

**Human Right Commission  
July 7, 2009 Meeting Minutes**

**Members Present:** Mary Bixby, Glenn Glasgow, Negar Jackson, Mark Thomas, Marissa Todd

**Members Excused:** Jessica Macy, Al Terrill

**Staff Present:** Steve Hollis, Marie Glaze, Shawna Victor, Fred Boeckmann

**Others Present:** Eric Krekel, Director of Investigative Operations, Missouri Commission on Human Rights

- I. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m.
- II. **Approval of Agenda:** Bixby moved to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Glasgow and passed unanimously.
- III. **Approval of June 2, 2009 meeting minutes:** Bixby moved to approve the June 2, 2009 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Jackson and passed unanimously.
- IV. **Guest Presentation:** Eric Krekel, Director of Investigative Operations, Missouri Commission on Human Rights Regarding MCHR Investigative Policies and Procedures

Eric Krekel, Missouri Commission on Human Rights Director of Investigative Operations, made a presentation to the commission regarding the State of Missouri Commission on Human Rights' procedures for the investigation of discrimination in the area of employment.

Krekel said when cases are taken to a public hearing, there is an assistant Attorney General who prosecutes the cases for the MCHR. During the MCHR investigation, they are a fact finding agency only and the AG is not involved. After the investigation is complete, the Executive Director will write a finding. At that time, the case is either closed due to no probable cause, which the complainant can appeal in court, or probable cause is determined. If probable cause is found, then the complainant can have the case mediated. If the complainant decides not to mediate or a settlement cannot be reached then the MCHR Chairperson decides whether the case should be dismissed or a public hearing should be set. The Chair does receive input from the AG as to what cases should be dismissed. If it is a housing case, the public hearing can be skipped and the case can go straight to court.

Thomas asked what the case load is like for MCHR. Krekel said MCHR investigated approximately 2,000 cases last year.

Thomas asked if there are any staffing issues at MCHR. Krekel said they now have 36 employees. In 2000, there were 54 employees.

Hollis asked if the MCHR is prosecuting cases. Krekel said the state acts as the party for the complainant.

Thomas asked where their funding comes from. Krekel said they are a division of the Department of Labor. Because of the work they do, they have more autonomy than other divisions.

Thomas asked what the average time is for investigating a case. Krekel said last year, an investigation took approximately 200 days.

Jackson asked if a "right to sue letter" is issued to someone when the MCHR will not take the case. Krekel said right to sue is issued for those who want to go to court and litigate the

issue themselves. When that letter is issued, MCHR closes their investigation. The person has 90 days to file through the courts.

Jackson asked if the letter is issued when MCHR believes the person has a case. Krekel said that is issued when the complainant requests the letter. The complainant must have the letter before they can go to the court.

Bixby asked if the commission could receive a copy of MCHR's complainant form to review.

Thomas asked Krekel what advice he would give the commission about providing education to local businesses. Krekel said education can prevent a lot of discrimination. MCHR's goal is to prevent and eliminate discrimination.

Hollis said the challenge is not trying to set up a meeting but getting other organizations and entities to partner in the training and possibly partnering with the State more so in the future. Krekel noted MCHR and the City partnered on the Fair Housing Symposium.

Krekel said Alisa Warren, Executive Director Missouri Commission on Human Rights, is interested in bringing the local human rights commissions together.

Thomas thanked Krekel for his presentation, which he found very helpful in understanding the investigation process.

Hollis said staff has a great relationship with the state and they have been a great help for he and Glaze.

**V. Old Business:** There was no old business.

**VI. New Business:** There was no new business at this time.

**VII. Staff Reports**

**A. Community Services:** Hollis said the City is making significant cuts to the FY2010 budget. The department has been asked to cut \$100,000 from their budget, which does not include \$50,000 cut from the Social Services Funding budget. The City is trying to cut back on employee benefits to avoid lay-offs. He noted things could be worse with the FY2011 budget.

Bixby asked if the Diversity Celebration would be cut. Hollis said he does not believe it will be cut as it pays for itself.

**B. Law Department:** Boeckmann said Council postponed a vote on the Citizen Review Board at last night's meeting. There were only four members present and Council had requested some revisions to the draft ordinance. The Council is scheduled to make a final vote at their July 20 meeting.

**C. Human Rights Specialist:** Glaze mailed the following report to the commission:

Glaze attended the Special City Council Meeting on June 8 where Rex Campbell, Chair of the Citizen's Oversight Committee, presented their recommendation that a Citizen's Review Board be established with a representative from the Human Rights Commission on the board. There were a number of citizens who spoke in favor of a Citizen's Review Board and other than members of the Columbia Police Officers Association there was no one who spoke in opposition.

The Columbia/Boone County Department of Public Health and Human Services was a sponsor of the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Pridefest, held on June 13 at Stephen's Lake Park. This year's theme was "Your Rights, Our Rights, Human Rights". The event was attended by over 900 people. Human Rights staff was on hand and provided information about human rights services, the local human rights ordinance and information and an opportunity to sign up for the City's Domestic Partnership Registry. Clinic staff provided GARDASIL and Hepatitis A and/or B vaccinations along with information about other clinical services offered by the department.

Staff continues to field inquiries ranging from housing questions to questions regarding disability issues. Glaze noted Jackson helped with one inquiry.

- I. **Public Comment:** There was no public comment.
- II. **Commissioner Comment:** Thomas noted he also attended the Council meeting on June 8 regarding the Citizen's Review Board. He believes the Council is supportive of this proposed ordinance. The only questions that were raised were from Columbia Police Officers Association regarding the appeal process and the role of the City Manager.
- III. **Closed Session to Discuss Pending Cases Pursuant to Section 610.021 (1) RSMo.:** Jackson made a motion to move to closed session to discuss cases pursuant to Section 610.021(1) RSMo. The motion was seconded by Bixby and a roll call vote was taken. Jackson called the roll with the following vote: Bixby – Aye, Glasgow – Aye, Jackson – Aye, Thomas – Aye, Todd – Aye.
- IV. **Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Steve Hollis, Manager  
Office of Community Services