

# **Allentown**

*435 Hamilton Street  
Allentown, Pa. 18101*



## **Minutes**

**Thursday, September 5, 2019**

**8:00 PM**

**City Hall, 5th Floor Conference Room**

**Human Relations Commission**

Present: Hamp Smith, Inga Williams, Janet Morillo, Patrick Palmer, Tracie Springer, Wendy Escarfullery and Cheryl Johnson-Watts (Allentown School Board Representative).

Absent: Donna Forrester and Scotty Smith

Courtesy of the floor: 08:01 pm – 08:13 pm. The Chair (Patrick Palmer) opened the floor for resident discussion and informed the residents that this segment was allotted 15 minutes. Resident name Lewis Shupe was filming the meeting as asked for verification of the restriction of the public meeting. Tatiana Tooley (Human Relations Officer) asked the Chair for permission to render and explanation. The Chair allowed the HRO to answer the residents question. The HRO stated that due to the content of the information relating to the discrimination cases we as the Commission are mandated to respect the privacy of the implicated in our discrimination cases.

Resident Vanessa Cornier spoke addressing her concern about the limitation on the public participation during the HRC meeting. The HRO responded by reminding both Mr. Shupe and Miss Cornier that prior to the meeting opening they (Mr. Shupe, Miss Cornier and HRO) had a conversation on the topic of Discrimination cases report conveyed during the close session of the HRC meeting.

Miss Cornier then expressed the following:

- Would like to see funding provided for school uniforms
- School district surplus should go to school & kids instead of fixing credit
- Residents are struggling, and the city is not helping

Allentown School District Board member and HRC Cheryl Johnson-Watts suggested that Miss Corner should contact the Allentown School District Board Secretary for assistance with school uniforms.

## Human Relations Officer Report:

- HRO thanked the Commissioners that were able to attend the Diversity Training
- Spoke about training in Harrisburg, PA for Investigations procedure will take place probably in November and it will be a 3-day training.
- All Commissioners new application was submitted to the Mayor for appointment.
- In order to remove any Commissioners due to absentee, the Chair must mail a letter to the questioned Commissioner. The letter must state to the Commissioner in question that the Commissioner in question has missed 3 or more monthly meetings and there will be a vote to remove the Commissioner in question during the next meeting. This process written in the Allentown Human Relations Commission Ordinance will allow the Commissioner in question to attend the following meeting and assure that he/she will stay in the Commission. The letter will also state that if the Commissioner in question wishes to step down from the Commission, he/she must submit a letter of resignation. The following Commissioners are currently listed as Active Commissioner on the City's Website:
  - o Vinnie Tyrone Steiner (6/6/2018 to?)
  - o Daniel Benitez (5/2/2018 to 11/1/2020)
  - o Patricia Jackson (5/2/2018 to 1/1/2020)
  - o Shalon Burskirk
- 3 open cases, 2 out of 3 have Council to represent the Complainant and Respondent. They have all filed with the PA HRC (per the complainant).
  - o Protocol to follow: HRO must advise the complainant to also file with PHRC. If the complainant filed with PHRC first, then Allentown HRC would not investigate such case.
  - o 1 case is currently on hold till the Complainant submit the Intake Form which has a time limit till 2/9/2020.

## Voting for absentee Human Relations Commissioner:

- The Chair will send a letter to Donna Forrester notifying her that a vote to remove her as a Commissioner will take place during our the next HRC meeting due to her absents.
- o Motioned by Wendy Escarfullery and Seconded by Tracie Springer

## Committees selection:

- Outreach: Inga Williams, Hamp Smith & Tracie Springer
- Investigation: Scotty Smith and Tracie Springer
- Awards Banquet Dinner: Wendy Escarfullery, Cheryl Johnson-Watts and Janet Morillo
- Old business: Hispanic Heritage will be at Arts Park on Sept 15th. & Multicultural day will be at Arts Park on Sept. 14th

## Adjournment:

- No time indicated.