

**Human Rights Commission
Meeting Summary – September 14, 2009**

Present:

Commissioners: Cheryl Pope, Chair; Eduardo Rivera, Vice Chair; Kathleen Gervais, Edward Kwiyp, Mable L. Millner, Edward G. Robinson

Unable to Attend: Maria Florez

Staff: Ines Beron, Yung Phan and Fran Manocchio

Guest: Martin Ebel, Commissioner, Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination
Michael Gilleberto, Dir. of Operations, Executive Office of the City Manager

Meeting called to order at 6:03 PM by Cheryl Pope, Chair.

1. Welcome and Introductions: Chairperson Pope welcomed all, especially to new Commissioner, Edward Kwiyp. Mr. Kwiyp shared that he serves as the human rights officer for a social service agency in North Worcester County.
2. Update on Move to City Hall and Fair Employment Ordinance:
 - a. Proposed Move to City Hall: Michael Gilleberto told Commissioners that a report went to City Council two weeks ago regarding moves to and within City Hall. He stated that the proposed move is not to the previously identified space, which may have led to two moves within City Hall in a relatively short timeframe. He has identified a potential alternative that is more suitable for the needs of the office (southeast end of the fourth floor).
 - b. Fair Employment Ordinance: The Fair Employment Ordinance went into effect on September 1st. There is a 90 day waiver for vendors to comply. Human Resources staff is available to active vendors if they need assistance; an email was sent to vendors from the Purchasing Dept.; we are working on a list of FAQs – frequently asked questions – to post on the city website; and, at the direction of the City Manager, Fran Manocchio will investigate any complaints.
3. Presentation by Martin Ebel, Commissioner, Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination: Chairman Medley, Commissioners Sunny George and Marty Ebel are attending Human Rights Commission meetings across the Commonwealth to share information and identify potential partnerships. Highlights of Commissioner Ebel's presentation:
 - MCAD has not been involved in a meaningful way with Human Rights Commissions across the state for too long.
 - Within the past 18 months, MCAD has a new Chairman (Malcolm Medley) and two new Commissioners. They are committed to reaching out to communities.
 - MCAD has 4 offices, required by state statute – main office in Boston, significant office in Springfield (12 employees), 1 person office in Worcester (senior investigator, committed for at least 1 year), new office in New Bedford (3 days/week).

- MCAD is charged with preventing and eradicating discrimination within protected categories, including the areas of employment, housing, education, public accommodations, genetic testing, mortgage lending, and credit.
- 80 - 85% of complaints received are employment related.
10% Housing, 10% public accommodations; small percentage – education and credit
- Initial complaint is conducted in person or in writing. MCAC would like to try videoconferencing. All complaints are reviewed by an attorney to check on jurisdiction and probable cause (see attached information).
- MCAD has three divisions: Complaints, Testing and Training.
- Fran Manocchio will follow-up with Becky Schuster, Director of Training, to learn more about the 5 day train-the-trainer programs. According to Commissioner Ebel, the fee can be waived or reduced for municipalities.
- Possible opportunities for partnership:
 - SEED: Students Educating to End Discrimination – undergraduate students
 - Training
 - Co-sharing Intakes – cross services
 - HRC may have a work share agreement (would require an attorney)

4. Presentations by Office of Human Rights and Disabilities Staff:

- a. Ines Beron – Hired in June 2009 as Housing Discrimination Intake Worker. Ines is conducting community outreach, completing intakes and providing training and presentations. Her position is funded (80%) through a federal HUD (Housing and Urban Development) grant, for which we are subcontractors through Legal Assistance Corporation of Central MA. Ines has visited most of the Latino and Brazilian businesses along Main Street and in the Piedmont neighborhood; she left brochures at each site in the respective languages required. She attended every free medical clinic in the city and distributed brochures and connected with medical staff. She is conducting regular, weekly outreach hours at Pernet Family Health and Centro Las Americas. She is coordinating an upcoming training with the East African women’s organization. Ines discussed some challenges, including the need to have her contact information prominently on all literature (currently, the brochures and posters only list Legal Assistance). Ines shared her journey from Uruguay to Worcester. Since 2006, she has been actively involved with Worcester Immigrant Coalition.
- b. Yung Phan – South East Asian Outreach Worker. Yung is in a unique position within the city. She is the only employee in a job share between two divisions. Yung is a client advocate at the Worcester Senior Center, Division of Elder Affairs for 27 hours/week. The remaining 13 hours she works for Human Rights and Disabilities, an arrangement that began in FY2006. Yung works all day Mondays and part of the day on Fridays; some time is spent in the office and some time is spent conducting outreach and community organizing at the South East Asian Center. The South East Asian community is very reluctant to come forward with discrimination complaints. Therefore, Yung has worked in partnership with other organizations, such as the Asian Festival which had representatives of 10 different ethnic groups this year. She is involved in a range of cultural events and was one of the founders, along with Worcester Police Dept.

5. Approval of June meeting summary: Edward G. Robinson made a motion to approve the June meeting summary, as submitted. Edward Rivera second the motion. Approved unanimously.
6. Old Business:
 - a. Fair Employment Implementation Plan: see above.
 - b. Update – Social Justice Roundtable: Next full meeting will be held on September 24 at 5:30 pm at the YWCA. The group received a \$22,000 grant from the Third Sector New England.
 - c. Status of Training Proposals: Cheryl Pope and Fran Manocchio will conduct diversity and inclusion training for a local non-profit who will offer a contribution of \$2,000 to the Office of Human Rights and Disabilities.
 - d. “Running for Your Rights”: Total donations received = \$1131.00
 - e. Know Your Rights: Eduardo Rivera inquired about the “What To Do When Stopped by the Police” cards. Fran noted that we have not made any further progress and will report back next month.
7. New Business:
 - a. Letter to Editor in Collaboration with Commission on Disabilities and City Manager’s Community Coalition on Bias and Hate: Letter will be sent next week.
 - b. City’s Website Re-design: Fran noted that the city’s website is going through a major re-design and she has submitted information for the new Office of Human Rights and Disabilities pages.
 - c. RESPECT: It’s the Way to Play Initiative and MARC Conference: We are honored to participate in the annual MARC (Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center) Conference on November 12th at Bridgewater State College. Presenters will include: Colleen O’Brien, Director of Athletics and Health, Worcester Public Schools; Rob Pezzella, School Safety Liaison, Worcester Public Schools; Mable Millner, College of the Holy Cross; and Fran Manocchio.
 - d. Scheduling meeting with State Sen. Michael Moore: Fran will request that Sen. Moore attend the October meeting.
8. Other Business: none

9. Director's Report:

- Discussed City Hall office and safety concerns raised by MCAD employee.
- Hate Crime that occurred in November 2008: Office of Attorney General issued civil rights injunction against the two alleged perpetrators.
- Cases: Q1 first quarter - full report at October meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Fran Manocchio