

Chairperson
Eduardo Rivera

Vice-Chair
Cara Berg Powers

Clerk
Jeffrey Miller



**City of Worcester
Human Rights Commission**

Members:
Harry Danso
Kathleen Gervais
Edward Kwiyp
Mable Millner
Edward G. Robinson
Udeme Ukpung

**Meeting Summary
Monday, August 13, 2012
6:00pm to 8:00pm**

YWCA – Member’s Lounge 1 Salem Square, Worcester, Ma. 01608

Members Present: Cara Berg Powers, Harry Danso, Edward Kwiyp, Jeffrey Miller, Mable Millner, Eduardo Rivera, & Edward Robinson

Members Absent: Katherine Gervais & Udeme Ukpung

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

1. Call to Order:

There being a quorum Eduardo Rivera called the meeting to order at 6:01pm.

2. Introductions:

The Commission introduced themselves. (Jeffrey Miller arrived after the minutes were approved and orally reviewed the Agenda.)

3. Approval of June 4, 2012 Minutes:

On a motion that was duly made and seconded, the Commission voted to approve the meeting minutes from the June 4, 2012 meeting as written, by a vote of 6 to 0. (Jeffrey Miller arrived after the vote was taken).

4. New Business:

(a) Southeast Asian Community Center (SEAC) Partnership- the chair asked for suggestions for outreach

Some of the suggestions are as follows:

- Use know your right to incorporate introduction
- Invitation to the commission meeting – Jayna Turчек will extend an invitation to the new Executive Director of SEAC to come to speak at a future meeting.

(b)Calendar scheduling

Nothing new to add



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5. New Business:

(a) WIC

Eduardo Rivera, attended two WIC meetings at Centro las Americas and SEAC. He introduced himself and presented on the work of the Commission.

Comment from the public:

Gordon Davis, member of WIC, made a request to the Commission to inquire what is the future of the City-wide immigrant forums that were instituted by former Mayor Joseph O'Brien. WIC is interested in taking the lead with or without the Commission if the Mayor's office will not continue the forums.

Jayna Turchek offered to speak to the former Mayor Joe O'Brien to see if they will be continued and how the Commission and/or WIC could support its continuation. (There was a motion, that was duly seconded)

(b) Annual HRC Report-

A draft of the Annual HRC Report was included in this meetings materials.

There was a motion to accept the draft as is, (with the addition of adding City Hall to the list of meeting places in April), and the motion was duly seconded.

(c) Bi Annual E. Hawley Award

Meeting did not take place last month due to lack of quorum.

Jayna Turchek suggested that the entire Commission take up the questions to be answered at the September meeting to avoid a time delay. (She suggested that the Office handle some of the administrative details.)

The HRC Chair, Eduardo Rivera, suggested that for next month's Commission meeting, the Sub-Committee will give an update, and provide agenda items to vote on.

The Director asked that any materials to be submitted for the meeting, be submitted one week prior to the meeting for distribution.

Items for this sub-committee that need to be decided for the next meeting are as follows:

- Age group for youth
- Program theme
- Event location

The next sub-committee's next meeting was scheduled for 4:00p.m., Sunday, August 19, 2012, at the Hogan Campus Center Room 109.

(d) Youth and Human Rights

Meeting did not take place this month due to a lack of quorum.

Will meet 15 minutes prior to the next Commission meeting.

(e) Foreclosure Update -

The sub-committee reports that there is no update, and that the sub-committee has not met.

Eduardo Rivera requests that the various sub-committees prepare the updates of their progress in a timely fashion in advance of the Commission meetings. Eduardo Rivera wants all subcommittees to designate a member to take notes, and submit sub-committee meeting minutes.

(f) Know Your Rights / Voting Rights

The event shall be held on October 1, 2012, from 6:00p.m., to 9:00 p.m.

Jayna Turchek is confirming panelists and location. Commission members offered suggestions for locations: YWCA, Worcester Historic Museum, and/or Worcester Youth Center

The format of the Know Your Rights / Voting Rights shall be as follows:

- 2 part forum- Know Your Rights will be from 6:00p.m., to 7:30p.m., then a panel on Voter Rights will speak from 8:00p.m., to 9:00p.m.
- 1st panel will consist of 4 panelist for a 1 hour presentation, followed by 15 minute Q&A
- A similar format will proceed regarding the Voting Rights portion of the presentation.

Jayna Turchek, drafted a “Save the Date” postcard. There was a motion to accept the postcards, with the exception that a change be made by adding “Voting Rights” to the content. This motion was duly seconded. Jayna Turchek will send out invitations and promotional materials.

The event will be video recorded and if possible available in closed caption format. Additionally, where possible the video will be translated into other languages.

6. Commissioner’s Report

Members attended the following community meetings and activities:

- Worcester World Cup
- PSNNC Neighborhood Fire Meeting
- City’s Youth Commission
- Webster Square Crime Watch
- Mill Street Crime Watch Meeting
- PFLAG Meeting
- Four Corners Crime Watch Meeting
- Worcester Immigrant Coalition
- Main South Neighborhood Revitalization & Stakeholders meeting
- City Council Standing Committee on Municipal Operations (relative to Liveries: tabled until 9/2012)

Edward Robinson informed the Commission that he secured a table outreach for the Worcester PRIDE, for September 15, 2012 12:00 p.m., to 6:00p.m.

7. Office of Human Rights Director’s Report:

(a) 3rd floor offices are set up: Human Rights & Disabilities Outreach Office is in room 303 and the Director’s office is in room 311. Please stop by.

(b) The Panhandling update submitted to Council by the City Manager was distributed for Commission members review. No comments at this time.

(c) WHA better life program- Last year E.D. Raymond Mariano- addressed the Commission on the new pilot program. Jayna Turchek has a followup meeting with Alex Corrales to discuss progress. The pilot program has 30 participating families. Participation is voluntary and participants receive an array of classes and counseling support including financial planning and access to savings accounts and employment assistance.

8. Location of Next Meeting:

The location for next month's meeting (Sept 10, 2012) has changed to: City Hall- Conference Room 401.

9. Public Comment:

Bil Gardiner, representative from WAFT, requested an update as to the status of the WAFT complaint. Mr. Gardiner was under the impression that someone from the Commission was to contact WAFT to provide information. The Commission decided to invite WAFT representatives to the next HRC meeting so that the Commission can explain their decision in lieu of their review of recommendations by the City's law department. The Commission has additional questions for WAFT and in addition to asking these questions will provide an opportunity to answer questions WAFT may have for the Commission. The HRC Chair will make WAFT part of next month's agenda, to make progress with regards to the requests made by WAFT of the Commission.

10. Adjournment:

On a motion that was duly made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 7:41PM.

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**City of Worcester
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Members:
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Edward G. Robinson
Udeme Ukpong

TO: Michael V. O'Brien, City Manager
FROM: Jayna Turчек, Director of Human Rights & Disabilities
DATE: August 16, 2012
RE: Human Rights Commission 2011-2012 Annual Report

Message from the Chair of the Human Rights Commission

The City of Worcester is proud to be a diverse city. In the five districts of our city, residents from all backgrounds live and work together. Worcester has always been a place where our residents live, work hard, shop and enjoy a wide variety of services and benefits. It is a place where our residents have an opportunity to live their dreams. This sense of promise and possibility has helped our city to become both an engine of growth and a beacon of hope for all those new and old who made Worcester their home.

Our city is a place of equal access and opportunity for all and the Human Rights Commission is committed to protecting the civil and human rights of everyone who visits, lives, or works in the five districts. Discrimination in the forms of "hate, bigotry and prejudices" simply has no place here. The City of Worcester Human Rights Ordinance ensures that everyone is "treated fairly."

The Human Rights Commission and the Office of Human Rights are a well balanced team dedicated to fostering a community of hope, where diversity, harmony and tolerance shine. This is achieved by educating the public about their rights and responsibilities and enlisting the aid of community groups and other organizations in developing and delivering programs that raise local awareness of human rights issues.

The City of Worcester Human Rights Commission has made vital contributions to our city. It is with pleasure that I invite you to learn more about the work and achievements of the Human Rights Commission in this 2011-2012 Annual Report.

Eduardo Rivera, Chair



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The work of the City of Worcester Human Rights Commission July 2011- June 2012

Reflecting on accomplishments in the last year

- This year marked a year of increased Commission engagement with the public (see Appendix of Community Activities)
- We took the Commission meetings to the community:
 - ✓ December 5: Worcester Youth Center, 326 Chandler Street
 - ✓ January 9: Friendly House Neighborhood Center, 36 Wall Street
 - ✓ February 6: Francis Perkins Library, 470 West Boylston Street
 - ✓ March 5: Pleasant Street Neighborhood Network Center, 301 Pleasant Street
 - ✓ April 2: Worcester City Hall, 455 Main Street
 - ✓ May 7th: Veterans' Inc, 69 Grove Street
- Provided time in monthly meeting agendas to hear from community groups in the City and their human rights work. The groups that presented were: the Worcester Anti-Foreclosure Team (WAFT), the Worcester Immigrant Coalition and the Center for Nonviolent Solutions.
- Increased communication and reporting regarding the work of the Office of Human Rights.
- With the assistance of the Office of Human Rights, the Commission now reviews quarterly reports from the Worcester Police Department's (WPD) Bureau of Professional Standards
- Effective communication between the Commission and Worcester Police Chief Gemme confirmed that the WPD would not pursue implementation of Secure Communities. (September 2011)
- Conducted an initial review of Worcester Housing Authority Pilot Project: A Better Life Project (October 2011)
- Advocated for the renewal of the City Manager's Homelessness Taskforce (November 2011).
- Participated in the nationwide Drop the "I" Word campaign to educate and encourage the City government and the public to use the word undocumented instead of illegal. In doing so, the Commission affirmed that no human being is illegal. (November 2011).
- Visited Fitchburg Human Rights Commission and Mayor Wong to mentor their fledgling Commission on Human Rights.
- Recommended revisions and updates to the City of Worcester Office of Human Rights Website adding the history of the Office and the Commission.
- Notable guests at Commission meetings included Mayor Joseph Petty and Councilor Sarai Rivera.
- Hosted the annual fair housing training during a Commission meeting. Training conducted by Leticia Medina-Richman, Staff Attorney at Community Legal Aid (June 2012)

Participation in Community Events and Outreach

- Loving Day Mayoral Proclamation (June 12)
- May Day Rally (May 1)
- Stand Against Racism Rally (April 27)
- Human Rights Day March and Rally (December 10)

Recommendations/Requests

- The Commission submits an ongoing request to all City Offices and Departments to seek advice and input from the Commission on how proposed and current policies impact human rights for all in the City of Worcester

Goals for Next Year

- Know Your Rights/Voting Rights Community Panel Presentation (October 1, 2012)
- Eleanor T. Hawley Human Rights Awards (December 10, 2012)
- Outreach and collaborate to support the work of the City Manager’s Youth Council and/or other youth leaders in the City and launch a Youth Certificate on Human Rights
- Develop partnership with the Center for Nonviolent Solutions
- Address ongoing concerns regarding local foreclosure practices and potential discriminatory impacts
- Encourage greater public participation in meetings and the work of the Commission
- Deepen commitment to anti-racism

APPENDIX OF COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

City Councilor Sarai Rivera’s office hours at Community Realty	Murray Avenue neighborhood meeting	Stand Against Racism morning lecture at YWCA, Community Stand Out on the Worcester Common, and Union Station event
Community Listening session held by the Worcester Police & Clergy Partnership	PACT meetings at the Pleasant Street Neighborhood Network Center	Worcester branch of the NAACP general meeting
Community Partnership at Claremont Academy	Pride Parade	Worcester Free School monthly teach-in on homelessness
Elm Park and Chandler parents meeting with Worcester Interfaith, Pleasant St. Network Center, and Christian Community Church	PFLAG meetings	
Fitchburg Human Rights Commission meeting	Meeting at Worcester Vocational High School	
Greater Hammond Heights neighborhood meeting	Quinsigamond Village crime watch meeting	
	Shepard Street crime watch	
	Shrewsbury Street crime watch meeting	

Michael V. O'Brien
City Manager



CITY OF WORCESTER

To: Worcester City Council
From: City Manager Michael V. O'Brien
Date: July 27, 2012
Re: Panhandling Update

Mr. Mayor and Members of City Council:

In response to the recommendations that I put forth for reducing the incidence of panhandling in the city, please be advised that beginning on Monday, July 30th we will begin the targeted outreach program in which a full-time dedicated outreach worker will be deployed to intersections, streets, sidewalks, etc. to assist individuals engaged in panhandling who may be in need of services.

It will be the responsibility of this outreach worker to engage the individual and determine if social services can be rendered to them so that they will no longer need to beg motorists for money or food. The outreach worker will conduct initial engagement, complete a service needs assessment, and connect individuals with community-based resources including other potential sources of financial support (such as job opportunities, food pantries, food stamps, fuel assistance, etc.). This individual will work collaboratively as part of the Greater Worcester Housing Connection Team, which provides access to a variety of resources, including medical care, shelter, food, mental health services, substance abuse resources, workforce development services and beyond. The City is fortunate in that we have nearly 100 community agencies and partners that provide these types of services ranging from shelter, case management, food, clothing, health care, detoxification and substance abuse resources, legal assistance, support groups, cash/rental assistance, employment and training, educational services, utility assistance and furniture donations.

The outreach worker will proactively seek out individuals engaged in panhandling and will also respond to reports of panhandling locations. We have set-up the City's Customer Service Center at 508-929-1300 for the public to report incidences of panhandling. The locations will be automatically sent to the outreach worker via text, phone call, and e-mail and the outreach worker on call will be deployed to the location to provide assistance. In addition, the Worcester Police Department route officers and City inspectors will assist in identifying locations. The Police Department will also notify Neighborhood Watch groups of this service.

The outreach worker will document the needs of the individual encountered and the types of intervention employed and will provide a report to the City's Transitional Housing Manager, absent confidential or identifying information in order to protect the individual's privacy rights. This tracking mechanism will enable the City to compile data on the instances of panhandling to



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fully understand the scope of the problem and best evaluate which interventions are successful and effective.

Initial reviews and cross checks with providers indicate that many of the known panhandlers and those who have recently spoken to the media and revealed names, etc. are currently receiving services, whether shelter, housing, clothing, food by the various agencies in our city. The outreach worker performs an important role in assessing panhandling and linking people with services, but it will also be incumbent upon the local social service community to assist by discouraging the practice of panhandling. In our community, Veterans Inc. has a written and enforced policy whereby those accessing services from its agency are prohibited from panhandling. This type of policy may need to be evaluated and implemented by other partnering agencies.

I intend to report back to City Council the scope of the problem, as defined by this outreach effort, within two months. This information will be critical in formulating next steps for how to address the problem and provide alternatives to the practice of panhandling.

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City of Worcester

HRC Subcommittee on Peer Mediation

Monday, August 13th, 2012

5:45 – 6:00 PM

Location: **YWCA –Members Lounge, 1 Salem Square, Worcester, MA 01608**

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of July 2nd minutes
3. Review lesson plan
4. Director's update regarding communication with Center for Non-Violent Solutions
5. Adjournment

Human Rights Commission (HRC)

Monthly Meeting – Monday, August 13th, 2012

6:00 – 8:00 PM

Location: **YWCA –Members Lounge, 1 Salem Square, Worcester, MA 01608**

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Introductions (Commission Members and Guests)
3. Approval of July 2nd, 2012 Meeting Minutes
4. New Business:
 - a) Southeast Asian Community Partnership
 - b) Calendar scheduling
5. Old Business:
 - a) Worcester Immigrant Coalition Update
 - b) Annual HRC Report
 - c) Bi Annual E. Hawley Award: Report from Subcommittee
 - d) Youth & Human Rights: Report from Subcommittee
 - e) Foreclosure Update: Report from Subcommittee
 - f) Know Your Rights / Voting Rights
6. Commissioners' Report
7. Office of Human Rights Director's Report
 - a) Office update
 - b) Update on Panhandling
 - c) WHA Better Life Program Update
8. Location of Next Meeting: City Hall – Levi Lincoln Room
9. Public Comment (3 minutes per individual)
10. Adjournment

The Human Rights Commission is dedicated to its service of safeguarding the civil liberties of all persons who live or work in Worcester. May the public kindly take notice to respect the order and decorum of the meeting. Please silence all cell phones and similar electronic devices. Refrain from speaking on cell phones or to others until recognized by the Chair that you have the floor.

