

Erie County Human Relations Commission (ECHRC) – Commissioners/Advisory Board Joint Meeting

Minutes – March 23 2021

Call to Order/Roll Call:

The Meeting was called to Order by Chair Shawnta Pulliam Brown via zoom at 6:03 PM.

Commission Members Present: chair Shawnta Pulliam-Brown, Secretary Christine Mitchell, Michael Martin (joined late), Jeff Pinski, Dana Williams, Marc Blount

Commission Members Not Present: John Steiner, Mary Jo Campbell, Kathleen DiVittorio

ECHRC Staff Present: Tony Logue, Wayne Harbison.

County Council Ellen Schauerman

City Council Kathy Schaaf, Mel Witherspoon

Advisory Board Freda Tepfer, Diana Ames, Tim Stoops, Ron Sumarski, Caitlyn Strohmeier

Chair Pulliam-Brown congratulated Diana Ames on her reappointment to the advisory board. No quorum for the Advisory Board so no election of officers.

Approval of Commissioners Minutes / Notes: January Minutes motion to approve by Mr Pinski and Mr. Blount. Motion Approved. Motion to Approve February 23rd minutes by Mr. Pinski and Mr. Blount. Motion Approved.

Public Comment Chair Pulliam-Brown welcomed Ms. Schauerman and Ms Schaaf and our advisory board.

Advisory Board

Discussion of the advisory Board.

Dr. Stoops has students working on the partnership with McDowell Intermediate High School to create public service announcements and this had been going as well and they are doing as much as possible with the pandemic. We are very optimistic to be able to pursue this more in the fall based on how education looks at that time.

Ms Tepfer discussed in addition to the lack of quorum and meetings. She also discussed the public accommodation of information and websites available to ensure easy access for all.

Ms. Ames discussed attendance/participation in the advisory board. Chair Pulliam-Brown discussed with her and they agreed to discuss with the advisory board members to determine interest and discuss attendance policy. The advisory committee has 11 members and need 6 for a quorum. Director Logue indicated concerns should be taken to the appointing member/body. There are currently several positions open . From County Council District 3 Mary Rennie and District 5 Brian Shank and there are also two city council vacancies and Kathy Schaaf is also looking for a new member since her representative has not been attending. Chair Pulliam-Brown indicated that the advisory board annual report was due in December and had that been submitted we would have been taking action sooner and requested a status on that annual report. Diana Ames agreed to provide an update by the following Monday the 29th.

Director's Report:

Director Logue indicated case status is holding at 10 and 5 planned needing hearings attorneys working. Director Logue also requested the financial interests need completed. Wayne will be sending a reminder tomorrow and they can be returned mail or scanned and emailed. Director Logue is hopeful with the vaccine rollout we can resume in office hearings hopefully by year need. The commission has provided available dates as had the courthouse.

Chair Report / Commissioners Comment(s): Chair Pulliam-Brown requested case information including a reference number, date opened, type of case (housing, employment) and status of case (open, closed) monthly. The chair is requesting this information to allow us to better track our cases, to prevent cases from being lost, to prevent reporting errors and to prevent back logs. The chair asked for comment – commissioner Pinski indicated as long as the information is kept non identifiable and pristine it made sense. Commissioner Blount indicated he felt the commission needed this information as well. Commissioner Williams indicated it would help us celebrate successes and see progress. Commissioner Mitchell commented as long as it was generic reference numbers that would not jeopardize the hearing panel it made complete sense. Attorney Sumarski from the advisory board wanted to ensure no personal information related to the case would leak that would cause serious concerns. Chair Pulliam-Brown indicated that this information was already included in the annual report and so it should be available and requested that be recorded. Director Logue objected to the sending of these details. Commissioner Martin Joined as we were discussion article 5 section 5 of the bylaws to request this information. Commissioner Martin indicated the staff is doing their job and this request would be micromanaging. Commissioner Blount made a motion for the staff to provide the monthly tracking without the details. Commissioner Williams Seconded the motion. Commissioner Martin requested a roll call vote. Chair Pulliam Brown Yes, Marc Blount Yes, Dana William Yes, Mike Martin No, Christine Mitchell Yes Jeff Pinski Yes with the caveat that this is done with the legalities we are entitled to so the motion was amended to include that and that amendment was approved by Mr. Blount. We re-voted with the amendment. Chair Pulliam Brown Yes, Marc Blount Yes, Dana William Yes, Mike Martin No, Christine Mitchell Yes Jeff Pinski Yes.

Chair Pulliam-Brown thanked everyone who attended the state training. The Chair also is looking to appoint a motions panel chair if anyone is interested please contact the chair. Those motions would go through the HRC office.

Old Business:

New Business: Erie reader ad doubled from 1/6 page to 1/3 page same price through the end of the year. There is a fair housing contest for high school students that was sent out through IU5.

Second annual know your rights, know the process event is being planned via zoom.

Commissioner Martin discussed the 2020 annual report and motion that we submit our 2020 report to the city and county before 6/30/2021. Commissioner Pinski seconded the motion. Mr. Harbison indicated we do have a good template for this and that was very realistic. This would be our second annual report. Prior to that the only a financial statement or a case summary was submitted. Motion approved.

Kathy Schaff and Freda Tepfer discussed emergency housing link https://www.eccm.org/blog/erie-county-emergency-rental-assistance-program-begins-march-29-2021?fbclid=IwAR3bYxNslN8W_CWRpIL9A3f_wJTWQmeimbvxQEICOkEscOzGpubrAOwqkpl.

This link required multiple clicks to find the information. Freda Tepfer also questioned the phone number listed on the HRC website as not being the most used phone. Ms Tepfer was requested to submit these concerns in writing so we can address the concerns with the HRC website. Ellen Schauerman already was addressing the emergency housing assistance as that was through the county department of health.

Adjournment:

There was a motion to adjourn by commissioners Mitchell and Pinski and the meeting was adjourned at 7:44 p.m.