

COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Monday, January 28, 2019
Regular Meeting of the
Prince George's County
Human Relations Commission

ATTENDEES:

Commissioners:
Merrill Smith, Jr. (Chairman)
Janelle Johnson (Vice-Chair)
Katrina Burson
Gerald Folsom
E. Anthony Langbehn
Johnathan Medlock
MaKelia Mitchell

Kim Kendrick, Counsel to the Commission

ABSENT:

Nora Eidelman (Secretary)

STAFF:

Renée Battle-Brooks
Executive Director

Kyla Hanington
Clerk to the Commission

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

1. Call to Order – Chairman Merrill Smith Jr. called the meeting to order at 6:47 pm.
2. Adopt Agenda – the agenda was adopted as written by unanimous vote.
3. Approval of Minutes – the minutes from the November 26, 2018 Commission meeting were adopted by unanimous vote.

4. REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON

Chair Smith welcomed the Commissioners to the first meeting of 2019. He welcomed the new Executive Director, whom he had the pleasure of meeting a month previously, and said he looked forward to working with her. Chair Smith said he expected 2019 to be busy. This is his eleventh year with the Commission, he said, and while he believes in serving and serving well, there also comes a time to pass the mantel to someone else. He reiterated he believes that this Commission is one of the best of its kind in the country and thanked the Commissioners for their service, saying how thankful he was to serve with them.

Chair Smith acknowledged the presence of a guest, Sylvia Johnson and invited her to address the Commission. Ms. Johnson introduced herself as a resident of Bowie and explained she was in attendance as a community observer.

5. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The **Executive Director** said she was thrilled to be working with everyone in the room, telling them the job they do is so important and that we appreciate the work that they do. She told the Commissioners that the process of filling spots in the Commission is underway and information from several applicants have already been forwarded to the County Executive's office. She asked the Commissioners to direct anyone who asks about joining the Commission to the Clerk.

The Language Access Coordinator position in the HRC office had been posted and filled. However, the candidate was unable to move into the position and so it has been reposted. The posting closes on February 7th and the Executive Director hopes to have a quick turn around. She noted it is a very in-depth position.

The Executive Director explained that HRC Office is working on really letting citizens know we are here as currently the HRC is a resource that is under-utilized. The HRC, in partnership with the Department of Family Services and the Prince George's County Police Department, is hosting an event focusing on the intersection between domestic violence and human trafficking. The event will be held on April 6th at Police Headquarters on Barlowe Road. The Executive Director invited all of the Commissioners to attend. She explained that this is the first of four events that will be held in different areas of the county.

On April 30th the HRC is partnering with the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights to host a sexual harassment awareness training that is open to anyone who would like to attend. We are also partnering with the Department of Justice to host a Know Your Rights Hate Crimes forum, the date of which is pending due to the government shut down.

6. NOTICE OF INTENT TO CERTIFY – NONE

7. CASES SCHEDULED FOR PUBLIC HEARING

HRC Case No.: HRC17-0809

EEOC Case No.: 531-2017-00390

Henry Lewis V Board of Education of Prince George's County

(Investigator Langston Clay)

Panel Members: Commissioner Johnson as Chair, Commissioner Langbehn, Commissioner Folsom; and Chairperson Merrill Smith Jr. as the alternate.

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A public hearing in this matter was held on Tuesday, October 30, 2018; Tuesday, December 4, 2018, and Thursday, December 13th, 2018. The next hearing date is scheduled for February 26, 2019 and a fifth date is pending.

Panel Chair Johnson stated that Tuesday, February 26, 2019 is the next hearing date in this matter and they are working to secure a fifth date. She thanked her fellow panel members for their patience and perseverance on this matter.

8. APPEAL HEARING – NONE

9. CASES READY FOR DECISION - NONE

10. HEARING PANEL UPDATES

HRC Case No: HRC17-0804

EEOC Case No.: 12H-2017-00049

Darryl Green vs. Verizon Communications, Inc.

(Investigator V'Hesspa Glenn)

Panel Members: Chairperson Merrill Smith Jr. replaces Commissioner Jackson as Chair; Commissioner Eidelman; Commissioner Medlock. Commissioner Burson as alternate.

The Public Hearing in this matter was held on November 13th and November 15th, 2018.

Panel Chair Smith explained the Panel has met and come to a conclusion and that the proposed order would be discussed in the closed session.

11. CASE UPDATE – NONE

12. ATTENDANCE RECORD – not attached. The Clerk will distribute at the following meeting.

13. OLD BUSINESS

14. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Small Business Owner Outreach – the Executive Director would like to partner with the Commission in putting together an outreach to small business owners. Commissioner Burson stated she would have a proposal ready for the next meeting.
- b. IAOHRA Conference 2019 – Chair Smith told the Commissioners that the conference will be held in Orlando in late August. In the next sixty days he will be looking into attendance for Commissioners.

- c. Bylaws and Rules of Procedure – Chair Smith stated the process has been started for reviewing and revising the Bylaws and the Rules of Procedure and his priority is that this will be completed by next fiscal year.
- d. Commissioner Business Cards – the Clerk asked the Commissioners to please email her what, exactly they would like on their business cards. Some discussion about personal cell phone numbers. The Clerk suggested the Commissioners consider using only the office number on their cards. The Commissioners agreed to send the Clerk their wishes for their business cards.
Discussion around county emails. Currently only Commissioner Mitchell is able to access her county email.

15. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. Next Commission Meeting **February 25, 2019** at 6:30 pm.
- b. MAHRA Human Rights Day 2019 will be held on February 8th. The Clerk has sent registration information to the Commissioners and hopes they are able to attend.
- c. Meet and Greet between Commissioners and Staff set for before the February Commission meeting.
- d. April 30th Sexual Harrassment Awareness Training with MCCR – discussed previously. The official invitation is still pending but hopefully the Commissioners are able to save the date.

16. CLOSED SESSION

The Commission went into Closed Session by unanimous vote 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:

Commissioner Langbehn - Moved the subpoena request discussed be granted.
Commissioner Johnson – Seconded the Motion.
By unanimous vote the subpoena was granted.

Commissioner Burson - Moved that the Executive Director’s action be upheld in the appeal in HRC18-0209
Commissioner Johnson – Seconded the Motion.
By unanimous vote the Commission upheld the Executive Director’s decision.

Commissioner Johnson - Moved the Commission uphold the Executive Director’s determination in the appeal in HRC18-0608.
Commissioner Folsom - Seconded the Motion.
By a majority vote of 3-2 with one abstention, the Executive Director’s action was upheld.

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In the matter of Darryl Green v Verizon Maryland LLC, HRC17-0804, Chair Smith explained the panel had met on two occasions to deliberate and that the full commission had received the draft decision and proposed order.

Chair Smith - Moved that the Commission approve the Panel Decision.

Commissioner Burson – Seconded the Motion.

By unanimous vote the Commission approved the Panel's decision.

17. ADJOURNMENT: Meeting officially adjourned at 8:35 pm.



Commissioner Nora Eidelman
Secretary



Kyla Hanington
Clerk to the Commission