



MINUTES

BOARD OF EQUAL RIGHTS COMMISSIONERS December 2, 2015 at 2:30 PM in Room 301B of City Hall

Present:

Aldira Aldape
Marquette Baylor
Mayhoua Moua
Chez Ordonez
Jeffrey Roman, Chair

Maria Monteagudo, Employee Relations Director (DER)
Kristin Urban, Human Resources Compliance Officer (DER)
MaryNell Regan, Fire and Police Commission Executive Director (FPC)
Sharon Robinson, Administration Director (DOA)
Steve Mahan, Block Grant Director (DOA)

Absent: None

Commissioner Roman commenced the meeting at 2:35 p.m.

1. Approval of minutes from the October 21, 2015 ERC meeting.

Commissioner Aldape moved approval of the October 21, 2015 minutes; the motion was seconded by Commissioner Moua. The minutes were approved unanimously.

2. Discussion regarding transition of ERC from the Department of Employee Relations (DER) to the Department of Administration (DOA)

Ms. Monteagudo explained that the 2016 City of Milwaukee budget includes an Equal Rights Specialist position that will be within the Department of Administration (DOA) and will staff the Equal Rights Commission. The position will be classified by the Department of Employee Relations' Compensation staff and that classification must be approved by the Finance and Personnel Committee. Ms. Monteagudo introduced Steve Mahan and Sharon Robinson of the DOA and said they would be selecting the ER Specialist and working closely with that individual. Ms. Robinson indicated that the ER Specialist may report directly to her.

Ms. Monteagudo said that FPC Executive Director MaryNell Regan is here to discuss the proposed collaboration on community engagement with the ERC, which the ERC has discussed at the last few meetings. Under this proposed model, the ERC would serve as a conduit regarding community issues for the Executive Director of the FPC.

Ms. Monteagudo stated that Mr. Mahan would like to discuss the ERC's role related to HUD funding of community organizations, including the Fair Housing Council. Ms. Monteagudo

indicated that this is a brainstorming session for short and long-term goals for the ERC in this period of transition.

Mr. Mahan stated that there are mandatory requirements for receipt of HUD funding, including maintaining an arm that addresses equal rights pertaining to fair housing. This piece is generally managed by the Metropolitan Fair Housing Council (FHC). Mr. Mahan said that the ERC could oversee the complaints received by the FHC or could review aggregate data regarding complaints and how they are handled. Ms. Monteagudo indicated that in the past, the ERC referred housing complaints to the FHC, however there has not been a mechanism for the FHC to provide feedback to ERC regarding how complaints have been addressed. Ms. Monteagudo suggested that the ERC could further define how to measure success for the FHC in addressing equal housing issues. Mr. Mahan suggested that the new ER Specialist may serve as a compliance officer for the HUD funding that is run through the Fair Housing Council. Additionally, Mr. Mahan said that the ERC could request specific reports and identify holes in the system, based upon an analysis of these reports. Ms. Monteagudo asked how this enhanced accountability role and reporting expectation would be conveyed to the FHC; Mr. Mahan responded that could be done through a letter to the FHC. Ms. Monteagudo asked that Mr. Mahan send the ERC the language in the 2016 FHC contract that establishes the accountability expectations.

Commissioner Roman asked how the job description would be drafted to reflect the other areas that the ER Specialist would support. Ms. Monteagudo indicated that a preliminary job description had been drafted by the DOA. Ms. Monteagudo mentioned that fair housing is only one piece of the ERC's role; the ERC has spent a lot of time on one of their other prime functions: accountability. Specifically, most meetings have included a presentation by a City department head, not only to educate the ERC regard the roles, initiatives, successes and challenges of his or her respective department, but to afford the ERC members an opportunity to ask the department head questions regarding access and other accountability concerns. Ms. Monteagudo stressed that the accountability role is as important as the fair housing role in the ERC's purpose under Chapter 109. Commissioner Baylor also stressed that the accountability piece is a very important aspect of the ERC's role and that the proposed community relations collaboration with the FPC is critical. Commissioner Baylor stressed that the ER Specialist should not just work on fair housing issues because the ERC would not want to lose momentum on police relations and other accountability initiatives. Commissioner Baylor suggested that this expectation be spelled out in the job description. Commissioner Roman reiterated Commissioner Baylor's concern and said that the ERC had three primary roles: community engagement, accountability and housing and employment discrimination; the ER Specialist job description should be reflective of the scope of the position. Ms. Monteagudo stated that the Mayor wants to maintain the accountability piece, which could be an ongoing part of the AIM meetings. Ms. Monteagudo suggested that there are other programs in the DOA with which the Equal Rights Specialist may interface, such My Brother's Keeper and the Black Male Achievement programs.

Ms. Regan suggested that she would be willing to partner with the incumbent of the ER Specialist position to brainstorm ideas, including having educational forums as part of the community and neighborhood engagement role. Ms. Regan also suggested that as a housekeeping matter, Chapter 109 could be amended to provide clarification of the role of the ERC.

Commissioner Roman asked whether the ERC members would have an opportunity to review the job description. Ms. Robinson expressed concern that the workload of the ER Specialist

would be affected by the expectation that the ERC meet four times per year. Commissioner Romans said that the ERC would likely meet monthly, as they had been, and then reassess the need as the ER Specialist position evolves. Commissioner Baylor mentioned that the ERC also has two subcommittees: community and neighborhood engagement and accountability. Ms. Monteagudo suggested that the ERC send suggestions regarding the knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics for the ER Specialist to Ms. Urban; Ms. Robinson said that would be a good idea. Commissioner Ordonez asked whether there is an official transition date from the DER to the DOA for the ERC's work. Ms. Robinson said that DOA would assume responsibility for the ERC after January 1, 2016. Ms. Monteagudo said she and her staff are happy to facilitate the transition. Commissioner Baylor mentioned that there are two open seats on the ERC; Commissioners Aldape and Baylor said they had recommendations for individuals to serve on the ERC. Ms. Monteagudo recommended that the commissioners send their recommendations to Clifton Crump of the Mayor's office.

3. Announcement by Commissioners of upcoming community activities.

Commissioner Roman stated that UW-M is hosting the third annual summit for black male youth on December 15 and 16, 2016. This program is for middle and high school students. Commissioner Moua mentioned that the Hmong New Year will be celebrated at the State Fair Grounds on December 5 and 6, 2016 and there will be a Hmong Health Conference at UW-M on April 16, 2016.

4. Tentative next meeting date:

Wednesday, January 20, 2016. NOTE: The January 20, 2016 ERC meeting will be rescheduled by DOA staff on a date TBD.

5. Adjourn.

Adjournment moved by Commissioner Ordonez; seconded by Commissioner Baylor. The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m. by a unanimous vote.