

Chairperson
Aaron Richman

Vice-chairperson
Cara Berg Powers

Clerk
Elizabeth O'Callahan



**City of Worcester
Human Rights Commission**

Members:
Lilian Chukwurah
Robyn Kennedy
Jose Medina Santos
Luis Portillo Reyes
Edward G. Robinson
Jacqueline Yang

**Monthly Meeting Summary – Monday, February 5th, 2018, 6pm
Worcester City Hall, 4th Floor, 455 Main St., Worcester, MA**

Members Present: Aaron Richman, Robyn Kennedy, Ed Robinson, Elizabeth O'Callahan, Jose Medina Santos, Jacqueline Yang, Lilian Chukwurah,

Members Absent: Luis Portillo Reyes, Cara Berg Powers

Staff Present: Jayna Turcek

1. Call to order and introductions

A quorum was established and Chairperson Aaron Richman called the meeting to order at 6:13pm. Commissioners introduced themselves. The Chairperson welcomed the Commissioners and those present.

2. Approval of January 22nd, 2018 meeting minutes

Commissioner Kennedy motioned to approve the minutes as written. Clerk O'Callahan seconded.

3. Old Business:

3A. Update and recommendations from the Mayor's Roundtable on Religious Freedom

Commissioner Santos and Director Turcek summarized the discussion from the recent Mayor's Roundtable on Religious Freedom event held on January 31st.

- Topic: How faith moves people and their work in the community
- Themes: Public service, community involvement, individual call to help one another
- Outcomes: Helpful in solidifying ground for future collaboration, received feedback on calendar

Religious leaders were asked for feedback on the Reference Calendar of Religious Observances- part of the Human Rights Observances Calendar- and how it could be utilized within the community

- Overall positive reception
- Digital format would be useful
- Sharing and seeking feedback from community will increase accuracy of local observance dates
- Opportunity to generate a web page that could be a place to source information, interfaith gatherings, assistance, call to actions, etc.



OFFICE OF HUMAN RIGHTS & DISABILITIES, CITY HALL ROOM 101
455 MAIN ST., WORCESTER, MA 01608
TELEPHONE (508) 799-8486 | FAX (508) 799-1218



- City Council will be receiving a proposal to create new calendar on new city website
 - Under development with assistance from IT
 - This is a separate calendar under HRC webpage linked to larger municipal calendar

Human Rights Observances calendar

- Contains two categories: religious observances, and civil rights observances & events
- PDF calendar to be finalized and possible to e/mail en masse - open to recommendations & input
- Potential interfacing with schools
 - Generated list can take burden off parents to excuse absences for religious observances
 - Who would see list of students? Privacy considerations must be taken into account

3B. Planning for April/May meeting on police community relations

For new commission members, Chairperson Richman summarized the nature of the Human Rights Commission's role in the police community relations and a brief history of its involvement over time:

- City Manager directive for quarterly BOPS reports to be prepared and sent to Commission.
- Past meetings with police chief, BOPS liaison, hosted WPD at Commission meetings

Commissioner Kennedy spoke on incarnation of race dialogues, first held 3 years ago. The city thought the commission could help with follow through on race dialogues

- Internally, police are also focused on addressing this issue under new leadership

Upcoming forum with Chief Sargent will focus on the current state of affairs and look ahead to the future

- Purpose of this evening's discussion: What is the type of work do we want to do? What specifically should the meeting focus on?

List of proposed topic areas:

- Public attitudes toward mounted unit
- Concerted effort to interest, involve, engage young men and women from diverse background, to get them interested and prepared for the exam in April 2019
- Level of diversity within WPD
- Body camera pilot program update
- Invite Chief to address concerns on federal movement within the Justice Department toward having police question citizenship status of those who report or witnesses a crime
- WPD Community Police Initiative is 11 years old
 - Have goals been met? Revision of document, new goals?
 - What are areas of significant improvement? How did they make them?
 - What challenges are they continuing to face? How are they targeting them?
 - How can the Human Rights Commission help?
- Director Turchek's list of topics:
 - Definition of hate crimes; reporting of 2017 statistics reported
 - A summary of 2017 BOPS completed cases
 - WPD Social media protocol on effective communication for positive and negative news
 - How can we bring in neighborhood meetings so we can present recommendations?
- May 7th - tentative meeting date; Director Turchek set up prep meeting with Chief Sargent to review agenda/requested content - Monday 4/30 at 9am

Proposals on Meeting Format/Preparedness:

- Utilize sign up for public comment; limit to 3 mins/person if necessary
- Preface the format of the meeting and clarify expectations
 - Announce any planned follow up events at the start of this forum?

- Provide resources to direct people with individual concerns: Neighborhood watch meetings, Contact information for each liaison, Contact Information for BOPS

3C. Discussion on future cultural/civil rights awareness days/events

Director Turchek asked commission members for feedback for a solidified list of commemorations & dates, and gave a list of upcoming events:

- March 8th: International Women's day, status for women
 - Keynote speaker: Dr. Mayor Spicer, new Mayor of Framingham
- National Consumer Rights Week - series of activities conducted by office
- April - Fair Housing Month; 50th Anniversary of Fair Housing Act
 - Potential Forum/Symposium; How CORI has created a barrier to housing
- Thinking ahead: 2018 is an on-year for HRC event in December. Human Rights Commission turns 50 years old in 2018

Other community events:

- February 14th - American Antiquarian society hosting a celebration of the 200th birthday of Frederick Douglass on 2/14
- March 6th - YMCA Alejandro Castillo, CEO of YWCA is keynote speaker on 3/6

4. New Business:

4A. Announcement: Freedom for Massachusetts call to action to protect full transgender equality in MA <https://www.freedommassachusetts.org/>

Commissioners heard a call to action regarding the ballot initiative to rollback public accommodations bill. Such a change would have a significant impact on the transgender community

- Potential commission role: Education campaign
 - Goal: Educate people on why the bill is discriminatory
- Officer McQueen - LGBT Liaison officer has spoken on this previously
 - Part of campaign could be inviting Officer McQueen back to speak to Commission
- For follow up: More information is needed, specifically regarding the wording.
 - Secretary of State provides booklet with exact wording, as well as pros and cons

5. Location of next meeting (March 5th, 2018): City Hall, Esther Howland Chamber

6. Adjournment at 8:05pm