

Erie County Human Relations Commission

Minutes – March 28, 2016

Attendance

Commissioners: Bob Howden, Vicky Taylor, and Amy Danzer
Staff: Joe Aguglia, and Heidi Meyer

Conversation started at 6:12 pm

Approval of Minutes

As there was not quorum, minutes could not be approved.

Directors Report

Old Business

Fair Housing Resource Center (FHRC) did not test in the second municipality so the contract had to be amended. It now ends around June 1. Rather than testing in Girard Township (which had too few units to test), they will now test in Edinboro. The report should be available around late May.

There will be no funding from the City of Erie CDBG grant for housing testing.

There will be \$5,804 from the Millcreek Township CDBG grant for housing testing. That testing should take place in 2017 or so. The Millcreek Supervisors moved the category from fair housing to public service.

The HRC Housing Seminar is April 27 in the Blasco Library.

The Veteran's Resource Expo will be at Gannon on April 21.

Work continues to fill the vacant HRC seats but the appointments must be made by the designated County Council representative.

New Business

Adam Williams has resigned from the HRC.

James Wandless, who had been on the Advisory Board, is a new Commissioner. He could not attend tonight's meeting.

As April is Fair Housing Month, a request for someone to write an op-ed article was given. Bob Howden will contact Charlotte about the parameters for such an article and work on writing it.

Fiore Leone has stated in County Council meetings that he is "investigating" the HRC. This may include staffing, funding and moving the office. Excerpts of the County Council meeting minutes are attached.

Public Comment or Open Discussion

Adjournment

Conversation ended at 6:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Amy Danzer

Excerpts of County Council Minutes relating to the Human Relations Commission for the past year:

May 18, 2015

Jason Brendel, McClelland Avenue, Erie, PA; Mr. Brendel thanked Council for allowing him to speak about one thing the County did many years ago, that being the establishment of the Erie County Human Relations Commission. He stated that it has failed. He cited the 2014 Human Rights Commission and Equality Federation report card for Erie, where it is listed 57th out of 100 cities regarding the LGBT community and diversity in Erie. Erie is also last in diversity with elected officials, businesses, and inclusivity of LGBT and minority communities, and he questioned why Erie is last. Mr. Brendel is also bringing the National Gay Blood Drive to Erie. The FDA recommended, in 2014, that the LGBT community would have to abstain from sexual activity for one year in order to donate blood. Mr. Brendel felt that is discriminatory and stated that the FDA, CDC, and National Team for the National Gay Blood drive are in dialogue to lift that ban and allow the LGBT community to donate blood without having to wait one year. Mr. Brendel stated that the National Gay Blood Drive will be coming to Erie on July 11th, 2015 and he is asking that the entire community to come and donate on behalf of the LGBT citizens.

February 23, 2016

Mr. Leone stated that the Erie County Industrial Development Authority cancelled their last meeting. He also commented that he has been reviewing the Erie County Human Relations Commission and Council tends to forget the reason and goals established for the HRC. In 1993, Council created the County Human Relations Commission via Ordinance Number 80, 1993. The reason was to be able to facilitate needs of individuals that the city Human Relations Commission could not accommodate. The city Human Relations Commission could only listen to individuals that lived in the city. Hence Council's involvement. The agreement was for the city to pay one-third and the county to pay two-thirds. The city's share at present should be \$59,332. The city actually only pays \$15,000. Mr. Leone stated he has not finished reviewing the Human Relations Commission, although at present, he is not pleased with what he has seen that it has accomplished. He will continue to review all aspects of the Human Relations Commission and give his findings and recommendations to Council in the near future.