

PITTSBURGH COMMISSION ON HUMAN RELATIONS

A G E N D A

July 10, 2006

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

III. STAFF AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Compliance Update

B. Director's Report

IV. NEW BUSINESS / ANNOUNCEMENTS

V. ADJOURNMENT

Please be considerate of others; turn off cell phones.

/cmz

File

PITTSBURGH COMMISSION ON HUMAN RELATIONS
Minutes of Meeting
July 10, 2006

Attendance: B. J. Samson, *Chair*

Lynette Drawn-Williamson	Adelaide Smith	Leah Williams-Duncan
Sr. Eleanor Loftus	Robert McClenahan	Curtis Smith

Called/Unable to attend:	Christine Williams	Anne McCafferty	Dr. Susan Hunt
	Elbert Gray, Sr.	Elizabeth Pittinger	
	Stephan Broadus	Rev. Tim Smith	

Absent: David Engel

Staff:	Charles F. Morrison, <i>Director</i>	
	Kevin Trower, <i>Solicitor</i>	Connie Miskis Zatek

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair, Commissioner B. J. Samson called the meeting to order at 3:45 p.m., and thanked the Commissioners for their attendance and their commitment to volunteer work on behalf of the residents of the City of Pittsburgh.

II. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Commissioner Adelaide Smith noted a typographical correction on the Director's Report: Fullbright Scholar should be typed as one word, not two. Upon motion of Commissioner Adelaide Smith and seconded by Commissioner Robert McClenahan, the Minutes of the June 5, 2006, Commission meeting were unanimously adopted.

III. STAFF & COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Compliance Update

Director Morrison reported that as of the June Compliance meeting, 67 cases have been forwarded to EEOC for contract credit. This does NOT include cases which were closed earlier today. The contract requires the processing of 128 dual-filed cases. The last meeting for which case action can be applied toward this contract will be September 2006. Director Morrison doubted that the full contract amount could be met but noted that he hoped to be well over the 100 case minimum.

Director Morrison also explained that HUD criterion requires housing cases to be completed within 100 days from the date of filing. At times the complexity of a case, the number of witnesses to be interviewed or other facts, may delay the completion of a housing case within this timeframe. In these instances, it is at HUD's discretion as to whether or not the Commission will be paid at

the full rate or at a percentage of it. The Director stated that he tries to maintain processing so that we are paid at the highest levels. He indicated that nationally 52% of all cases are completed within the 100-day timeframe. Currently, 60% of the Commission's housing cases are completed within the 100-day mark. Some reasons that a case may take longer to complete include its complexities, delays in the response/action of one of the parties, difficulty in contacting witnesses, and whether or not it proceeds to public hearing.

Processing housing cases are a priority for staff. They are assigned for investigation immediately, and generally, a Fact Finding Conference is scheduled within two – three weeks of when it is assigned.

Director Morrison also pointed out that trends in housing discrimination are changing. In the past, complainants may have been steered to other units or communities and thereby subjected to discrimination. Now discrimination is more subtle. For example, technology enables prospective landlords to screen their calls and decide, largely on linguistics, who they will call back. Commissioner Samson shared other examples of discrimination in housing which she learned at the HUD Policy Conference in Anaheim, California, June 26 – 30.

B. Staffing

Director Morrison reported that intake has been down for some time, but had recently begun to pick up again. He stated that HUD's statistics are about the same nationwide as they were at this time last year (approximately 9,100), but were down from two years earlier. EEOC's numbers are down too (approximately 70,000 nationwide), as are the State Commission's. He reiterated that the general feeling among the agency directors is not that there is less discrimination, but that people are fearful of retaliation in a tight economy and are, therefore, not filing complaints.

The Director also reported that as a result of fewer complaints being filed, staff caseloads are lower than they were four or five years ago, and as a result, individual cases are getting more quality attention. He also explained the Commission's process following the filing of a complaint: a copy is served on the respondent within 48 hours. Thereafter, the respondent has 30 days to file an answer and a position statement, with a copy to the complainant. Once a response is received, the case is assigned for investigation. Currently, the investigators at the State Commission have about 70 cases per investigator; staff at this Commission has about half of that, which is very manageable.

C. Director's Report

Director Morrison highlighted information from the written report which was mailed to all Commissioners prior to today's meeting.

1. HUD Policy Conference

The Director stated that this conference (held in Anaheim, California), was one of the best that he had attended. Experts were on hand to discuss predatory lending, mortgage lending, insurance and to focus on other issues which may develop in the

near future. He stated that respondents appear to be taking advantage of the recent housing boom which is resulting rising prices for real estate and lack of affordable housing in some markets. The tendency is for people to purchase homes with interest only mortgages or adjustable rate mortgages which have a low introductory rate that escalates over the life the loan. There are also "piggy-back loans" which combine a first and second mortgage in the hope that real estate values continue to increase. The concern however is that some of these buyers will end up in big trouble financially when values begin to falter and may subject borrowers to an increase in predatory lending.

The conference also talked about mortgage brokers who have assumed the role of banks in the past; about the value of education and outreach; and the results of good public service announcements.

2. WUPN-TV Public Service Announcements

The Commission has entered into another contract with WUPN-TV for 83 housing PSA's to be broadcast July – October during prime time television hours. This contractor was selected because, according to recent Neilson Ratings, broadcasts will hit more than 84% of African-American households during the course of its programming. A similar contract was held with WUPN-TV last year with good results.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS / OPEN FLOOR

Commission Chairperson, B. J. Samson encouraged other Commissioners to take advantage of HUD and/or EEOC training conferences if they are offered in the future. She agreed with the Director that the workshops provided excellent materials and promoted excellent discussion with other directors and commissions across the country. She indicated that a wealth of written materials was available, including video tapes of each workshop, and she distributed several books she brought back to share with Commissioners. She asked Commissioners to review the materials at their leisure and to return them to the Commission offices so that they could be available to others. Commissioner Samson noted that she had never seen a conference so well attended. Similar national conferences are scheduled every two years. Regional or district conferences are held yearly.

Director Morrison stated that HUD administers the CDBG Program of which Pittsburgh gets approximately \$20 million annually. During the conference, it was announced that as a result of the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, Louisiana has already received 80 years worth of CDBG money and it is not even close to what is needed in that area! Funding for other domestic programs are being cut to help fund the needs in Louisiana/Mississippi, as well as the war effort in Iraq.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

By law, the Commission is required to hold at least ten meetings each year. Typically, the Commission takes a hiatus in August. Commissioner Adelaide Smith stated that given the Commissioner attendance this month, she moved that no full Commission meeting be held in August. Commissioners were in unanimous agreement. Therefore, there will be NO Commission meeting in August. (This does not include the Compliance Review Section which will discuss and vote on this separately.)

The Mayor's office announced this afternoon that Mayor Bob O'Connor has been diagnosed with primary lymphoma of the central nervous system, a very rare cancer. Commissioner Samson asked that he be kept close in thought and prayer.

With all business of the Commission addressed, Commissioner McCafferty moved that the meeting be adjourned. The motion was seconded by Sister Eleanor Loftus and properly carried. The meeting was concluded at 4:25 p.m.

/cmz



CITY OF PITTSBURGH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RELATIONS

MEMORANDUM

To: All Commissioners

FROM: Connie Miskis Zatek *CMZ*
Secretary to Director

DATE: June 30, 2006

SUBJECT: **MEETING NOTICE**

Bob O'Connor

Mayor

Charles F. Morrison

Director

Commissioners

B.J. Samson, *Chairperson*

Stephan A. Broadus, *1st Vice Chair*

David A. Engel, *2nd Vice Chair*

Susan C. Hunt, M.D., *Secretary*

Rev. Timothy L. Smith, Sr., *Treasurer*

Robert C. McClenahan, *Chair Emeritus*

Elizabeth C. Pittinger, *Chair Emeritus*

Lynette Drawn-Williamson

Adelaide Smith

Curtis A. Smith

Christine D. Williams

Leah Williams-Duncan

Due to the July 4 holiday, the Commission will meet one week later on
Monday, July 10, 2006 as follows:

2:30 p.m. Compliance Review Section

3:30 p.m. Full Commission meeting

The following items are enclosed for your review:

1. Minutes of the June 5, 2006 Commission Meeting
2. Director's Report
3. Case Summary Package *(for Compliance Review Section Members Only)*

**If you are unable to attend your assigned meeting, please call me at
412-255-2600 to report your absence.**

/cmz
Enclosures

Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations
Director's Report
June 30, 2006

- May 26, 2006 Director Morrison met with Louis DelCampo, a Full Bright scholar who is doing an internship with the Pittsburgh office of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Mr. DelCampo was provided an overview of the history, work, purpose and mission of the Human Relations Commission.
- June 26-30, 2006 Commission Chair B. J. Samson and Director Morrison attended the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity National Fair Housing Policy Conference in Anaheim, California. Items discussed included testing, outreach, predatory lending, contract performance, legal update and building our strengths through collaboration.