

Council on Human Rights
Friday, August 10, 2007
9th Street Office Building, 11th Floor
Conference Room
11:00 a.m.

Council Members Present: Jon D. Strother, Chairman; David A. Drachsler, Vice Chairman; Members Charles Baugham; Donald O. Campen, Jr.; Carolina Espinal; Dyana Mason; Deborah Segaloff; Jagdish Singh; and Mary Studevart.

Staff Present: Sandra D. Norman, Director; Cora M. Billings, Deputy Director; Cortley West, Intake Officer/EEO Manager; Lisa Hetrick, EEO Manager; Geraldo Williams, EEO Manager; and Timothy Wilson, Administration/Operations Manager.

Council's Attorneys Present: Guy Horsley, Senior Assistant Attorney General and Teri Miles, Assistant Attorney General.

Guest: Carlos Labiosa, Vice Chair, Prince William County Human Rights Commission.

Call to Order and Adoption of Agenda and Minutes

The Chairman called the meeting to order. On motion by Member Segaloff and seconded by Member Campen, the motion carried to approve the agenda. On motion by Member Campen and seconded by Member Mason, the motion carried to adopt the minutes with corrections from the June 4, 2007 meeting.

Members of the Council introduced themselves, which included Members Carolina Espinal and Mary Studevart who were attending their first meeting.

Ms. Norman introduced Mr. Guy Horsley, Senior Assistant Attorney General, the Council's attorney. Mr. Horsley introduced Ms. Teri Miles, an Assistant Attorney General, who will be assisting him as the agency's legal counsel

Director's Report

Introduction of New Staff Member

- Ms. Norman introduced Mr. Geraldo Williams, who serves as the Council's part-time investigator and is proficient in Spanish. Mr. Williams is returning to the Council having been one of its initial staff members at the beginning of the agency.

Introduction of Staff Members and Interns

- Ms. Norman introduced the remaining staff members and the Office Assistant, Ashley Marriott (P-14).
- Mr. West is coordinating the agency's intern program. The Council has two (2) interns: Ms. Clementine Buzard, a senior at Virginia Commonwealth University and Ms. Elisa Ward, also a senior at Virginia Commonwealth University.

- Ms. Norman also shared that the agency has a high school student for the summer working with the Council, Ms. Myoshi Goode. Ms. Goode is a participant of the Friends Association for Children's Youth Executive Exchange Program. Ms. Goode has been assisting with data entry and general office assistance. She is a rising freshman at Thomas Jefferson High School in Richmond.

NFL Camp in Plymouth, NC

- Ms. Norman advised the board that she and other alumni of her alma mater, Plymouth High School of Plymouth, North Carolina sponsored a National Football League football camp for 100 area kids.

Lying in State of the Late Oliver Hill

- Ms. Norman will serve as co-chairperson of the volunteer corps at the Executive Mansion on August 11, 2007, that will assist with the lying in state of the late Oliver Hill, a native of Richmond and a nationally recognized civil rights attorney. She will share this honor with Ms. Sara Redding Wilson, director of the state's Department of Human Resource Management.

Vacation

- Ms. Norman will be on vacation August 20 – 24, 2007.

2007 Budget

- The agency completed the last fiscal year in the black which is a positive outcome for the Council.

IT Update

- As mentioned in previous meetings, the Virginia Information Technology Agency (VITA) is charging agencies monthly for the number of computers it has along with maintenance fees. These charges are not allocated in the Council's budget. It is the agency's hope that these funds will be appropriated in the upcoming budget process.

National Human Rights Conference

- The National Association of Human Rights Workers (NAHRW) and the International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies (IAOHRA) will have its first joint conference in September 2007. Ms. Norman is a member of IAOHRA and will be attending the conference.

Technical Assistance Program Seminar (TAPS)

- TAPS is a quarterly training conference sponsored by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). The next TAPS is scheduled for September 25, 2007 in Hampton. Chairman Strother and Member Singh will be attending. Other members of the Council who have not participated in this conference are encouraged to attend and to let Ms. Norman know of their interest.

Girls Are Talking

- "Girls Are Talking" is a conference sponsored by the Friends Association for Children. Ms. Norman will lead a discussion assisted by Ms. Marilyn Booker of the Charlotte District Office of the EEOC in a workshop that will inform young workers about their rights in the workplace. The conference will be held on Saturday, August 18, 2007 at the Fifth Street Baptist Church, Richmond, Virginia.

A Day of Opportunity

- Mr. West and Mr. Williams staffed and facilitated a booth at the ‘Day of Opportunity’ at Cloverleaf Mall in Chesterfield County in conjunction with Ms. Marilyn Booker of the EEOC. This was the second year this event was sponsored by the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. Many persons stopped by and inquired of the Council’s services and Mr. Williams served as an interpreter to our Spanish speaking constituents.

Annual Report

- Ms. Billings is coordinating the annual report. Once a draft copy has been completed, Ms. Norman will submit a copy to the sub-committee for its review and comments.

Compliance

- Mr. West has assumed some of Mr. Gerald Snead’s inventory in his absence.
- According to the EEOC, the Human Rights Council (HRC) has met its contract of 55 cases and wants to increase the number of cases for the upcoming year within its third quarter modification process.
- The investigators are doing a wonderful job of meeting the established investigative timelines.
- Ms. Norman disbursed the July’s statistical intake report.

Assistant Attorney General Horsley

- Mr. Horsley gave an update of the case detailed in the March meeting where the Respondent refused to submit requested information. However, after repeated attempts, the Respondent did submit some information. Mr. Horsley gave this information to the investigator to see if the information met the request.
- A brief discussion on the subject of subpoenas was held.
- Mr. Horsley is attempting to have Ms. Norman included as a presenter at the Virginia Bar Association’s Labor and EEO Section’s workshop to give an overview of the agency. A number of attorneys with expertise in labor and EEO laws are still not relatively familiar of the Council and its functions.

Chairman’s Report

Election of Vice Chairman and Parliamentarian

- The Council re-elected Member Drachsler to succeed himself as vice chairman and elected Member Mason to the position of parliamentarian.

Public Forum

- The transcript submitted by a local stenography company in Danville, Virginia was not of good quality. The Chairman presented a draft transcript of the public forum recorded by him. Member Campen moved to receive the transcript as presented. Seconded by Member Segaloff and the motion carried.
- A brief discussion was held on the attendance at the public forum and what avenues to take to increase the turnout of at future events.
- The next public forum is tentatively scheduled to be held in Staunton, preferably in October 2007. There is a contact person in that area and that person is very familiar with the population and has agreed to assist in getting the forum publicized.

Prince William County Resolution

- Mr. Carlos Labiosa, vice chairman of the Prince William County Human Rights Commission, was presented by the Chairman. Mr. Labiosa came to represent a sub-committee of the commission on immigrants' concerns in response to the resolution passed within Prince William County that denies illegal immigrants of specific county government services. It was Mr. Labiosa's opinion that the resolution has resulted in extraordinary tactics from county law enforcement. A major concern as a result of the resolution is alleged racial profiling by the county's police department; especially persons of Hispanic descent.
- A lengthy discussion was held on the jurisdiction of the county and HRC and the county's resolution in regards to the Virginia Human Rights Act.
- Even though the Council is unable to take a position on this matter at this time, attempts will be made to stay abreast of the developments concerning the resolution.

Appeal Assignment

- The Chairman appointed an appeal panel for Case #1750 and appointed Member Segaloff, chairman.

There being no new business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 2:52 p.m.

Submitted by,

Jon Strother
Chairman

Timothy Wilson
Recorder