

**Human Rights Commission
Meeting Summary
January 12, 2009 Room 310B Worcester City Hall**

Present: Cheryl Pope, Chair; Eduardo Rivera, Vice-Chair; Mable Millner, Clerk;
Maria Florez, Edward G. Robinson – Commissioners; Fran Manocchio - staff

Unable to Attend: Kathy Gervais, Sean Rose

Members of the Community: None present

Meeting called to order at 6:05 pm

1. Minutes of December 2008 meeting approved, as submitted.
2. City of Worcester, Department of Health and Human Services: Proposed Return to City Hall
On November 4, 2008 a letter was sent by the Human Rights Commission, signed by Cheryl Pope, Chair, regarding proposed move to City Hall. Commissioners expressed their concerns regarding the essential need for confidentiality, adequate office and meeting space, and input into the design of the office space. The City Manager recently announced that the Human Rights Division was returning to City Hall and would be located on the first floor. This would give the Director, Fran Manocchio, access to staff who have been at City Hall for the past year. However, that proposed plan has changed from the first floor to the fourth floor. Ms. Pope and Ms. Manocchio will tour the proposed location tomorrow with Jay Gardiner, Acting Commissioner of the Department of Health and Human Services.
3. Public Policy Item: CORI Reform and Proposed Ordinance/Role of the Human Rights Commission
The City Manager's Office is coordinating the work on this issue. The Human Rights Commission's report was sent to the City Manager's Office.
4. Action Items:
 - a. Posting HRC meetings, agendas and meeting summaries on City of Worcester's website: Fran Manocchio contacted Technical Services and we will begin this policy by the end of January 2009.
 - b. City Manager's Community Coalition on Bias and Hate:
 - i. December 3, 2008 Press Conference – On Wednesday, December 3, 2008 the City Manager's Community Coalition held a press conference at City Hall in response to a recent hate crime. Speakers included: Congressman McGovern, City Manager O'Brien, Mayor Lukes, Police Chief Gemme, Rabbi Seth Bernstein, District Attorney Early, and Worcester State College's Director of Diversity, Edna Spencer. At least 50 individuals attended the press conference as well as several media outlets. The press conference was called to send out a message that Worcester does not tolerate hate.

- ii. “RESPECT: It’s the Way to Play” - The Youth Work Group of the City Manager’s Community Coalition on Bias and Hate, in collaboration with Worcester Public Schools, the City of Worcester’s Youth Office and the College of the Holy Cross, recently launched a new initiative, “RESPECT: It’s the Way to Play.” Starting with the pre-winter sports assemblies, we distributed several hundred RESPECT: It’s the Way to Play pledge cards at the assemblies which also featured members of the Holy Cross men’s basketball team. We gave each of the eight public high schools a 10’ by 10’ poster with the respect pledge that will be on display throughout winter sports season. We will continue this initiative throughout all athletic seasons within Worcester Public Schools and in community settings.
- c. FY2009 Goals and Objectives: Final work plan will be reviewed at the February 2, 2009 meeting.
- d. Boston Marathon Work Plan: Discussion held regarding Jaime Flores’ offer to complete the Boston Marathon in order to raise funds for the HRC. City Council approved this item. Cheryl Pope and Maria Florez agreed to have their names and phone numbers listed on materials as the contacts.
- e. Social Justice Roundtable – Next Steps: The Third Sector New England awarded The Willis Center a \$5,000 capacity building grant.
- f. FY2009 Ordinary Maintenance Account: To be discussed at February 2, 2009 meeting.

5. Old Business:

- a. “What To Do When Stopped By The Police”: Hannah Caruso, intern, is coordinating this effort. We will have the wallet-size cards available in English, Spanish and Vietnamese; we are also exploring Albanian and Portuguese. Fran Manocchio and Hannah Caruso are working on a community outreach plan that will be presented at the February 2, 2009 meeting.
- b. PIP Training: Larry Raymond, Director of the City’s Office on Disabilities and Fran Manocchio will facilitate a training session for staff of the PIP. This training is in response to complaints that both the Office on Disabilities and the Office of Human Rights received from guests at the PIP.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:10 pm

Next meeting: Monday, February 2, 2009

Respectfully submitted,
Fran Manocchio