

# MICHIGAN CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION

July 28, 2014 – 2:00 p.m.  
George E. Potter Center, Jackson College  
2111 Emmons Road, Jackson, MI 49201

## MINUTES

PRESENT: Commission Chair Arthur Horwitz  
Commission Vice-Chair Rasha Demashkieh  
Commission Secretary Jared Rodriguez  
Commissioner Agustin Arbulu  
Commissioner Linda Gobler  
Commissioner Deloris Hunt  
Commissioner Linda Lee Tarver  
Commissioner Bradley Voss

*The meeting was called to order by Commission Chair Horwitz at 2:00 p.m.*

### I. WELCOME

Chair Horwitz provided initial welcoming remarks, and introduced Dr. Daniel Phelan, President, Jackson College. Dr. Phelan provided welcoming remarks and provided background information on the school as well as major goals and accomplishments the administration has set for providing a quality and affordable education to the surrounding community and beyond.

### II. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES FROM MAY 19, 2014

On Motion duly made and supported, the Minutes from the May 19, 2014 Commission Meeting were approved. ***Motion passed unanimously.***

### III. ADOPTION OF CONSENT AGENDA

On Motion duly made and supported, the Consent Agenda with the exclusion of items 2, 3, 9 and 10 for the July 28, 2014 Commission Meeting was approved. ***Motion passed unanimously.***

### IV. DIVISION REPORTS

Consent Agenda Item 2: Director's Report, Matt Wesaw

Director Wesaw touched on the subjects of the approved Interpreter Rules, the Summer All-Agency Meeting where recognitions were made for work on the Interpreter Rules as well as the Good Government awards for Excellence and Leadership; Strategic Plan delayed until next Commission Meeting – culture change within the Department and how we do business, as well as 3-5 goals; Transitions – MDCR will continue with only one anti-bullying initiative; Sharon Ellis and ADA

Compliance Unit transferring from DTMB to MDCR; DODHH office also moving from current location to Lansing MDCR Office. Completed Executive Leadership Training for the Governor's Cabinet – Good Government Through Intercultural Competency. Civil Rights Curriculum – Southern Law Poverty Center graded Michigan with failing grade. Mark Bishop and Melissa Claramunt will serve on the state committee workgroup to address this issue; the Commission will have input on recommendations from MDCR.

Consent Agenda Item 3: Enforcement Report, Lori Vinson

Ms. Vinson touched on the subjects of the Enforcement Division's completion of federal contracts for the 2013-14 fiscal year, full staffing of the Housing Unit, Fair Housing partnership grants, new Enforcement Division staff consisting of Tonya Barry and Glovita Lamar-Brown assigned to the Intake Unit, and Aaron Clum assigned to the Flint Investigator Team; work regarding promulgation of the DODHH Rules and development of the DODHH complaint process, as well as implementation of complaint entry to CMS database.

For follow-up at next meeting, Commissioner Tarver had questions regarding discrepancies in state and federal laws with regards to disability laws, identifying what discrepancies exist, and what the Commission and/or the Department can do to possibly resolve those issues. Dan Levy indicated he would provide follow-up. Commissioner Tarver also asked that MDCR publicize completed cases where unlawful discrimination was proven to bring awareness to MDCR's authority in terms of enforcing civil rights laws and protecting citizens from unlawful discrimination.

## VII. COMMISSION MATTERS

Consent Agenda Item 10: Attorney General Report, Ron Robinson

Mr. Robinson introduced student interns Jessica Soblesky and Alice Long; provided status updates on the cases of *Barash v. SMART* and *Smith v. Countryside Townhouses*.

For follow-up, Commissioner Tarver requested a summary of all completed cases for which unlawful discrimination was proven. Ron Robinson indicated that he would provide the summary.

Consent Agenda Item 9: Chairman Report, Arthur Horwitz

Chair Horwitz commended Director Wesaw and the MDCR Staff on the progress made in creating a new culture of improved communications, teamwork and camaraderie within the department that will help to better serve the people of Michigan who look to MDCR for assistance. Chair Horwitz also touched on the upcoming 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary dinner and symposium events on September 18-19, as well as the Commission's plan to develop and implement a strategic plan.

## VIII. OLD BUSINESS

Follow up to Commissioner Tarver's request for the Commission to explore and focus on prioritizing and addressing major issues plaguing African-Americans (i.e. education, crime rates, incarceration and pipeline to prison, domestic violence against women, HIV rates, etc.). Reports referenced include the National Urban League 2014 State of Black America; Kids Count.

MOTION (Commissioner Tarver): That the Department provide a report related to African American issues that are prevalent to the state of Michigan for the Commission to explore and provide leadership in addressing. SUPPORT (Commissioner Gobler)

After discussion, Commissioner Horwitz recommended that the Commission seek information that expands the knowledge of the Commission on issues of particular concern to the African-American community that it may not be aware of, not to the exclusion of any other community, and that information is something that in the course of developing a strategic plan can be accessed at various commission meetings and other similar gatherings.

Commissioner Tarver accepted Chair Horwitz' recommendation, and withdrew her Motion. Director Wesaw will ensure that the next Commission meeting will include speakers and presentations by community organization leaders/representatives to provide information on this issue.

## IX. NEW BUSINESS

- 1) Adoption of October 2014 Commission Meeting date - After discussion, the Commission agreed on the date of October 6, 2014, and the location to be the City of Pontiac.
- 2) Proposed 2015 Commission Meeting Schedule – The proposed meeting dates include January 26, March 23, May 18, July 27, September 28, November 23 (fourth Mondays of the month).
- 3) 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Events, September 18-19, 2014 – The celebration events consist of a dinner at the Charles H. Wright Museum in Detroit, Judge Damon Keith will serve as the keynote, to include present and former commissioners, MDCR executive directors, and agency partners and friends. On the following day, the Department will host an all-day symposium at the Damon Keith Center at Wayne State University Law School in Detroit, to include panel discussions on the past, present and future of civil rights, and a sit-down luncheon. More details will be communicated to the Commission as the dates approach.

- 4) Presentations by Barbara Levine and State Representative Joe Haveman on civil rights issues in Michigan's state prison system.

X. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

On Motion duly made and supported, the meeting of the Michigan Civil Rights Commission was adjourned at 4:43 p.m. ***Motion passed unanimously.***

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Secretary

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Director