

**CITY OF NORWALK
HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
NOVEMBER 19, 2009**

ATTENDANCE: Carol Frank, Chairperson; Daisy Franklin; Rev. Julius Gamble; Andrew Mattiello; Thomas Mahoney; Vicky Su.

STAFF: Adam Bovilsky, Director, Human Relations and Fair Rent

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:38 p.m. by Ms. Frank

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: SEPTEMBER 17, 2009 REGULAR MEETING

Mr. Bovilsky requested this item be tabled and discussed later on the agenda.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Ms. Frank welcomed Thomas Mahoney as a new member to the Commission, and she asked everyone to introduce themselves and provide a brief background of their appointment and involvement in the committee. Ms. Frank noted that an updated member list was distributed by Mr. Bovilsky and noted that a confirmation e-mail for attendance to meetings is done prior to the meetings. She added that meetings are cancelled without a quorum and members would be notified by e-mail or phone call.

Ms. Frank mentioned that she had attended a seminar on the ADA – Americans with Disabilities Act, and noted that it was poorly attended with only twelve people in attendance. She added that she had attended a Fair Housing Budget Meeting with Tim Sheehan of the Norwalk Redevelopment Agency, and noted that it was a tough year with revenues down and they did what they had to do in working with the Finance Department.

Ms. Frank noted that over the past two weeks, Norwalk lost three citizens who were very active and dedicated to the City's community service, Otha Brown, Ken Slapin, and Paul Jones. She added that all of these residents were long-term, active members of the community who gave of themselves in many ways for the betterment of the community, and will be sadly missed.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Bovilsky provided his written report on statistics and highlighted that intakes are up compared to previous years, and noted that an increase in the routine work of the office intakes and follow-up contacts. He stated that the Department is now going through the second round of interviews for the position, and they hope to fill it shortly.

Mr. Bovilsky discussed the upcoming budget process and stated that he will be providing a draft budget request later in the meeting, and added that the final request is due December 11, 2009. He added that the current active HRC investigations and routine intakes and responses are taking up substantial staff time, particularly without administrative support. In addition, the office is working on the following projects in behalf of the Commission:

International Human Rights Day; preparing the statistical analysis required to set goals under the Affirmative Action Program, and planning the completion of the City's Americans with Disabilities Act Transition Plan. He added that the Commission may want to consider some training of the commissioners to assist Larry with field work.

Mr. Bovilsky distributed the Annual Report listing highlights for 2008-09, goals for 2009-10 for Human Relations and Fair Rent Commissions including the description of services, mission statement and performance indicators, personnel roster and operating budget with actual expenditures compared to prior years. He stated for the record that matters are all confidential through transparent reporting.

He concluded with a comment that he was happy to answer any questions from the Commission regarding the report on the budget, priorities and goals. There were no questions about the Annual Report.

Mr. Bovilsky also included in the handout packet copies of several articles featured in the local and area newspapers relating to human rights topics.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- ** **REV. GAMBLE MOTIONED TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE TO DISCUSS APPEAL OF CASE #228-08E AND CASE #231-09N, AND CASE 232-09E.**
- ** **MS. SU SECONDED**
- ** **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The Committee went into Executive Session at 7:50 p.m. and reconvened into Public Session at 8:15 p.m.

- ** **REV. GAMBLE MOTIONED TO GO BACK INTO PUBLIC SESSION.**
- ** **MR. MAHONEY SECONDED**
- ** **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Ms. Franklin stated that no actions were taken during the Executive Session.

MOTIONS ON CASES

There were no motions on cases.

BILLS AND COMMUNICATION

Ms. Franklin distributed one of the invitations to the International Human Relations Day that were being mailed to City departments, schools, and organizations. She encouraged all members to spread the word to get participation for the event.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a. IHR Day Committee
 1. City Hall International Human Rights Day Program

Ms. Franklin presented the details of the International Human Rights Day Program which will be held on December 10, 2009 at Norwalk City Hall. The report included an outline of the details of the Human Rights Messages and Art contest, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Declaration of the Right of the Child, and The Human Rights Wall. Ms. Frank thanked Ms. Franklin and stated she had done a great job with coordinating all of the details, and she asked about the quotes for food. Mr. Bovilsky answered that they were considering finger sandwiches as opposed to just pastries that were done in the past. Ms. Frank suggested they speak to Margaret and as she has done a great job in the past. Ms. Frank added that last year's ceremony was a wonderful with the children and the flower garden, and Ms. Franklin added that she intends to have some type of similar involvement with the children and flowers.

2. Ely School Declaration of the Right of the Child Program.

Ms. Franklin distributed the declaration and stated that it is the founding document of the United Nations and an important document of international humanitarian law. It is a collaborative work of social and political philosophy with roots in the Greek philosophers.

On another subject, Ms. Franklin stated that she had attended a workshop on ADA held at the Norwalk Inn and stated that it was not well attended, but it was very informative regarding proper etiquette in dealing with individuals with handicaps. She added that she welcomes this type of training as it benefits all people to learn to treat others in a respectful way, and to use the appropriate behavior.

NEW BUSINESS

Budget Request for 2010-11

Mr. Bovilsky distributed the preliminary budget request and asked the Commissioners for input and questions. Ms. Frank asked about the Haitian Council and Mr. Bovilsky answered that this was for the passport service that Rahoul Duperville has assisted with translations. Ms. Franklin added that she has received rave reviews that Mr. Duperville has done a great job with assisting the Haitian community.

Ms. Frank asked about longevity pay and Mr. Bovilsky answered that it is an annual payout that is issued to City employees and needs to be budgeted for. He added that the field representative gets paid overtime for attending the meetings, which is why Larry does not attend all the meetings.

Ms. Su questioned the increase in legal research fees, and Mr. Bovilsky answered that normally the Commission relies on Corporation Counsel to help with legal questions, however there are times when they cannot do the research on a timely manner due to more pressing matters. He explained that the Department currently subscribes to an on-line data base of electronic data where he can do research, but it is outdated and inferior. He is now recommending a budget item to upgrade to the new version of this subscription which allows access to all state and federal court decisions and actions, at a cost of \$2,600. He added that it is not incremental to the budget but represented transferring monies left over from other accounts, which are outlined as decrease items on the report.

Ms. Su asked if any other City department subscribes to such on-line data service where they could share resources, and Mr. Bovilsky explained that more users results in a higher price and it is inappropriate to share trademarked software when you must be a registered user.

Ms. Su questioned \$50 in business expense and membership dues. Mr. Bovilsky answered that the \$50 is for the rare times when money is needed for meals during a conference. He added that the membership dues are actually fees for using services such as usage of the CT Bar Association electronic database for legal documents and we are no longer members to organizations such as the NAACP.

Mr. Bovilsky concluded with a comment that he was happy to answer any questions from the Commission regarding the budget, and he always welcomes input from the Commissioners. He added that if there were any other questions, to please e-mail him prior to presenting the final draft which is due December 10.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: SEPTEMBER 17, 2009 REGULAR MEETING

Mr. Bovilsky provided copies of the minutes, which he had edited electronically, reflecting the following changes:

Page 2: Under Chairperson's Report, in the second sentence: delete "heads" and replace "is" with "are" after Protection Act, which...

Page 4 and throughout correct the spelling of Dupervil from Duperville.

Page 3: Under Executive Session, replace Mr. Bovilsky with Rev. Gamble.

- ** **MS. FRANKLIN MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE SEPTEMBER 17, 2009 MINUTES WITH CHANGES AS NOTED.**
- ** **MS. SU SECONDED.**
- ** **MOTION PASSED WITH FOUR VOTES IN FAVOR, NONE OPPOSED, AND ONE ABSTENTION (MR. MATTIELLO)**

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Frank asked if the members wanted to discuss the need for a December meeting, or if they wanted to adjourn and stay to have an informal discussion on a joint holiday dinner with the Fair Rent Commission.

ADJOURNMENT

- ** **MR. REV. GAMBLE MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
- ** **MS. SU SECONDED.**
- ** **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Knox
Telesco Secretarial Services