

Prince George's County Human Rights Commission

Monday, August 23, 2021

Zoom Meeting of the
Prince George's County
Human Rights Commission

ATTENDEES:

Commissioners:

Charlene Proctor, Chair
Felicia Sadler, Acting Vice-Chair
Wade Woolfolk, Secretary
Nathaniel Bryant
Adonna Bannister Green
Llamilet Gutierrez
Wendi Howard
Sylvia Johnson
Ademola Oduyebo
Joseph Reed

Staff:

Renée Battle-Brooks
Executive Director

Kyla Hanington
Clerk to the Commission

Jose Villegas
Senior Investigator

Guests:

Keith Merkey – MCCR

Keisha Garner, Counsel to the Commission

Excused:

Andrea Price-Carter

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

1. Call to Order – The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:35 pm and welcomed guest Keith Merkey from the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights.
2. Adopt Agenda – Hearing no corrections or objections, the agenda is adopted as written.
3. Approval of Minutes of the **July 26, 2021** meeting. The minutes were adopted as written.
4. **REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the second Commission meeting of Fiscal Year 2022. She reminded the Commissioners of the upcoming meeting dates this year. Nominations for Vice-Chair and Secretary will be called for in the September meeting with the election taking place in the October 2021 meeting.

The Chair noted the many training opportunities that have been made available to the Commissioners and thanked the Clerk and the Executive Director for providing and sharing information about those. The Chair also discussed Commissioner training and noted that the Commission hopes to have Counsel Garner provide Commissioner training, including providing clarity on roles, expectations, and more, at a date in the near future. She asks that the Commissioners revisit the memorandum that the Chair sent out about preparing for and holding public hearings. She notes that document helps clarify function, questions, demeanor, etc and will help Commissioners serve in fully-engaged in their function.

The Chair brought the Commissioners attention to a spreadsheet that the Clerk created that shows all matters on public hearing, including the panel members, hearing dates, transcript receipt, etc. She asked the Commissioners to refer to that document, noting that the chart will be updated and distributed with any additions. Counsel Garner asked the Commissioners to be mindful about time frames, noting that decisions must be rendered within 180 days of receipt of the final transcript, and that includes the drafting of the order as well as it appearing before the full Commission.

5. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Executive Director told the Commissioners that there are currently three petitions for judicial review: Lewis v Board of Education of Prince George's County; Crawford v Board of Education of Prince George's County; and Reeves v Capital Medical. She noted that the last two were not public hearing but are public now as the complaining persons filed in circuit court.

She announced that the commission meetings and public hearings will continue to be held virtually at least through June 2022 due to continuing Covid cases. How meetings and public hearing will be conducted post June 2022 will be re-evaluated closer to that date.

She encouraged every panel to please be ready to go on the record as close to the start time (5:30 pm) as possible, noting that the County is paying a premium fee for the evening court reporter hours, and asked that the Commissioners try to deal with any discussion of issues that need to occur before the scheduled time at 5:30 pm.

The Executive Director also discussed training and noted that in addition to what has been shared, she has been in discussion with regional EEOC about hosting specific Commissioner training with the Commissioners. The target date for that is in September; as soon as she knows the date she will have that information distributed to all the Commissioners.

She also mentioned some process issues, such as subpoena requests, explaining that the analogy is to a court system, where one can go to the Clerk's office (in Circuit Court) and get already printed out subpoenas. She notes that the office will bring subpoena requests

to Commissioners and requests that the Commissioners issue them when those requests are before them. She also asked that panel members issue orders as quickly as possible, in fairness to the parties who are enmeshed within the process.

The Executive Director mentioned some upcoming outreach events. The Elephant We Don't See Diversity Dialogue on August 31 will discuss Anne Moody's *Coming of Age in Mississippi*; on September 14th we have Jennifer De Leon in conversation; on September 20th we welcome Latinx poet C.T. Salazar; and on October 6th we welcome labor activist Delores Huerta.

She recognized guest Keith Merkey, one of the trainers with the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights, in attendance at the meeting and pointed out that if Commissioners sign up for trainings from MCCR they likely will get to learn from Mr. Merkey.

6. CASES SCHEDULED FOR PUBLIC HEARING

HRC Charge No.: HRC19-0306
EEOC Charge No.: 531-2018-01416
Carisia Dyson v Staffing Etc.

(Investigator V'Hesspa Glenn)

Panel Members: Acting Vice-Chair Sadler as Panel Chair, Commissioner Howard, Commissioner Oduyebo; Commissioner Johnson as alternate.

The public hearing in this matter was held on May 20, June 14, August 16, August 17, and August 18, 2021. The panel is now deliberating.

FEPA Charge No.: HRC20-0322
EEOC Case No.: 531-2020-00697
Reddick v DC Tours & Transportation

Panel members: Secretary Woolfolk as Panel Chair, Commissioner Oduyebo, Commissioner Green; Chair Proctor as alternate.

A scheduling order for this matter was issued with hearing dates set for April 7 and 12, 2021. This matter was re-scheduled and four nights of public hearing were held: April 29, May 6, May 10, and June 8, 2021. The Panel is deliberating.

HRC Case No.: HRC20-0304
EEOC Charge No.: 531-2019-02276

Kheni Wells v Board of Education of Prince George's County
(Investigator V'Hesspa Glenn)

Panel members: Commissioner Howard as Panel Chair, Commissioner Bryant, Commissioner Johnson; Commissioner Gutierrez as alternate.

This matter was scheduled for June 22 and 23, 2021. A settlement agreement has been reached and a motion to dismiss was before the Commission in closed session.

HRC Case No.: HRC20-0401

EEOC Charge No.: 12H-2020-00017
DeMornai Blackwell v City of Mount Rainier
(Investigator Caitlin Mohler)

Panel members are: Commissioner Price-Carter as Panel Chair, Commissioner Bryant, Commissioner Howard; Commissioner Reed as alternate.

Commissioner Johnson recused herself from this matter. This case is scheduled for public hearing September 21 and September 22, 2021.

7. **ATTENDANCE RECORD** – Attached

8. **NEW BUSINESS**

An issue was raised about the time frames in the agenda, which are sent out a week before the Commission meeting and thus, at the time of the meeting, events pending when the agenda was first sent may have already been completed. The request was made that the Clerk add the language “as of (date)” when composing the agenda.

9. **OLD BUSINESS - NONE**

10. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- a. The next Commission meeting is scheduled for September 27, 2021.

11. **CLOSED SESSION**

The Commission moved to Closed session to consult with counsel to obtain legal advice and to comply with a specific constitutional, statutory, or judicially imposed requirement that prevents public disclosures about a particular proceeding or matter.

Upon return from Closed session, Secretary Woolfolk reported:

In the matter of:

HRC Case No.: HRC20-0304
EEOC Charge No.: 531-2019-02276
Kheni Wells v Board of Education of Prince George’s County
(Investigator V’Hesspa Glenn)

Panel members: Commissioner Howard as Panel Chair, Commissioner Bryant, Commissioner Johnson; Commissioner Gutierrez as alternate.

The request for public certification is withdrawn due to settlement agreement and the matter is dismissed with prejudice and closed.

Commissioner Green moved, Commissioner Reed seconded. By unanimous vote, the motion carried and the case shall be dismissed.

The Chair sought clarification on name changes as the Office moves from the Human Relations Commission to the Office of Human Rights (effective July 1, 2021) and the Commission moves from the Human Relations Commission to the Human Rights Commission (effective October 1, 2021).

12. **ADJOURNMENT** – 7:10 pm

Wade A. Woolfolk

Commissioner Woolfolk
Secretary