

**STATE OF ILLINOIS
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

Meeting of the Commission
February 24, 2010
10:00 a.m.

James R. Thompson Center
Pollution Control Board
100 West Randolph Street, Suite 11-512
Chicago, Illinois
and
Lincoln Land Training Center
130 W. Mason Street, Room 104
Springfield, Illinois

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Commissioners

In Chicago

Chairman Martin R. Castro
Sakhawat Hussain, M.D. (arrived after roll call)
David Chang
Robert S. Enriquez
Marylee V. Freeman
Spencer Leak, Sr.
Munir Muhammad (arrived after roll call)
Rozanne Ronen
Yonnie Stroger
Diane Viverito

In Springfield

Marti Baricevic

Staff

Reva Bauch
Dr. Ewa I. Ewa
Michael J. Evans
Harriet Parker
Donyelle L. Gray
Evelio Mora

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Christine Welninski

Absent N. Keith Chambers
Gregory Simoncini

Members of Public: *None*

NOTICE:

Public meetings and closed meetings of the Illinois Human Rights Commission are audio recorded.

I. Call to Order

On February 24, 2010, at 10:07 a.m., Chairman Martin R. Castro called to order a meeting of the Illinois Human Rights Commission.

Pursuant to the Illinois Open Meetings Act, 5 ILCS 120/1 et seq., it was determined that:

A quorum of the public body was present at the meeting without the physical presence of Commissioners Simoncini, Hussain, and Muhammad. Prior to the meeting Commissioner Simoncini gave notice (and good cause as defined by the Illinois Open Meetings Act) to the General Counsel and Secretary of the Public Body, Harriet Parker, that he would be unable to attend the February 24, 2010, meeting.

II. Consideration of Minutes

January 27, 2010

The minutes of the meeting of January 27, 2010, were approved as submitted by staff. Motion made by Commissioner Freeman, with a second by Commissioner Stroger. Motion carried 9-0. Commissioner Hussain and Commissioner Muhammad did not vote.

III. Staff Reports

A. N. Keith Chambers, Executive Director

As Executive Director N. Keith Chambers was on vacation and therefore, absent from the February 24, 2010 meeting, Chairman Castro advised the Commission that absent questions, discussion of the Executive

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Director's report would be tabled until the next meeting. No questions were raised regarding the Executive Director's Report.

Chairman Castro advised the Commission, that he, Executive Director Chambers, Commissioner Simoncini and Dr. Ewa had met on February 1, 2010, to discuss the Commission's FY 2011 budget.

B. Dr. Ewa I. Ewa, Chief Fiscal Officer

Chief Fiscal Officer Dr. Ewa distributed a draft of the FY 2011 budget and explained that after rigorous negotiations with relevant state officials he had successfully prevailed in saving the Commission from the imposition of a 3 percent plus 14 percent reduction in the HRC's FY 2011 budget. However, after FY 2010 the HRC will be responsible for payment of its retirement/pension plan costs. Accordingly, the HRC budget for FY 2011 will be increased by an additional \$462,000 to cover this cost. Although the HRC will not lose staff, the three current vacant positions must remain unfilled due to budgetary constraints. The FY 2011 budget will increase from 2.1 million to 2.3 million.

C. Michael J. Evans, Chief Administrative Law Judge

Chief Administrative Law judge Evans reported that thirty-two (32) cases were filed with the Commission and thirty-one (31) cases were disposed of for the month of January 2010.

Judge Evans also reported that there may be a rise in complaint filings due to staffing issues with the Illinois Department of Human Rights.

D. Harriet J. Parker, General Counsel

General Counsel Harriet Parker reported the Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA") was Amended effective January 1, 2010. The new changes include reduced response time from 7 days to 5 days after receipt of a FOIA request, new procedures regarding when and how a FOIA may be denied, and the requirement to accept anonymous requests.

Ms. Parker reported that all State of Illinois agencies are now required by statute to designate an Open Meetings Act Officer. The Commission voted to designate Ms. Parker as the Commission's Open Meetings Act Officer. Motion made by Commissioner Ronen, seconded by Commissioner Freeman. Motion passed 11-0 to designate Ms. Parker as Open Meetings Act Officer.

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Ms. Parker reported that the HRC's rulemaking to amend its Procedural Rules to conform to newly enacted changes in the Human Rights Act had been accepted by the Joint Committee On Administrative Rules.

The General Counsel reminded the Commission that on March 15, 2010, the Illinois Secretary of State will mail out Statements of Economic Interest forms to all Commissioners and that a timely response is required.

Ms. Parker stated that she has completed work on an updated Commissioners Training Manual (which must be typed), and suggested a possible Training for the Commissioners-old and new- in late March or April, on what would normally be an En banc Meeting day.

Lastly, the General Counsel reported that GC staff was proposing a possible amendment to the Ill. Human Rights Act to add weight and height as a protected class. It was determined the GC should send this recommendation to the Commission's Legislative Committee for review.

IV. Old Business

Executive Session

Pursuant to the Open Meetings Act (5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1)), the Commissioners voted to close a portion of the public meeting at 10:24 a.m. in order to discuss internal personnel matters. Motion made by Chairman Castro, seconded by Commissioner Freeman. Motion carried 11-0. Motion made by Commissioner Hussain to return to the open meeting, seconded by Commissioner Enriquez. Motion carried 11-0. At 10:45 a.m., the open meeting resumed.

V. New Business

Commissioner Muhammad suggested the resumption of continuing legal education training to allow HRC staff the opportunity to explain their respective Commission position duties. General Counsel Parker explained such training while feasible would involve the need to extend the En Banc meeting, and would require a possible reduction in Panel meetings. Chairman Castro shared that he had recently attended a DHR sponsored workshop and suggested the Commissioners attend DHR trainings, time permitting.

Commissioner Ronen suggested an update of the Commission's brochure. Chairman Castro suggested the Commission's brochure be translated into several languages to better reflect the Commission's mission. Commissioner Enriquez suggested the

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Commission collaborate with the Department of Human Rights to jointly create an electronic brochure.

Motion to exclude Photographs from the Annual Report made by Commissioner Ronen, seconded by Commissioner Muhammad. Motion carried 11-0.

VI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:02 a.m. Motion made by Commissioner Hussain, with a second by Commissioner Freeman. Motion carried 11-0.