encouraged HRC members to attend if possible.

Also, the City's Bias and Hate Coalition will co-sponsor a presentation by the Lee Hirsch, Director of the movie "Bully" at Tuckerman Hall on Sunday October 14th, at 4:00pm. The HRC is invited to co-sponsor.

Jayna Turcek announced that she will be a full time employee starting July 1, 2012 and thanked the Commission for its hard work and lobbying efforts to have the City Manager reinstate the position.

A Human Rights Commission complaint was received regarding the SMOC Triage Center, 701 Main Street. The complaint is being handled by staff and staff have visited the facility.

#### **Location of Next Meeting:**

The Commission agreed to leave the location of the next meeting up to Jayna Turcek to arrange. The meeting will be held in one of the previously discussed locations.

**Public Comment:**

A member of the public commented that he was very pleased with the Youth and Human Rights Subcommittee's table of contents and the work geared toward the youth of Worcester. The member also made a question as to whether the sub-committees must consist of HRC members only. Jayna Turchek stated that subcommittee members are made up of Commission members. All meetings are open to the public and participation is welcomed.

**Adjournment:**

On a motion that was duly made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 8:15PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jeffrey Miller, Clerk

**Next Meeting**  
**Monday, July 2nd, 2012**  
**6:00 PM – 8:00 PM**

**Location: Worcester Historical Museum- Auditorium, 30 Elm St Worcester, MA 01609**

**City of Worcester  
Human Rights Commission**

**Planning Calendar**

**1<sup>st</sup> Quarter (July-September)**

1. Know Your Rights
2. Youth and Human Rights
3. Bi Annual E. Hawley Award Ceremony

**2nd Quarter (October-December)**

**3rd Quarter (January-March)**

**4<sup>th</sup> Quarter (April-June)**