

PITTSBURGH COMMISSION ON HUMAN RELATIONS

MINUTES
January 5, 1998

Attendance: Christine Williams, Chair Pro Temp

Pamela Golden	Elizabeth Pittinger
Alma Speed Fox	Father Lou Vallone
Robert McClenahan	Chuck Honse, Jr.
Sandra Glass	

Staff: Charles Morrison, Director
Connie Miskis Zatek Yancy Miles
George Monroe
Kevin Trower, Legal Counsel

Guest: Dave Goldberg, Controller's Office

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 3:35 p.m. by Christine Williams, in the absence of the Chair.

II. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the December 1, 1997 full Commission meeting were unanimously adopted as mailed, upon motion of Father Vallone and second by Commissioner Fox.

III. COMPLIANCE UPDATE

George Monroe, EEOC liaison, reported that as of the end of December, 67 cases were submitted to the EEOC for the 1998 contract. The Commission has not yet received the 1998 contract, but it is anticipated that since all criteria has been been, it will reflect an upward modification.

The Director explained that in the past, EEOC conducted random spot checks regarding case investigations. This process has now changed. EEOC will review every action in the months of January and April 1998, only.

HUD has signed the contract with the Commission. The first voucher for a drawdown of \$30,000 is currently being processed.

IV. COMMITTEE & STAFF REPORTS

A. Director's Report

The Pittsburgh Board of Public Education kicked off a program at Schaffer Elementary School on December 2, 1997 (Character Education Program), which is very similar to the summer lunch program the Commission initiated with CitiParks in 1997 (Values Education Program). The Director reported that he is trying to expand this program in 1998, possibly with the help of the Grable Foundation.

Director Morrison stated that he hopes to identify the schools attended by the children who participated in the 1997 Values Education program in an attempt to develop follow-up information regarding measurable improvements in the student's interaction with peers, teachers, parents, etc. as a result of the Values Education Program.

The Director also met with a representative of the Tropman Non-Profit Management Institute, which provides training to non-profit organizations.

December 11, 1997 the NCCJ celebrated its 70th anniversary, focusing on its name change to National Conference for Communities and Justice.

December 14, 1997 the director of the Federal Office of Personnel Management met with the community at St. Benedict the Moor Church, as part of the President's initiative to bring people together to talk about issues related to racism.

A youth town meeting is scheduled for January 22, 1998 at Carlow College/Antonian Hall. This meeting is also part of the President's initiative on dialogue among the races.

On December 17th, the Director met with City Council regarding the curfew legislation. The Curfew Advisory Committee began meeting in March 1997 and in July, issued its report to City Council. Council members, however, did not recall the presentation of this report and are looking into reducing the curfew budget and/or repealing the legislation. The Director noted that one of the recommendations of the Committee was to revisit the program one year after its implementation when more data could be available. (There was so little activity during the initial six-month period that no valid conclusions could be drawn.) Council has agreed to this recommendation, therefore, the Curfew Advisory Committee will reconvene to review updated statistics, etc. Of particular interest will be determining whether there has been a reduction in crime involving youth since passage of the curfew legislation.

Dale Frederick, superintendent of the Pittsburgh Public Schools, has agreed to attend the February Commission meeting. Commissioner Fox suggested that Alex Matthews, president of the School Board and Curtis Walker, head of the School District's Office of Compliance and Equity, also be invited to meet with the Commission. Commissioners were in agreement, but felt each individual be invited to a separate meeting.

Commissioner Fox moved that the Director be authorized to invite Mr. Matthews and Mr. Walker to future meetings of the Commission, at their convenience. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pittinger and carried unanimously.

Commissioner Pittinger noted that a Kindness and Justice Challenge relating to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday, is available on the World Wide Web. She indicated it has a very good package of information for teachers and in some ways, relates to the Values Education Program.

B. Update on public hearing decisions:

The Director reported that the Commission's decisions in Slifko, Hammond and Pack have been appealed.

In the case of Demetris, the Respondent has not complied with the Commission's Order and did not appeal the decision. Mr. Trower suggested that the Commission file a Motion to Compel. If the Respondent continues to disregard the Order, the Commission can proceed to the Court of Common Pleas for contempt.

C. Community Relations Activities

Yancy Miles reported that the Coalition to Counter Hate Groups is continuing to respond to hate activities in the Pittsburgh area. The agency was originally receiving funds from the Maurice Falk Foundation, but that has now ended. However, the volunteers have continued to serve the community. They have organized sub-committees to redefine the agency's mission; to sponsor an annual "Not in Our Town" event at Point State Park; to monitor hate activities, including that on the Internet, and produce a quarterly report; and to offer victim assistance. The Commission is assisting the Coalitions' efforts wherever possible.

The Pittsburgh Foundation may be a source of new funding for the Coalition's proposal to start a crisis hot line.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Expiration of Commissioner Terms

Commissioner Honse noted that many of the Commissioners' terms will be expiring in April and July 1998. New officers are scheduled for election in June and he was concerned that Commissioners elected to office may later be replaced. He asked if it is appropriate for Commissioners interested in serving another term to notify the Mayor on their own.

Director Morrison stated that Commissioners serve until they are replaced, and that he is now in the process of sending a memo to the Mayor regarding expiration of terms, the first of which occur in April.

Father Vallone stated that he did not wish to serve as a "lame duck" and therefore, notified the Mayor of his interest in serving again, but specifically stating that if he was not reappointed at the end of his term, he would resign.

Discussion ensued which identified possible alternatives to more efficiently provide for the reappointment or replacement of Commissioners at the end of their terms. Suggestions included establishing a rotation system, initiating legislation through City Council, amending the Commission by-laws and/or amending the City Charter. Mr. Trower was directed to check further as to how to best address this issue. He also stated that he believed it was appropriate for Commissioners to communicate their interest in continuing to serve as Commissioners to the Mayor.

Commissioner Pittinger asked that an updated schedule of expiration of terms be forwarded to Commissioners prior to the February meeting.

The meeting was properly adjourned at 4:45 p.m. upon motion by Father Vallone and second by Commissioner Golden.

/cmz