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City of Detroit Human Rights Commission Monthly Meeting Minutes

Date: Thursday, August 15, 2024 | **Time:** 5:00 PM

Location: CAYMC 13th Floor Auditorium and Virtual

Scribe: Commissioner Mendoza

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Present:

- Chair Ross
- Vice Chair Harris
- Commissioner Cole
- Commissioner Mendoza
- Commissioner Olvera
- Commissioner Paul
- Commissioner Wright

Excused Absences:

- Commissioner Buffington
- Commissioner Carter
- Commissioner Franklin
- Commissioner Singh

ADOPTION OF MEETING AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR OPENING REMARKS

- **Chairman Ross:** Thanked the commissioners for their contributions and discussed his intention to step down from his role.
- **Vice Chairman Bishop Harris:** Discussed his excitement for the commission's continued opportunities to improve advocacy for residents.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- **Commissioner Paul** requested that the July minutes be updated to reflect her excused absence from that meeting. **Commissioner Wright** seconded the recommendation.
- **Commissioner Mendoza** stated she would update the minutes accordingly and will re-circulate the final amended July minutes to CRIO for posting.

COMMISSION SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS/UPDATES

- Discussion on the bylaw subcommittee updates was deferred to New Business.

CRIO DEPARTMENT UPDATE

Deputy Director Griggs provided updates on department operations:

- CRIO Ambassador Program
- New Engagement Manager position
- Engagement Opportunities for commissioners
- Compliance
 - Team handling 106 executive orders since July 2024
- Marijuana Ventures Engagement Efforts and Legacy Retailers
- Civil Rights Division
 - Received 27 complaints in July and closed 2
 - 12 translation requests
 - 10 interpretations
 - Processed 49 other related requests
- Detroit Business Opportunity Program
 - Application response time reduced to 9 days; platforms and websites updated
 - Collaboration with DEGC business liaisons to promote DBOP
- Contruction
 - Mayoral Fellow-supported panel discussed strengths and opportunities for developers and contractors.
 - Discussion of upcoming networking events.

CRIO Department Follow-Up Questions:

- **Commissioner Mendoza:** Asked if ambassadors are being trained to support their departments' anti-discrimination plans.
 - **Response:** Not yet, but trainings will be provided.
- **Commissioner Mendoza:** Requested a summary of complaints to better understand areas needing more attention.
 - **Response:** The complaints received are referrals and not "official" complaints; informal complaints are not captured.
- **Vice Chair Bishop Harris:** Inquired about supporting challenges around language access.
 - **Response:** Yes, but further discussion is needed.
- **Vice Chair Bishop Harris:** Asked about tax resource assistance.

- **Director Zander's Response:** Ongoing support is provided at the help center in CAYMC.
- **Vice Chair Bishop Harris:** Inquired about tree and lot cutting timelines and communication.
 - **Director Zander's Response:** Recommended using the Improve Detroit app for monitoring and contacting district managers for support.
- **Chair Ross:** Asked about resources for residential tree cutting.
 - **Director Zander's Response:** Directed to use the Improve Detroit app and district manager support.
- **Commissioner Mendoza:** Asked if the Improve Detroit app provides resolution summaries when tickets are closed.
 - **Director Zander's Response:** The app offers insight into closed tickets and geo-data for neighborhood reports.

NEW BUSINESS

Bylaws Report by Commissioner Wright

- The committee has been working on the bylaw recommendations in coordination with the law department. A final recommendation is expected at the September meeting.
- **Chair Ross** thanked the committee for their dedication.

Election Committee Process and Next Steps

- **Chair Ross:** Announced his decision to step down and emphasized the importance of electing a new chair. Vice Chair Bishop Harris has the right to assume the role of chair. Both confirmed Vice Chair Bishop Harris' desire to stay in his current role.
- **Bishop Harris:** Suggested interested commissioners self-nominate for executive roles and requested guidance from the legal team.
- The law department confirmed that the body could suspend existing bylaws to hold elections.
- **Chair Ross:** Made a motion to suspend bylaws and proceed with elections.
- **Law Department:** Advised that the chair should not make the motion. **Commissioner Mendoza** made a motion to suspend, seconded by **Commissioner Olvera**.
- The motion passed with six ayes.
- **Vice Chair Bishop Harris:** Invited nominations for the chair position.
- **Commissioner Mendoza** expressed interest in the chair position.
- **Commissioner Wright** suggested **Commissioner Carter** but was advised that absent members should not be nominated without their explicit interest.
- **Chair Ross:** Confirmed Commissioner Carter had no expressed interest in the chair role.
- **Vice Chair Bishop Harris:** Recommended against nominating Commissioner Carter.
- **Law Department:** Clarified the process for nominating Commissioner Mendoza.
- **Vice Chair Bishop Harris** made a motion to accept **Commissioner Mendoza's** nomination for chair, seconded by **Commissioner Olvera**. The motion passed with six ayes and no opposition.

- **Chair Ross:** Motioned for **Vice Chair Harris** to remain in his position. The motion passed with six ayes and no opposition.
- No nominations for the secretary position.
- **Commissioner Mendoza** noted that the drafted bylaws state elections should be held every January, anticipating the next election will occur in January 2025. She will serve as both Secretary and Chair until then.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- **Vice Chair Bishop Harris:** Requested a copy of commissioner term dates.
- **Commissioner Mendoza:** Asked for clarification on the document's location. **Director Zander** confirmed it was in the shared drive.

Chair and Vice Chair: Requested confirmation of the law presentation on HRC powers for the September meeting. The law department confirmed the presentation.

OTHER ACCOUCEMENTS

- **Vice Chair Bishop Harris:** Shared information on peace marches scheduled for August 17 and 24, starting at the Fellowship Chapel in collaboration with the US Attorney's Office and the Mayor's Office.

ADJOUNMENT

The meeting was adjourned.

Bill Ross, At-Large, Chair
Bruno Olvera, At-Large
Charlotte Wright, D1
Dr. Carter, D5

Bishop Harris, D3, Vice Chair
Patricia Cole, At-Large
Annie Mendoza, D2
Suneil Singh, D6

Dr. Paul, D7, Secretary
De'Rone Buffington, At-Large
Marloshawn Franklin, D4