

Human Rights Commission
Business Meeting
Minutes

October 16, 2014

Chair Schuneman called the meeting to order at 5:40 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Vazaskia Caldwell, Olgy Diaz, Richard McGrue III, Nicci Montgomery, Darion N. Reese, April Sanders, Fred Schuneman, Lucas Smiraldo, Larry Strege, Christopher Winters

Commissioners Absent: Alice Currie

Staff Present: Marya Gingrey, Tina McLeod, Vicki Walker, William Yi

Roll Call was taken. A quorum was present.

Agenda Approval

Chair Schuneman called for a motion to approve an amendment to the HRC Business Meeting Agenda of October 16, 2014, to include under New Business, the approval of a Pre-Settlement Agreement for HRC 4709. The motion to approve the HRC Business Meeting Agenda as amended was made, seconded, and carried.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made, seconded, and carried to accept the HRC meeting minutes for September 18, 2014.

Commissioner Strege arrived at 5:42.

New HRC Business

Marya Gingrey explained that commissioners had before them a request for approval of a Pre-finding Settlement Agreement, HRC #4709 – Mylein Evans v Salishan Gardens/ABHOW (American Baptist Homes of the West), et.al.

Tina McLeod walked the commissioners through the allegations, case background, and terms of the pre-finding settlement agreement.

Chair Schuneman entertained a motion to approve. This was moved and seconded. Discussion followed.

Commissioner Sanders arrived at 5:48.

The motion carried.

Chair's Report

- Chair Schuneman explained that his topics would be covered in the study session.

Commissioner's Report

- Wage Theft: Commissioner Winters commented that he has not heard back on whether the City monitors workplace safety, contract compliance, and wage and compliance, on construction projects in the City of Tacoma, and if there is a process/person to monitor, or do investigations (especially when private employer is City funded). Additionally, he wanted to know who would enforce on violations and where a person would complain and was hoping this would be addressed by the City. Commissioner Winters noted that the State L&I does investigate this type of complaint state-wide, but has not received any information from the City. To get in front of this issue, Chair Schuneman said he would entertain a motion that the Commission draft a letter to the City (with assistance from the Director), requesting due answers, and providing examples of potential hazards for not addressing, and also ask the city for existing policies and procedures in regard to enforcement of these issues, and mechanisms in place to identify and enforce on these human rights violations.

A motion was made and seconded. Chair Schuneman also requested mention of embarrassment to the Commission after asking for information, and receiving no answer after our original inquiry. Commissioner Winters, Strege and Smiraldo will work on developing a draft, including a request for timelines for this body of work, and/or confirmation of any resource gaps in City investigation and enforcement. The motion was amended to include all of the above. The motion carried.

- Commissioner Smiraldo was just selected as the new Director for Vibrant Schools Tacoma, which advocates for students of color and students affected by poverty, with the intent of making sure they have every opportunity to thrive, especially concerning college preparation. There will be a meeting on Nov 5, 4:00-6:00 p.m., at the Asian Pacific Cultural Center. Commissioners were invited to attend.

Director's Report

- None

Staff Report

- Marya Gingrey, referring to the Report of Case Closures, stated that during this period, we closed three fair housing cases as No Reasonable Cause Findings:
 - HRC 4696 – Schut v. Vintage at Tacoma/FPI Management, et. al.
 - HRC 4701 – Geter Pioneer Human Services, et. Al.

- HRC 4707 – Thomas v. McKinley Terrace Apartments/United Marketing, et. al.
- Effective October 6th, the City established the Office of Equity and Human Rights (OEHR), established by the City Manager to implement the Equity and Empowerment Initiative that passed by Resolution by City Council vote on September 30, 2014. This department will be looking at City policies, practices, programs, and procedures that either create barriers for opportunity for advancement, or practices, programs and procedures we can enhance to ensure people are receiving services and have the ability to participate. There is also an external component that will involve community engagement and stakeholders, to work on equity concerns within our community, and in collaboration with our community, and how this will be internalized in our city policies and procedures.

Diane Powers, the NCS Human Services Division Manager was appointed the Office of Equity and Human Rights Director. The Human Rights section (Marya Gingrey, Tina McLeod and William Yi) will be moving to this new department to continue their current duties and in support of the Equity and Empowerment framework. The City's Affirmative Action EEO Officer, Jerry Lee, was also re-assigned to this new office and will still be performing his current duties. Mary Morrison, who worked in organizational development, was also re-assigned to this office – staffing the office with existing resources.

- Pam Duncan, the Contracting Services Manager, was appointed the Human Services Division Manager, also effective October 6.
- Nadia Chandler Hardy, the Assistant to the City Manager, was serving as the Interim NCS Director, and was appointed as the Permanent NCS Director, while still maintaining her position as Assistant to the City Manager.
- Gail Himes, ADA coordinator, was re-assigned to Public Works.
- The Commission on Disabilities was assigned to Human Resources.

Marya Gingrey reported that the new Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, Gastavo Velasquez, was appointed and confirmed this summer, and will be visiting our area November 14, to meet with FHAP and FHIP agency representatives.

Public Comment

None

Adjournment

Business Meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.