

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS**



**OFFICIAL COMMISSION MEETING**

July 12, 2017

One Judiciary Square, 441 Fourth Street, NW, Room 1117

**ATTENDEES**

**Commissioners:**

Commissioner Fowlkes, Chair  
Commissioner Ward, Vice Chair  
Commissioner Figueroa-Garcia  
Commissioner Maier

Commissioner Reed  
Commissioner Thomas  
Commissioner Robinson  
Commissioner Collinson\*  
Director Mathew McCollough, ODR\*\*

**Office of Human Rights Staff:**

Mónica Palacio, Director  
Hnin Khaing, Deputy Director  
Ridhi Shetty, Law Clerk

**Commission on Human Rights Staff:**

David C. Simmons, Chief ALJ  
Dianne S. Harris, ALJ  
J.P. Howard, ALJ  
Jasmine Alexander, Law Clerk  
Kaiwon Tresvant, Law Clerk  
Daniel Gick, Incoming Law Clerk

**Members of the Public:**

Michael Sindram  
Lyndon Smith

**MEETING**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Fowlkes called the Commission's Official Meeting to order at 6:31 pm.

**II. ROLL CALL**

Chief Judge Simmons conducted the roll call, a total of seven active Commissioners were present. The Commission was able to conduct an official meeting; however, a quorum was not

\*Commission Nominee to be sworn-in on July 24, 2017.

\*\* Former Commissioner, who resigned July 10, 2017, upon being nominated as Director of the Office of Disability Rights.

present to take official action.

### **III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

As a quorum was not present to take action on this item, Chairperson Fowlkes tabled this topic.

### **IV. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES**

As a quorum was not present to take action on this item, Chairperson Fowlkes tabled this topic and moved to the Report of the Director.

### **V. REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF OHR**

Mónica Palacio, Director of the Office of Human Rights, gave the report of the Director. Prior to the report, Deputy Director Hnin Khaing introduced Rhidi Shetty, one of the OHR law clerks. Director Palacio highlighted points of the written Director's Report provided to the Commission including:

- Over thirty (30) public-facing agencies have adopted and implemented policies based on the Gender Identity and Expression Policy released by OHR in April;
- OHR is working on a hate crimes protocol with MPD and several other agencies;
- A review of the case numbers and production;
- Summary of Pride Month events OHR participated in;
- A review of recent legislative activity from the City Council and regulatory work at OHR, including Human Rights Amendment Act and the Street Harassment Prevention Act, which Director Palacio testified on earlier in the day.

Several Commissioners had questions and comments about the hate crime protocol work that the Director announced. Several events including nooses found in Ward 8 were discussed. The Commissioners expressed strong support for OHR's collaborative work on a hate crimes protocol. Additional, discussion occurred with regard to the agency adoption of the Gender Identity and Expression Policy and any discussion that OHR has had with collective bargaining units regarding adoption of the Policy. Finally, discussion occurred regarding the precipitous drop in unemployment in Ward 7 that has occurred since the implementation of the Fair Criminal Record Screening ("Ban the Box") Act. The Director expressed encouragement from the positive change East of the River, but stated that there is no evidence to demonstrate a causal connection with the FCRSA and that positive change.

### **VI. REPORT OF CALJ**

Chief Administrative Law Judge David C. Simmons presented the report of the Chief ALJ.

- The Commission's docket currently has:
  - Twenty-five (25) Commission Cases, and we have received eleven (11) new cases and one recertified in FY17;
  - Eight (8) Office Cases, eight (8) new cases have been assigned to the ALJs;

- Four (4) CBX cases, three (3) new cases have come in; and
- One FCRSA case.
- To date, the Commission has closed:
  - Ten (10) Commission cases,
  - Eight (8) Office cases, and
  - Three (3) CBX cases.
- Commissioners Aizawa, Muhammad, and Mulhauser were sworn in on May 25, 2017. A new Commissioner, Eleanor Collinson, has been nominated by the Mayor, confirmed by the City Council, and is awaiting swearing in on July 24, 2017.
- The Commission's current summer law clerks were introduced. First, Jasmine Alexander, a native of North Carolina and Florida; a graduate of Florida State University; and a rising 2L at Howard Law. Next, Kaiwon Tresvant, a native Washingtonian from Ward 4, who attended Marshall University in West Virginia and is a rising 2L at Howard Law as well. Ms. Alexander and Mr. Tresvant gave their greeting to the Commission. Both have been with the Commission since early June.
- The Commission's incoming law clerk, Daniel Gick, was introduced. Mr. Gick is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Carleton University and recent graduate of Georgetown Law, where he was a top student in Chief Judge Simmons' Employment Discrimination Class. He will be the Commission's first full-year, post-graduate law clerk participating through a Georgetown Law fellowship. The Commission ALJs are excited to have Mr. Gick join. Mr. Gick gave greetings to the Commission.

Chairperson Fowlkes initiated discussion to clarify what appeared to be a discrepancy in the case numbers between OHR and the Commission. Additionally, the Chairperson led discussion of the Commission's attempts to hold meetings in the various Wards with the ANCs. The role of a Commissioner was discussed by several Commissioners. Additionally, the Chairperson asked for an update on the development of the Commission's Case Management System. Judge Howard addressed the extensive groundwork that was completed and stated that the System was in development and is expected to be ready for beta testing in August. Finally, the Commission engaged in discussion about providing water at the Commission meetings and the possibility of Metro cards being provided to Commissioners to travel to attend meeting using public transportation.

## **VII. OLD BUSINESS**

The Commissioners engaged in a discussion of the Pride events that they participated in. A Commissioner inquired whether a banner or t-shirts could be prepared for the Commission to march in and publicize its presence to the public.

The Commission revisited its discussion regarding holding Commission Meetings in the

Community and its efforts to reach out to local leadership.

## **VIII. NEW BUSINESS**

Chairperson Fowlkes gave congratulations on behalf of the Commission to former Commissioner Mathew McCollough. Commissioner McCollough was required to step down from the Commission as of July 10, 2017, when he nominated by the Mayor to be the Director of the Office of Disability Rights. Acting Director McCollough was given the floor.

Director McCollough introduced his wife Melissa. He gave thanks to the Commissioners and ALJs for the work they have done together since he joined the Commission in 2011. Director McCollough noted that the ADA will have been around for 27 years as of July 26, and its impact. He also told the Commissioners that with the roles of ODR, OHR, and the Commission in enforcing the ADA and DCHRA this will not be a goodbye. He gave recognition to mentors, heralded the progress he has seen made, and thanked those gathered for their collective service.

Chairperson Fowlkes then welcomed Commissioner Collinson who he noted attended the previous meeting as well. Commissioner Collinson was given the opportunity to introduce herself again. Commissioner Collinson noted her work with Commissioner McCollough during the past couple of years she has served as the Chief Program Officer for United Cerebral Palsy. Prior to joining UCP, Commissioner Collinson worked with the Raben Group. Commissioner Collinson was a producer on the March on Washington Film Festival several years ago when it debuted for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the March. She noted that this year's Festival would occur next week and she could provide tickets for Commissioners that would like to attend the headline screening at the Supreme Court of Walk with Me: the Judge Damon Keith Documentary.

## **IX. COMMUNITY COMMENTS**

Community comments were provided by Mr. Michael Sindram. He congratulated Commissioner McCollough. He addressed several concerns with OHR and announced a federal law suit he stated he filed against OHR seeking injunctive relief. Mr. Sindram also made comments regarding his efforts to help a homeless person, Lyndon Smith, who he brought to the meeting with him.

## **X. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

No announcement were made.

## **XI. ADJOURNMENT**

The Commission's July 2017 public meeting adjourned at approximately 7:56 pm.