

MINUTES

**CHICAGO COMMISSION ON HUMAN RELATIONS (CCHR)
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING
May 14, 2020**

Attendance

Commissioners Present:

Joanna Borowiec
Ryan Dunigan
Naderh Elrabadi
Simon Gordon

Emanuel Johnson, II
Reyahd Kazmi
Ray Koenig, III
David Mussatt

Nabeela Rasheed
Michelle Shang

Staff Present:

Kenneth Gunn
Kelly Saulsberry

Gloria Vu
Karen Wallace

Call to Order

Kenneth Gunn called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m. and Gloria Vu recorded the minutes. A quorum of board of commissioners was present, and the meeting, having been duly convened, was ready to proceed with business.

Approval of Minutes

Acting Commissioner Kenneth Gunn presented to the board the minutes of the February 2020 board meeting for approval, where upon motion was duly made by Joanna Borowiec to adopt as written, seconded by Ray Koenig, III and unanimously adopted. The minutes were approved as presented.

Case for Review

Mendoza v Premium Parking LLC, CCHR No. 18-E-56

Karen Wallace provided a summary of the employment discrimination case based on national origin. The Hearing Officer recommended that respondent, Premium Parking LLC, be held liable and recommended the following relief:

- \$45,800 in compensatory damages (\$25,800 back pay damages and \$20,000 for emotional distress damages);
- \$25,000 in punitive damages;
- A fine of \$1,000 to the City;
- Interest on damages;
- Attorney fees in an amount to be determined;
- \$200 fine for each party for failure to appear at the pre-hearing conference.

The Adjudication Review Panel accepted the Hearing Officer's recommendation. David Mussat made a motion to accept the Adjudication Review Panel's recommendation; it was seconded by Reyhd Kazmi and unanimously adopted.

Acting Commissioner's Report

Kenneth Gunn, Acting Commissioner, has reported that the city is requiring non-essential staff to work from home for the time being, as the city is preparing to slowly shift into Phase III of the Mayor's Five-Step Plan. The CCHR will prepare and coordinate how to proceed with intakes as well as spacing staff members throughout the office as a safety precaution. Any Board meetings and large meetings will continue to be conducted on-line.

The CCHR has recently sent out the quarterly newsletter and is currently working on the 2019 Annual Report. One of the biggest projects now is to produce a hate crime video training for the Asian community in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Along with the video, there will also be a webinar. The webinar is scheduled for May 29th, 2020 from 12pm-1pm CDT with Acting Commissioner Kenneth Gunn, State's Attorney Kim Foxx, Commander Chung from the 12th Police District, Andy Kang from Asian's Advancing Justice, and Judy Hsu from ABC channel 7.

Adjudication Update

Karen Wallace, Director of Human Rights Compliance-Employment, reported that the CCHR is still currently receiving complaints through e-mail filings as well as paper filings through the mail. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the CCHR office has been closed to the public and there has been a decline of complaints received (most complaints are received in person). It is a challenge because some do not have the proper resources to send PDFs or have access to the internet. The Adjudication team has been working with DoIt to try and develop an online complaint filing process that would be more user friendly for complainants. The CCHR will look further into this process and updates are to follow.

Inter-Group Relations (IGR) Update

Kelly Saulsberry, Director of Policy and Outreach, reported that because of the pandemic, IGR has not been able to physically be in the community but has still been working virtually. The team has been participating in community conversations, outreach, and has been conducting virtual workshops and peace circles with students. IGR has also participated in community townhall discussions about discrimination against public accommodations, and discrimination in the workplace regarding COVID-19. The Hate Crimes unit also continues to assist victims and is working on hate crime education for the Asian community in light of COVID-19 backlash nationwide. As a part of the city's effort to deal with COVID-19, the city has been re-deploying staff as needed. IGR has also been helping with the Office of New Americans to provide translations for the Census Project.

Old Business

Just Housing Ordinance

The CCHR has been working with the Mayor's Office and the Law Department to draft a Just Housing Ordinance for the city. The goal of the ordinance is to help remove barriers for ex-offenders seeking housing. Cook County passed a similar ordinance in 2019. At this point, the city believes the county's ordinance sufficiently addresses the problem, and as such has delayed any further work on developing a city ordinance.

Amendment regarding Staff Filed complaints

The CCHR, the Mayor's Office, and the Law Department has also been working to add an amendment to the Human Rights Ordinance. The amendment would prohibit staff or family members from filing discrimination complaints with the CCHR, where there are other venues available that can provide the same remedies. The Mayor's Office and the Law Department's recommendation was to not make changes to the Human Rights Ordinance but to create a working agreement with the Illinois Department of Human Rights to handle these complaints. Further updates to follow.

Next Meeting

June 11, 2020 at 3:30 p.m., via ZOOM

There being no further business to come before the board, a motion to adjourn and was unanimously adopted at 4:08 p.m.