

ERIE COUNTY HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MARCH 24, 2014

I. CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by Amy Danzer (filling in for Chair, Tom Wellington) at 6:29 p.m. on March 24, 2014. The following Commission members were in attendance: Amy Danzer, Robert Currie, Mary Hayes, Willie McAdory and Victoria Taylor. The following Commission staff members were also present: Joseph Aguglia, Charlotte Scalise and Heidi Meyer. The following Commission members were absent: Tom Wellington and Judy Jobs.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion was cast by Mary Hayes to approve the minutes of the meeting held on November 25, 2013, as written. The Motion was seconded by Victoria Taylor. All were in favor.

There was no meeting in December, 2013. The meeting of January 27, 2014 was re-scheduled for February 3, 2014 (due to inclement weather). However, there was no quorum of Commission members present on February 3, 2014, so there are no Minutes to approve from that meeting. The meeting scheduled for February 24, 2014 was canceled due to lack of confirmed Commission member availability; therefore, there are no Minutes to approve from a February, 2014 meeting.

III. DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

A. TESTING: Joseph Aguglia reported that the City of Erie has requested that the HRC conduct housing testing in order to help the City fulfill its "affirmatively furthering fair housing" requirements for its receipt of Community Development Block Grant funding through the federal government. The funding that the City is able to contribute for the testing would likely not be sufficient to cover the entire cost of the testing, so the Commission would have to approve the additional expenditure to be paid from Commission funds. A Request for Proposal (RFP) will be drafted and advertised in order to solicit bids for the testing training.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

A. ELECTION OF OFFICERS (VICE CHAIR AND SECRETARY): Charlotte Scalise reported that County Council liaison, Doug Smith, has been in contact with the members of County Council and the County Executive regarding the remaining vacancies on the Commission. Once the vacancies are filled, Commission members will be asked to elect a new Vice Chair and new Secretary.

B. HOUSING SEMINAR – APRIL 15, 2014: Charlotte Scalise reported that the HRC's annual Fair Housing Seminar will be held at the Blasco Library on April 15, 2014 from 9:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. The brochures are being printed and will be mailed out this week. She will email the flyer to Commission members as well. Commission members are still being asked to think about what fair housing means and forward any responses to her.

C. EMPLOYMENT SEMINAR – JUNE 26, 2014: Charlotte Scalise reported that the HRC’s annual Employment Seminar will be held on June 26, 2014 at the Ambassador on upper Peach Street. Speakers are still being scheduled, but Commissioners should save the date if they would like to attend.

D. PHOENIX GROUP: Charlotte Scalise explained that the Phoenix Group has been in contact with her. The Group is a public relations firm that promotes non-profit organizations/agencies in Erie. She will check with Doug Smith on the availability of funding for such a project.

V. OLD BUSINESS:

A. HOME SHOW - FEBRUARY 20-23 @ FAMILY FIRST SPORTS’ PARK: The HRC staffed a table at this event. It was reported that although staff spoke to a fair number of people in this education and outreach effort, the attendance at the event itself seems to be waning.

B. EDUCATION AND OUTREACH AND THE ROLE OF THE COMMISSION:
There was a question posed regarding fundraising by the Commission, and a discussion on the role of the Commission and its members ensued. It was suggested that, in light of the fact that there should be two (2) new Commissioners appointed shortly, the Executive Director should devise a method and/or materials to provide an “orientation” to the new members. It was also suggested that the Executive Director provide the current members with statistical case data at monthly meetings to provide members with basic information as to the number of cases pending, the bases of discrimination of the pending cases and any outcomes that are able to be published.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

VII. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 7:33 p.m. Motion was cast by Mary Hayes and was seconded by Robert Currie. All were in favor. The next regularly-scheduled Commission meeting will be held on April 28, 2014.

Respectfully Submitted by Staff, Heidi Meyer.