

Erie County Human Relations Commission (ECHRC) – Commissioners Meeting

Minutes/Notes – February 26, 2019 Meeting

Call to Order/Roll Call:

The Meeting was called to Order by Commission Secretary Mitchell at 6:33 PM.

Commission Members Present: Mary Jo Campbell (Vice Chair) by phone; Christine Mitchell (Sec.); Tracy Leet; Connie Manus; and Willie McAdory.

Commission Members Not Present: Shawnta' Pulliam-Brown (due to work) and James Wandless (due to illness).

Commission Members to be Appointed: N/A (appointment by County Executive).

Advisory Committee Members Present: Diana Ames (Chair.); Timothy Stoops; and Freda Tepfer.

ECHRC Staff / Attorney Present: Tony Logue and Wayne Harbison / Attorney Bryan Spry.

Invited/Public Guests: Erie City Councilperson Kathy Schaaf.

Approval of Commissioners Minutes / Notes:

The Minutes of the January 22, 2019 meeting was approved by the Commissioners.

Financial Report:

Staff discussed the 2019 HRC budget summary provided to the HRC by the County. A more detailed budget will be sent shortly. Concern focused on the negative numbers indicated for fees and other pass-through line items including funds from the City's CDBG. The reason for the County in doing this is not clear other than providing a line item place in the budget for funding as it becomes available during the County's fiscal year. Discussion continued about providing the Commissioners with a copy of the more detailed budget as contained on the County's website. Commissioners wanted to inquire whether County Councilman Faust should be contacted about adjusting this. It was recommended that County Clerk Doug Smith or Denee' Breter of his office could explain the budgeting process. Commissioner Mitchell was to contact the County Clerk. It was noted that Denee's will be leaving the County on or about March 5th. Staff was also to ensure that Commissioner McAdory be given or mailed a hard copy of this info since he does not have e-mail. It was also noted that from our understanding the County approved \$10,118 increase for improvements to the HRC's office expansion. It is expected that this will be appropriated by County Council and added into our budget soon. Discussion continued about having a better understanding and transparency about the budget including a copy of the 2018 budget.

Director's Report:

Director Logue discussed the County Council budget approval for the expansion and improvement to Suites 812 and 811. Plans for revitalizing the ECHRC calls for the expansion of the office to include Suite 811 as our new Conference Room. Work is hoping to begin in March. The County's Administration and County Council have been consulted and seem to be in agreement regarding the office revitalization needs. It is expected that minimal

disruption will result. Phone lines may be an issue. We will be coordinating with the building owners. Contracting is done through the building's owners. Director Logue assured the Commissioners that this office is going to be a lot more transparent than before. ECHRC Advisory Members along with Commissioners will be strongly encouraged to utilize the space to further enhance our efforts in serving the community.

New Business:

Joint meeting(s) are being considered for April. Better transparency is our goal. Dates are not firm between either having it on regular Advisory Committee or Commissioners dates somewhat dependent work progress. Possible date could be at 5:30 on April 16th. Notices will be sent out.

Commissioners / Advisory Committee / Public Comment(s):

The topic of public accommodations / access around construction sites and its effects on the pedestrian environment was discussed. Advisory Committee member Freda Tepfer is working on this with others including the Mayor's ADA Roundtable. Construction areas of most concern in downtown.

Old Business:

Status of Findings for Public Hearing case was discussed. Despite health issues, Atty. Spry is still working to complete the Findings for case as soon as possible (2-4 weeks). He noted the strong possibility that this case will be appealed by the Respondent Melgrango and wants to ensure it is solidly written. The delay in the writing and delivery of the decision should not affect their ability to file the appeal if they choose to.

Our application for City of Erie 2019 CDBG funds was submitted and a Public Hearing will be held by the City on March 5th. We are submitting for PSAs for next year along with outreach and promotional materials. The amount requested was \$10,500. Discussion continued about future PSAs production possible through schools including McDowell according to Dr. Stoops. Other language (Spanish) PSAs are to be considered. PSAs for Radio are also being considered.

PSAs from 2018 CDBG funds, we will be running PSAs soon. The same two versions from last year are being considered. These airings are being finalized with the two major TV groups in Erie.

Commissioner Leet and others raised concerns about attendance at Commission Meeting. Commissioners need to attend in order to have a quorum. The Director referred the Commissioners to the By-laws and their applicability to the permitted excuses for absences. Ms. Leet offered to meet with County Executive. The staff was asked to contact her about her need to make an appointment. Discussion about sending names for her to consider was also considered. Advisory Committee Member Freda Tepfer asked to have her name submitted for consideration.

In regards to the formation of the Hearing/Motions Panel, discussions are to be continued. In the meantime Ms. Mitchell volunteered to serve as a substitute on the motions or hearing panels if a conflict exists.

Discussion continued about the By-laws and the discharge and/or appointment process for Advisory and/or Commission members.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 PM.