

Human Relations Commission
Meeting Minutes
January 16, 2019 5:00 p.m.

Attendance: Jeanette Blackwell, Justin Carbonella, Brandie Doyle, Henry Fernandez, Edward Ford, Debbie Ruimerman, Howard Thody, and Faith Jackson, Director of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Management

Excused Absence: Ava Hart

Absence: None

QUORUM: *Yes:* X *No:*

Call to Order: Chairperson Carbonella called the meeting to order at 5:10 p.m. He welcomed back Commissioner Doyle and asked how everyone was doing. Commissioner Doyle said that she and her daughter are doing very well. Chairperson Carbonella then asked for those present to say their names for the record. Director Jackson said that Commissioner Walton had resigned due to moving out of Middletown. She also said that Commissioner Hart was excused. Councilman Nocera and members of the Racial Justice Coalition, Beverly Lawrence, Betsy Morgan, and Precious Price were present.

Public Session: None.

Regular Meeting:

Approval of Revised Agenda: Chairperson Carbonella asked for a motion to approve the Revised Meeting Agenda. Commissioner Ford motioned to approve the Revised Meeting Agenda, and Commissioner Thody seconded it. The motion was properly carried.

Approval of Minutes: Chairperson Carbonella asked for a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes of November 14, 2018. Commissioner Ford motioned to approve the Meeting Minutes of November 14, 2018, and Commissioner Thody seconded it. The motion was properly carried with one abstention.

Old Business:

Chairperson Carbonella asked Director Jackson to give the commission a brief overview of the correspondence with Joyce James. Director Jackson advised the commission that after the last meeting, she was charged to request Joyce James to review the initial proposal that she'd given the commission and break it down into actionable parts along with coordinating dollars. The commission wanted a proposal similar to NCCJ's so it could make a better comparison. She explained that she emailed Joyce James and asked for her to respond by January 3, 2019. Joyce James emailed Director Jackson on December 27, 2018 saying that she was withdrawing her proposal from consideration. Director Jackson read to the commission Joyce James's withdrawal. Based on that, the commission has the decision to move forward with NCCJ or not. She added that the commission could include in its decision that both Cynthia Martin and Randi Renee McCray be a part of the work, and this language can be in the contract.

Councilman Nocera said that he thought Joyce James's email was well written. He added that he's optimistic about the protocol established by NCCJ.

Commissioner Doyle asked the commission about the concerns that were expressed in September. Director Jackson asked Precious Price to answer that. Precious Price said that prior to the interview there was a two-day workshop run by NCCJ, which she attended. Based on her experience at the workshop and the fact that there was a turnover in staff, she felt more comfortable with NCCJ.

Chairperson Carbonella said it seemed the commission had a lot of confidence in Cynthia Martin and Randi Renee McCray. Commissioner Fernandez added that he liked that they were local and passionate about the work. Director Jackson said she was pleased with the approach that they would be working together and that the commission would still be the driver of the project.

Director Jackson advised that once the commission makes its decision, she will have to immediately start working with the City's OnBase program and Purchasing to establish a contract. Chairperson Carbonella asked if the commission could move forward once a decision has been made or if it would have to go before the Common Council. Councilman Nocera answered that it would not have to go before the Common Council. However, it would be beneficial to provide an update to the Common Council at its March meeting. Chairperson Carbonella said he would be present for that meeting.

Chairperson Carbonella said that while the office works on the contract process, the commission can work concurrently on blocking off dates or scheduling trainings. He also suggested that the commission have an initial planning meeting with the two of them. Director Jackson agreed that would be an important next step. There was discussion of scheduling an additional meeting on February 20, 2019. Also, the commission could invite NCCJ to the February meeting. As the commission further discussed next steps, Chairperson Carbonella asked for an official motion to select NCCJ, if that was the commission's desire.

Motion: Commissioner Ruimerman motioned that the commission work with NCCJ with the understanding that Randi Renee McCray be a part of the project. Commissioner Fernandez made a friendly amendment that Randi Renee McCray be a part of the project through its entirety. Commissioner Ruimerman accepted the amendment. Commissioner Thody seconded the motion. Chairperson Carbonella asked for any discussion. Precious Price asked what the alternative would be if Randi Renee McCray could not be available. The commission discussed that possibility and decided that it should be crafted in the contract language. There being no further discussion, Commissioner Carbonella asked for a vote. The motioned passed unanimously.

Chairperson Carbonella thanked the commission members, Common Council members, and those present from the Racial Justice Coalition for their work to get to this point in this project. Commissioner Doyle thanked the City of Middletown and the Common Council for funding the project. Director Jackson thanked Councilman Nocera for his commitment to the commission in this work.

New Business:

Discuss: Commissioner Doyle asked about the vacancy. She asked if there is consideration of party affiliation. Director Jackson said she would look into the party affiliation split for the commission. She added that it's best to have a commissioner who is familiar with the work when recommending someone to fill the vacancy and was wondering if anyone from the Racial Justice Coalition would be interested and if so to let her know.

Review: The commission reviewed the 2018 attendance.

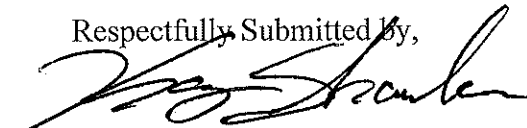
Announcements: Chairperson Carbonella announced that the State Commission on Equity and Opportunity will be meeting in Middletown, and he believes that the commission can get a membership to the Government Alliance on Race and Equity. Some of the guiding documents at the start of this work came from GARE. The State Commission would hold a membership, and it would offer an extension of that membership into this work, so the commission would have access to the benefits without paying for the membership.

Chairperson Carbonella said he followed up on the two guests who were in attendance at the last meeting and some of the concerns the commission had. He discussed the issue with the Office of General Counsel. He was told that these meetings are public. People from the public have the right to be in the room, record, and take notes during the meetings as long as they are not disruptive and do not participate. The commission can go into executive session if it wishes to do so in the future. Director Jackson said going forward if the commission sees someone different in the room, it needs to stop at the beginning of the meeting and ask if he or she is from the public and what is his or her purpose for attending for the record.

The commission's next scheduled meeting will **February 20, 2019 at 5:00 p.m., location to be determined.**

Adjournment: Commissioner Ford motioned to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Doyle seconded. The chairperson called for a vote. The motion was properly carried. The meeting was adjourned at 6:09 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by,



Kasey Shoemaker,
Administrative Sec. III