

**Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations
Minutes of Meeting
January 9, 2017**

Attendance:	Winford Craig, Chair	Gabriel McMorland (by phone)
	Lynette Drawn-Williamson	Wasiullah Mohamed
	Elizabeth Fogarty	Richard Morris
	Helen Gerhardt	Gwendolyn Young
	Eric Horwith	

Absent:	Lorraine Eberhardt	Curtis Smith
	Sharyn Henry	Robert Samuel
	Mariana Padias	

Staff:	Carlos Torres, Director	Sarah Kinter, Commission Rep.
	Rachel Salem, Secretary to Director	Leanne Davis, Commission Rep.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Craig called the meeting to order at approximately 4 p.m.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments. Sarah Hughes, a reporter from The Incline newspaper, introduced herself.

III. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

The December 5, 2016 meeting minutes were adopted with a motion from Commissioner Drawn-Williamson, seconded by Commissioner Fogarty and passed unanimously.

IV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chairman Craig asked that the meeting enter into executive session to discuss pending litigation. The meeting exited Executive Session

V. COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS

A. Director's report

Director Torres reported that he attended many meetings out in the community. He continues to hear concerns raised regarding the spending of CDBG funds, so the PCHR will be working with the Planning Department to make sure that this information is made public knowledge.

Commissioner Mohamed asked about how the relative effectiveness of various community meetings is being assessed, and Director Torres stated that the meetings are part of his work to inform the communities about the work of the PCHR and for the Commission to build relationships with community members and leaders.

B. Finance Report

Committee Chair Commissioner Young asked about an email she had received stating that the PCHR budget had been approved. Commissioner Craig and Director Torres clarified that the City's operating budget had been approved before Christmas by City Council and had gone into effect on January 1st, 2017. It was noted that the budget still needs to be approved by the PCHR Finance Committee. Commissioners Young, Morris, and Drawn-Williamson stated that all future budgets must be approved by the PCHR Finance Committee before being submitted to City Council. Commissioner Drawn-Williamson stated that we must learn the protocol for revising PCHR budgets after they have been approved by City Council. Ms. Kinter noted that the budget process was lengthy but followed the same process each year. Commissioner Mohamed asked if there were particular concerns that the Finance Committee had with the PCHR budget aside from the procedural question and Commissioner Young stated that she was not ready to speak for the entire committee, but that certain added positions and promotions had not been reviewed and discussed. Both Commissioners Young and Drawn-Williamson stated that transparency was very important and that now was the time to address needed changes both in budget process and content. The Finance Committee will meet to develop recommendations for the process going forward.

C. Community Relations Committee Report

Commissioner McMorland reported that the committee had not met since the last full Commission meeting. Commissioner Gerhardt requested that the committee contact her as soon as dates are established so that she would be able to schedule another proposed public hearing.

D. Housing Committee Report

Committee Chair Commissioner Morris asked for the Commission to approve the budget attached for a Citywide housing assessment that had been discussed at the previous meeting.

The housing needs assessment would be carried out by two PhD's from the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work at the cost of \$35,000, to be funded by CDGB funds.

Commissioner Fogarty noted that the December minutes stated the amount to be \$37,000 and Commissioner Gerhardt stated that incorrect figure was her mistake and the minutes should be amended. There was a motion to amend the minutes by Commissioner Gerhardt, which was seconded by Commissioner Fogarty and passed unanimously.

Commissioner Morris stated that the AFFH Task Force process has been revised and streamlined and will be discussed by the Steering Committee later that week. There will be a day-long Annual Meeting of the Task Force for Fair Housing month, to elect officers and develop planks for the year, featuring a training by Sara Pratt, a former HUD officer, who can fully explain the Fair Housing Assessment process the City must complete in 2019.

Commissioner Morris also stated that we will be doing advertising for Fair Housing month in newspapers, by bus ads, and other media. The Commission's 2013 Fair Housing public service announcements played during the Champion Chase show throughout October, November and December 2016; the show also included a feature of Commissioner Craig to discuss Fair Housing with host Ty Miller.

Commissioner Morris moved that the proposed funding for the housing needs assessment be approved, with a second from Commissioner Gerhardt. The motion was passed unanimously.

Commissioners Gerhardt, Horwith, and Mohamed reported that they had chosen the woman-owned, Pittsburgh-based design company Shift Collaborative to design brochures and images for the Commission, with a budget of \$19,000, the RFP limit being a top range of \$20,000. The company has a long history of working with nonprofits, foundations, and government agencies, including the City of Pittsburgh. Commissioner Gerhardt stated that they offer a collaborative process that might help the PCHR develop stronger relationships with stakeholders but caution will need to be exercised as regards going over budget as that process is used.

E. Personnel Committee Report

With Committee Chair Commissioner Padias still in Belgium, the report was tabled.

Commissioner Drawn-Williamson asked about the retirement of a former PCHR staff member and the process to hire new staff. Director Torres stated that the position of Commission Representative I had been posted, that there had been 31 applicants, that the personnel department had screened the applicants for basic qualifications, and then forwarded the 26 remaining applications. Four applicants were chosen to be interviewed, with three interviews complete and one yet to be scheduled. Commissioner Drawn-Williamson asked who was

interviewing the candidates with the Director and he reported that he had conducted the interviews alone. Commissioner Drawn-Williamson stated that there should be more than one interviewer.

Commissioner Craig stated that from this point on there would be regular monthly one-on-one meetings between himself and the Director, with reports to Commissioners to keep them up-to-date on PCHR developments.

Commissioner Young suggested that the PCHR Commissioners and staff may need to have a review of bylaws to make sure we are all on the same page as regards interpretation and practice. She stated that transparency and communication were important that everyone that should be involved would indeed be involved in all aspects of Commission functioning.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

A. Election of Second Vice-Chair: Chairman Craig stated that there would be an election for a second Vice-Chair. Commissioner Gerhardt nominated Commissioner Fogarty and she was unanimously elected.

B. Proposal for Public Hearing

As Chair of the Public Hearing section, Commissioner Gerhardt introduced a proposal for a public hearing on in May or June of 2017 with the purpose to:

- constructively address intergroup tensions associated with xenophobia and Islamophobia;
- to consider intersections of ethnicity, race, religion, national origin, and gender in such intergroup tensions, as well as perceived inclusion in a protected class (such as Sikhs, who are often perceived to be Muslim because they wear turbans);
- to promote intercultural understanding;
- to partner with other departments of City government, other public agencies, educational institutions, and private and nonprofit organizations to gather and consider expert testimony and advice on models for legislation, policies, legal instruments, training programs, coordinated educational campaigns, and other activities that might help protect the human and civil rights of groups that have been and might in the future be affected by discriminatory attitudes, behaviors, and even governmental proposals for barriers to equal rights and opportunities for many protected classes based on their ethnicities, religions, and countries of origin.

Commissioner Gerhardt stated that if the proposal was accepted by the Commissioners, an invitation would be sent to such organizations, advocates, and experts to attend one or more Commission meetings to carefully think through and plan the public hearing to be most practical

and constructive. This would also help to build stronger relationships and communication with key stakeholders as the Commission prepares for the challenges of coming years.

Commissioner Mohamed stated that Ramadan starts the last week of May and that we might consider scheduling the hearing as part those celebrations, with thousands of people visiting the mosques at that time and perhaps generating built-in attendance. He stated that it is important for the PCHR and partner stakeholders to consider a range of possibilities of what may happen as well as possible preparations and responses. He stated that there had been a similar example in Harrisburg, organized by the Governor's Commission on Asian-American Affairs and that we might want to consider what did and didn't work well at that event to inform our own planning. The Islamic Center of Pittsburgh will also be having a know-your-rights event with Dr. Moody who might be a valuable participant in our own hearing and/or planning. He stated that the community would view PCHR efforts in a very positive light if we focus on consideration of practical strategies and solutions because many groups offer help without having a clear idea of how to do so.

Commissioner Gerhardt stated there would be invitations to such legal experts as Pitt Law Professor, David Harris, with expertise in community-police relations and racial and ethnic profiling of immigrants and refugees, and Jules Lobel, Director of the Center on Constitutional Rights, who has many years of experience defending Muslims, immigrants, and other members of protected classes that have experienced severe discrimination, as well as organizations such as the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR). Commissioner Mohamed also stated that civil liberties lawyer Mike Healey had offered his support and that we might invite him to participate.

Commissioner Mohamed moved to accept the proposal with a second from Commissioner Fogarty. The motion passed unanimously.

C. Proposal for Human Rights Assessment

Director Torres presented a proposal for a Human Rights Assessment working with the University Pittsburgh and interns, with research guidance, data analysis, and report writing by Brian Calfano University of Cincinnati Political Science Professor, who conducted a similar survey and analysis for the LA Commission on Human Relations. The Human Rights Assessment will provide the Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations with community perceptions of civil rights issues within the jurisdiction of the City. The survey questions capture perceptions of employment, housing, and public accommodations that connect to civil and human rights expectations and experiences, including access good public school, medical services, public transportation, child care services, affordable housing, jobs, etc. This assessment will assist staff and Commissioners in understanding the current state of public perceptions and

experiences, including perceptions of systemic differences in treatment by neighborhood, rather than just zip code, and provide City-centric data for annual reports. The assessment would cost approximately \$20,000 and would take a year or more.

Commissioner Mohamed moved to approve, Commissioner Gerhardt seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

D. CEDAW Recap & Women representation at meetings

Commissioner Fogarty stated that there would be a gathering on March 23rd to celebrate passage of CEDAW and to thank Natalia Rudiak for her service and leadership on CEDAW. Natalia Rudiak's Chief of Staff Ashleigh Deemer will be running for her City Council seat.

Commissioner Fogarty stated that with passage of the CEDAW there will be a gender analysis of commissions and offices in the City, looking not just at how many women are placed within those bodies, but also at their positions and how many are placed in decision-making positions. She stated that the PCHR should also be looking at how women are placed in decision-making positions within our Commission and stated that she was very concerned that a recent meeting had not included any women from the Commission. Commissioner Gerhardt proposed that all future PCHR meetings, panels, etc should include women to show that we are serious in supporting gender diversity and leadership, perhaps with further consideration of inclusion of other protected classes. Commissioner Craig and Director Torres stated that they had invited Chairs of the Housing and Community Relations committees as relevant to the topic of the meeting. They stated their commitment to gender inclusion in the future. Commissioner McMorland stated that we should also take into account non-gender conforming women and men, as well as people who identify as trans. Commissioner Young stated that someone other than a male should be present, that female representation is important. Commissioner Drawn-Williamson stated that Commissioners should be informed about appointments or invitations to panels, meetings, nominations, which will allow inclusion, buy-in, participation by all Commissioners. Commissioner Commissioner Fogarty stated that future commitment to inclusion was not satisfactory but that she was willing to table the motion with commitments for further discussions at future meetings.

Commissioner Horwith stated that Director Torres and Chairman Craig had asked him to be Commission representative for Mayor's Council on GLBTQIA issues. He will report back to Commission on a regular basis.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Mohamed motioned to adjourn the meeting at approximately 5:15P.M., which was seconded by Commissioner Fogarty.

**Pittsburgh Commission on Human Relations
Minutes of Meetings in Executive Session
January 9, 2017**

Attendance:	Winford Craig, Chair Lynette Drawn-Williamson Elizabeth Fogarty Helen Gerhardt Eric Horwith	Gabriel McMorland (by phone) Wasiullah Mohamed Richard Morris Gwendolyn Young
Absent:	Lorraine Eberhardt Sharyn Henry Mariana Padias	Curtis Smith Robert Samuel
Staff:	Carlos Torres, Director Rachel Salem, Secretary to Director	Sarah Kinter, Commission Rep. Leanne Davis, Commission Rep.

EXECUTIVE SESSION FROM 4:10 P.M. - 4:20 P.M.

Solicitor Mark Hamilton and Director Torres reported that the PCHR staff and the EEOC had received a voluminous number of documents from Gateway Health, sent in electronic form. The Solicitor is not sure that all the requested documents have been included, but neither the PCHR or the local EEOC office had the necessary software to be able to analyze the documents so they were sent on to the national office in Washington D.C, so the Solicitor will need some time to work with their office to review. He will report his findings to the Commission in a future meeting. Chairman Craig then exited Executive Session.