

**CITY OF NORWALK
HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 15, 2009**

PRESENT: Carol Frank, Chair; Daisy Franklin; Andrew Mattiello; Diana Paladino; Brian Smith; Vicky Su; KarenTobin

STAFF: Adam Bovilsky, Human Relations/Fair Rent Director

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Frank called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

(A) September 18, 2008

****MS. FRANKLIN MOVED TO APPROVE THE SEPTEMBER 18, 2008 MINUTES.**

****MR. MATTIELLO SECONDED.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

(B) November Special Meeting

****MS. FRANKLIN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER SPECIAL MEETING.**

****MR. MATTIELLO SECONDED.**

****THE MOTION PASSED WITH SIX IN FAVOR (CAROL FRANK, DAISY FRANKLIN, ANDREW MATTIELLO, DIANA PALADINO, VICKY SU, KAREN TOBIN) ONE ABSTAINED, (BRIAN SMITH)**

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Chairman Frank wished everyone a Happy New Year and said the holiday dinner was really lovely and she thinks they should have more of them. One of the things she does is sit as representative on Fair Housing. They have had several issues. They have had an ongoing debate with the zoning commission on the use with a phrase they are using in the literature being sent out for affordable housing. They are using the term "Workforce Housing". Fair Housing said that is discriminatory and makes people that are not

working feel as though they are ineligible to live there. Zoning said on the last page of the literature there is an explanation. Chairman Frank said she said there should be an asterisk with an explanation next to the term "Workforce Housing" that says as long as the person economically qualifies they will be permitted to live there. Zoning has simply been ignoring this request.

She attended the budget hearing with Margaret Suib requesting funds for Fair Housing. They presented their case and await the result. The commission is very underfunded.

The committee holds an educational seminar every spring. Margaret purchased the film Brick by Brick. The film examines the racial and discriminatory policies of the town of Yonkers New York beginning in 1972. It is an amazing film and regardless of how aware you think you may be on the subject, this film is devastating. They are going to try to get the NAACP and Board of Realtors to co-sponsors it with them. They may try to use the theater at Isaacs Street. Once they firm up the plan everyone will receive invitations to view the film.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Bovilsky stated that they were half-way through their fiscal year. Comparing their statistical records from the first six months of this year to the same period last year, the numbers of intakes and follow-ups have increased. Human Relations related intakes have increased 27% and Fair Rent related intakes increased 5%. Similarly, their follow-up contacts have substantially increased. Their Human Relations related follow-up contacts increased 77% and Fair Housing related follow-up contacts increased 6%. The increase in intakes and contact is likely due to an increase in referred cases from Norwalk's NAACP, NEON and the Norwalk Housing Authority. Although these statistics do not fully represent all of the department's work these numbers do indicate that they have been busy for the first six months of the year. There were no new formal complaints filed in the last six months with the Human Relations Commission. However, they do have two cases pending and expect another case to be filed in February 2009.

There are two commissioners whose terms expired on September 1, 2008. They will continue to serve until they either re-appointed, resign or are replaced.

On November 12, 2008, the common council voted to accept the affirmative action plan that the commission passed, was signed by the mayor, and put into law in the city of Norwalk. The Human Relations department along with the Department of Personnel and Labor Relations will begin the statistical analysis that will be the basis for goal setting as part of that plan...

On October 28, 2008, the common council voted to change the name of Room 231 in city hall to "Mary T. Bea Brown" room. An event to memorialize the change will take place at a time to be determined.

The changes to the American with Disabilities Act are now in effect. Those changes broaden and clarify the definition of who is disabled and therefore protected under the act.

Mr. Bovilsky priorities going forward are to continue his efforts on behalf of the commission to plan a city wide employee diversity training program. He will be working with Chairman Frank's subcommittee to prepare statistical analysis required to set goals under the affirmative action plan. They will set goals for each department.

They will also be working with the city and Redevelopment Agency to ensure that certain redevelopment projects are constructed using 10% minority and women owned businesses or that a good faith effort to hire minority and woman owned subcontractors is made.

Mr. Bovilsky passed out the schedule of meetings for the following year and an updated roster, and some newspaper articles on a variety of subjects including the Affirmative Action Program.

Some changes to the roster were noted and Mr. Bovilsky said he would hand out an amended version to the contact list.

Ms. Karen Tobin arrived at 7:43 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

****CHAIRMAN FRANK MOVED TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS CASES 228-08E AND 229-08E.**

****MR. MATTIELLO SECONDED.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The Commissioners went into Executive Session at 7:45 p.m. and reconvened into Public Session at 8 p.m.

MOTIONS ON CASES

There were no motions.

BILLS AND COMMUNICATIONS

There were no bills or communications.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

HR DAY COMMITTEE

NEON HEADSTART PROGRAM

Mr. Bovilsky reported that The Human Rights Day Committee met with the teachers at the NEON Headstart Program. The meeting was well received and it was nice to have a captive audience. They required all of their teachers to hear about Human Rights Day.

IHR DAY, DECEMBER 10, 2009

Mr. Bovilsky reported that Human Rights Day held on December 10, 2008 was a nice event, but, poorly attended because it was not advertised. It was primarily attended by city employees. The mayor was great and the food was good.

Ms. Franklin commented on her concern for genocide. She said they should spread the word about the topic.

DIVERSITY DAY COMMITTEE

Chairman Frank reported on the activities of the Diversity Day Committee meeting. They will try to develop a pamphlet, small enough to keep in your pants pocket, to use as a resource outlining the cities offerings in terms health facilities, education, tools for job searching etc.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Bovilsky commented on the Martin Luther King breakfast to be held at West Rocks School at 8 a.m. He said he would be attending and suggested the other members join him.

Ms. Franklin reminded the commission of the event the evening of January 18th at Bethel A&E where they planned to kick off the program. She said she hoped some of the commission members would attend.

Chairman Frank commented that as commissioners sitting on the Human Relations Commission they should try to make some of these events. As representatives of the Human Relations Commission they should be known in a positive way in the community. The best way to achieve that is to attend some of these events.

ADJOURNMENT

****MS. TOBIN MOVED TO AJOURN THE MEETING.**

****MR. MATTIELLO SECONDED.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Angela M. Catigano
Telesco Secretarial Services

