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## **Providence Human Relations Commission**

### **Regular Meeting Minutes**

**August 15, 2016**

This open session of the Providence Human Relations Commission (PHRC) was called to order at 6:08pm at Roger Williams University, 1 Empire Street, Room 217, Providence, RI.

**Commissioners Present:** Patricia LaSalle, John Gaffney, Cesar Teo, Matthieu Yangambi

**Absent:** Chace Baptista, Maria Monteiro, Lucy Rose, Raymond Watson,

**Staff Present:** Director Jen Stevens

#### **1. Call to Order/Introductions:**

Chair LaSalle called the meeting to order at 6:08pm. A quorum was not established, as 4 of 8 commissioners were present.

#### **2. Review of August 1, 2016 minutes and vote to accept/amend:**

This was tabled for discussion at the next meeting.

#### **3. Review of August 4, 2016 minutes and vote to accept/amend:**

This was tabled for discussion at the next meeting.

#### **4. Director's Report**

Jen received one complaint of employment discrimination based on race, and walked the complainant through filing his complaint through the RIHRC website. Jen offered that

the PHRC should be considered a resource should he need further help. Jen confirmed that she is keeping a spreadsheet of complaints received, as Commissioner LaSalle requested.

Jen reported that she has had several interesting conversations with nonprofit leaders and law enforcement officials regarding police and community relations, as well as trainings available to police. Jen found that there are many cultural competency trainings available to police, though most are not mandatory, nor do trainings factor into which officers are promoted. Most cultural competency trainings are conducted in the Police Academy, and trainings are not formally integrated into professional development going forward. Jen has been invited to participate in a meeting with police on 8/23 at 8:30am at the Providence Public Safety Complex, where she intends to connect with the police training coordinator and make it known that the PHRC is here to help improve community relations. Commissioners are welcome to attend as well.

Commissioners would like to know if cultural questions are included in the test that determines promotions. Commissioner Gaffney suggested Jen reach out to Chuck Noice, who conducts police trainings.

**5. Election of PHRC Executive Committee:**

Commissioner Gaffney nominated himself for Secretary because he would like to serve on the Executive Committee. He would be unable to take minutes, so Jen is willing to continue to take minutes.

The election was tabled for the next meeting.

**6. Discuss commissioner biographies:**

Commissioner Yangambi and Commissioner Gaffney submitted biographies that were well-received. Commissioner Rose had previously submitted her biography to Jen.

**7. Discussion relevant to community engagement activities and PHRC calendar of events**

This was tabled for discussion at the next meeting.

**8. Discussion relevant to access to quality education**

Commissioner Yangambi is concerned with discrimination specific to hiring and promotion within the Providence School Department and poor student performance. He thinks the PHRC may be an effective tool for mediation at the City-level, so that (1) people who do not wish to involve lawyers and a drawn out process at the State-level can find common ground and perhaps a resolution, (2) the City could save money paid to successful litigants, (3) the City's reputation could be preserved, and (4) the discriminator could receive a verbal or written warning recorded in their personal file. Commissioner Yangambi will consider which questions he may have for the RIHRC at our upcoming training, and the PHRC will further discuss this issue with the larger group at our next meeting. These issues should be largely discussed at our 9/26 regular meeting.

**9. Upcoming meetings:**

- a. Wed. 9/7 – If a short 9/12 meeting is impossible, we will consider this date.
- b. Mon. 9/12 RIHRC training – Jen will look into training length and confirm tech needs. It may be that we are able to squeeze in a quick meeting to vote on the minutes and conduct the election. Commissioner Gaffney generously offered to order pizzas if it looks to be a lengthy meeting.
- c. Mon. 9/26 regular meeting
- d. Mon. 10/17 regular meeting
- e. Mon. 11/14 regular meeting

**10. Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 7:15pm.