

## Advisory Committee on the Status of Women

Chantel Bethea, Chair  
Robin Currie, Vice Chair  
Sarah Gruhin  
Athena Haddon  
Heidi-Sue LeBoeuf  
Kathleen Linton  
Jennifer Madson  
Karen Pelletier  
Elizabeth Tomaszewski



CITY OF WORCESTER

## Human Rights Commission

Aaron Richman, Chair  
Cara Lisa Berg Powers, Vice Chair  
Lillie Williams  
Shawna Curran  
Harry Danso  
Kathleen Gervais  
Robyn Kennedy  
Shirley Konnah  
James (Ike) McBride

### Joint Commission Meeting of the Advisory Committee on the Status of Women & Human Rights Commission

Tuesday, June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015, 6:00pm  
Worcester City Hall, Levi Lincoln Chamber (3<sup>rd</sup> floor)

### Meeting Summary

**Members Present, Advisory Committee on the Status of Woman:** Chantel Bethea, Chair, Robin Currie, Vice Chair, Sarah Gruhin, Athena Haddon, Heidi-Sue LeBoeuf, Jennifer Madson, Karen Pelletier, Elizabeth Tomaszewski

**Members Absent:** Kathleen Linton

**Members Present, Human Rights Commission:** Aaron Richman, Chair, Robyn Kennedy, Shirley Konnah, Kathleen Gervais, James McBride, Lillie Williams

**Members Absent:** Harry Danso, Cara Lisa Berg Powers, Shawna Curran

**Guests:** Amarely Gutierrez Oliver, MS & Erik Garcia, MD

1. **Call to Order:** A quorum was established and the meeting was called to order at 6:05pm by Human Rights Commission Chair, Mr. Aaron Richman. The Chair welcomed the speakers from Worcester Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation, WAASE, Dr. Eric Garcia and Ms. Amarely Oliver. He then invited Ms. Amarely to open the conversation.
2. **Converstation with Worcester Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation, WAASE**  
Ms. Oliver began with a power-point presentation outlining the WAASE structure including the five working groups: Communications, Community Awareness and Advocacy, Supporting people with lived experience, Criminal Justice and Research, data & evaluation. This structure allows each group to work specifically on one goal, coming together in full membership meetings quarterly. Dr. Garcia opened his



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remarks by applauding the Worcester Police Department on their work in addressing the issues raised in the last Joint Commission meeting held with the Police Department in January. He stated that WAASE had made the most progress in their Criminal Justice goal focusing on ending demand. He explained more about the goals of community advocacy and supporting people with lived experience. To meet these goals WAASE supports improving access and addressing gaps in services. He introduced the Police Department's Lieutenant Paul Saucier, to give an update on Police efforts. Mr. Saucier reported on: increased arrests of Johns from sting operations, increased research into online trainings, weekly command meetings with all supervisors so that all departments are updated, coordination with the street outreach worker upon women's arrests, and making resource literature available and posting it. In conclusion Dr. Garcia noted the progress made in that services and limited housing is available, but said that much more remains to be done to secure more safe, transitional housing.

After the presentation, the floor was opened for questions and comments. Regarding the question about steering committee meetings, Ms. Oliver clarified that they are monthly. The Human Rights Chair thanked Lieutenant Saucier for the great progress and asked if the P.D. had partnered with community neighborhood groups. Working toward that goal, he said not yet, but that the weekly command meetings inform all the different levels of officers of ongoing efforts and goals. He also asked the presenters what the commissions could do to help, such as working on literature. Ms. Oliver explained that the communication group is working on a trifold, but that they could help through policy recommendations, by inviting WAASE to the table, hosting trainings, helping to obtain funding, and through education and awareness-raising such as at tabling events. Capt. Saucier, responded to another question, noting that three officers usually attend the WAASE meetings and share updates.

In response to a question about whether WAASE was aware of local daytime radio advertisements for dancers and if they were addressing it, Dr. Garcia responded that they initially are focusing on the most visible street prostitution, however they recognize areas of hotels, clubs and online sites, and said the hope is to develop a robust way to address this. Local radio stations and others need to be educated around these particular problems and many others that pertain to the woman. Initially WAASE is targeting the most visible street prostitution, but it is something the communications group might work on in future. Regarding awareness-raising in schools and colleges, Dr. Garcia responded that the subcommittees each have their immediate goals, and that they had not reached schools but were working on it. Responding to the question of what specific policies to recommend, Dr. Garcia noted that WAASE is currently working on policy to expunge the records of those with multiple arrests as this obstructs future employment and other opportunities. The Vice Chair of the ACSW commented that the ACSW would like to work with the Human Rights Commission on WAASE policy recommendations two, seven and eight (2. to facilitate Ray of Light trainings, 7. Post outreach workers' phone numbers in the booking room at the WPD, and 3. Coordinate with outreach worker to assist in the provision of services.) Presenters clarified that these are already implemented by the WPD.

When the question of racial breakdown of the Johns arose, Capt. Saucier explained that of the six Johns recently arrested, three were white and three were people of color, and that they respond to the call area where the crime is being committed and arrest those breaking the law. In response to a question about male exploitation, Dr. Garcia explained that a Clark student was working on that issue. Regarding educating Judges, there is already an effective forum for education and likely a WAASE representative would be welcome in that forum to disseminate information. When asked if online searches for trafficking was being done, Capt. Saucier responded that a colleague has recently obtained software and is working on this. In working with the youth Dr. Garcia responded that they don't have all the data which is currently being worked on, but that they have a capacity issue as well.

About funding, WAASE said it is looking at different funding streams. With only one outreach worker, Dr. Garcia noted that at least two more are needed as a priority but WAASE does not have an itemized budget for this and underlined the massive need for dedicated transitional housing. A Commissioner mentioned

that the Main South CDC was an organization that could possibly be a resource. When asked if there were specific recovery shelters, Dr. Garcia answered that some stable housing exists but it is limited.

**3. Public Comment**

One participant spoke of her experience with housing and stressed that it should be a safe, stable place for women suffering with trauma. The housing piece is critical.

**4. Adjournment** was at 7:00pm.