

ERIE COUNTY HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON APRIL 28, 2014

I. CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by Amy Danzer (filling in for Chair, Tom Wellington) at 6:09 p.m. on April 28, 2014. The following Commission members were in attendance: Amy Danzer, Judy Jobs, Mary Hayes, Victoria Taylor and George Morgan III. The following Commission staff members were also present: Joseph Aguglia, Charlotte Scalise and Heidi Meyer. The following Commission members were absent: Tom Wellington, Robert Currie and Willie McAdory.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion was cast by Victoria Taylor to approve the minutes of the meeting held on March 24, 2014, with the change of her last name under the “Call to Order” section from “Hayes” to “Taylor.” The Motion was seconded by Mary Hayes with that one change noted. All were in favor.

III. DIRECTOR’S REPORT:

A. WELCOME OF NEW MEMBER(S): Joseph Aguglia introduced himself to the new Commission members and gave a brief description of where the Commission has been and where it is now. He also provided a brief description on the role of the Commissioners and the complaint filing, investigation and resolution processes.

B. OPEN CASES: Joseph Aguglia provided the members with the “Case Log Chart” of all the cases over the last six (6) years and described the trends.

C. DONALD STERLING: Joseph Aguglia briefly discussed the news reports of this NBA team owner in the headlines to illustrate that discrimination is not just a “thing of the ‘60’s.”

D. EMMETT TILL: Since this past week was the anniversary of Emmett Till’s death (an important and memorable one in the civil rights movement), Joseph Aguglia briefly discussed the history of Emmett Till’s death and its place in history.

IV. FINANCIAL REPORT: Joseph Aguglia again 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 will be available in July. He will be drafting a Request for Proposal (RFP) in order to solicit bids for the testing training. The staff was able to get input from Stella Adams of the National Fair Housing Training Academy (and one of the presenters for the HRC Housing Seminar this month) regarding running a Testing program. Judy Jobs questioned what is different about *this* testing from what the Commission tried to do before. *This* testing would be for research (data collection) purposes and not to generate cases that would be brought before the Commission. Amy Danzer suggested that the Commissioners put out feelers for volunteers and have the potential volunteers contact Joseph Aguglia. Charlotte Scalise will check with Stella Adams to see whether it is acceptable to use family/friends as testers.

V. OLD BUSINESS:

A. HOUSING SEMINAR – APRIL 15, 2014: Charlotte Scalise reported that the HRC’s annual Fair Housing Seminar was attended by approximately 30 people (in addition to staff and presenters). Joseph Aguglia indicated that the fact that the seminar was held on “tax day” could have influenced the low turn-out and stated that HRC will *not* schedule the seminar on tax day in the future.

VI. NEW BUSINESS:

A. 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. It will likely run from 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. or 4:30 p.m. The Seminar had over 100 attendees last year.

B. NEW AVENUES TOWARD VISIBILITY: Joseph Aguglia asked Commission members to continue to let the staff know of any ideas for education and outreach opportunities or any other ideas to increase the visibility of the Commission in the community.

C. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEW MEMBERS:

1. COMMISSION: Those in attendance introduced themselves, including the new members (Victoria Taylor and George Morgan III). There is still one (1) remaining Commissioner position to be filled and one (1) Commissioner awaiting re-appointment.

2. ADVISORY BOARD: Joseph Aguglia described the role of the Advisory Board and announced that several new appointments have been made recently: George Morgan III (was appointed by City Council to the Advisory Board and by County Council to the Commission, and is willing to serve on *both*); Robin Wilson; Jill Hrinda-Patton; and Dianne Ames.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m. Motion was cast by Victoria Taylor and was seconded by Judy Jobes. All were in favor. The next regularly-scheduled Commission meeting will be held on May 19, 2014 (*not* the 4th Monday, due to the Memorial Day holiday).

Respectfully Submitted by Staff, Heidi Meyer.