

Chairperson
Edward G. Robinson

Vice chairperson
Aaron Richman



**City of Worcester
Human Rights Commission**

Members:
Cara Berg Powers
Harry Danso
Kathleen Gervais
Robyn Kennedy
Shirley Konneh
Eduardo Rivera

Meeting Summary for December 1st, 2014
Worcester City Hall, Esther Howland Chamber

Members Present: Kathleen Gervais, Robyn Kennedy, Shirley Konneh, Aaron Richman, Edward G. Robinson, Cara Berg Powers, Harry Danso, and Eduardo Rivera
Members Absent: None
Staff: Jayna Turchek and Sundar Layalu

- 1. Call to order:** A quorum was established and the meeting was called to order at 6:05pm.
- 2. Introductions:** Introductions were made
- 3. Approval of November 3rd, 2014 Meeting Minutes:** Unanimously approved with one minor correction in bullet number 9; instead of using adjournment it should be mentioned loss of quorum.
- 4. Old Business:**

a) Final plans for Eleanor Hawley Award and Human Rights Day Celebration (December 9th, 2014)

Each awardee was notified and is planning to attend. Invitations were sent out by mail and email and were included in the new Office of Human Rights & Disabilities electronic newsletter. Commissioners were asked to sign up for tasks to complete prior to and on the date of the award. Commissioners also discussed award design, visibility, and method for presenting the award. The Commission approved the program. The program includes welcoming awardee and participants, recitation of universal human rights declaration, refreshment, and comments of city mayor and city manager.

5. New Business

a) Information about Presidential Executive Order on immigration: Dayanna Moreno from Ascentria Care Alliance

Ms. Moreno had a last minute cancellation and was unable to attend today's meeting.

b) Announcement: International Migrants Day brown bag lunch forum (December 18th)

Jayna shared information about an informational session to be held on December 18 at the Worcester City Hall, Levi Lincoln Chamber. Ascentria Care Alliance and the City of Worcester Office of Human Rights & Disabilities are hosting an information session on President Obama's announcement of "Immigration Accountability" executive action.

c) Review of 2014 Human Rights Campaign Municipal Equality Index Report

Jayna shared that the city of Worcester was awarded a perfect 100 score in the Municipal Equity Index. According to Human Rights Campaign, the Municipal Equality Index (MEI) examines the laws, policies, and services of municipalities and rates them on the basis of their inclusivity of LGBT people who live and work there. The city of Worcester jumped from 55 (last year) to 100 for the changes that were made by the city, including passing protections against discrimination in places of public accommodation, banning discrimination in city employment, adding a LGBTQ liaison in both the city manager's office and the police department.

d) Review of Worcester Police Department, Bureau of Professional Standards 1st quarter report of 2014

The Commission discussed the 1st quarter report and shared some common questions. The usefulness of the report was questioned and a broader conversation about the form of the report was discussed. Aaron shared that he compiled a reference guide to the codes for offenses cited in the report from the Worcester Police Department Rules and Regulations.

e) Planning for 2015 Fair Housing Poster Contest

The Commission is interested in pursuing a 2015 Fair Housing Poster contest with an award ceremony at the 3rd Annual Worcester Fair Housing Conference in April. Cara will prepare a draft contest announcement for the January meeting.

f) Upcoming events: St. Patrick's Day parade (March 8th, 2015)

The Commission decided to march in the 2015 St. Patrick's Day Parade.

6. Commissioners' Reports:

Kathleen contributed her time and expertise to bring awareness and education on human trafficking. She facilitated a group at the Salvation Army as part of her work as one of the new outreach workers at Spectrum (Everyday Miracles).

Aaron made communication with the Cambridge Human Rights Director for more information about their LGBTQ shelter survey.

Cara participated in the protests after the Ferguson decision and discussed ideas to bring down injustice and to empower those prone to such injustice and inequalities.

Eduardo attended a crime watch meeting and shared his opinion on crime and human rights among participants of that meeting.

Shirley attended the community meeting with the post office to hear the report of the conclusion of their investigation of the hangman noose incident. She commented on the need for greater diversity in the workplace (in general) and reflected on how important it is for job applicants to see someone like them in interviews.

Edward attended the NAACP meeting and raised issues against racism. He attended Transgender Day of remembrance at the Worcester Public Library. He mentioned that the LGBTQ community used to face sense of disbelief, which now turned to a sense of gratitude and a feeling of acceptance; an appointment of an

LGBTQ police officer is recognition of acceptance. He acknowledged the idea of gender-neutral bathroom issue in the Worcester College Consortium “QUILT BAG” meeting. Edward also attended the PFLAG meeting, city council meeting and, asylum (LGBTQ) meeting. He also attended the “Stop Ebola” event held at Union Station and raised voice against racial discrimination that goes along with the Ebola hysteria.

7. Location of next monthly meeting (January 5th, 2015): City Hall

8. Public Comment: None

9. Adjournment at 8:00pm
