

## **MONMOUTH COUNTY HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION**

**Full Commission Meeting**

**Monday, April 7, 2014, 3:30 – 5:00PM**

**Agriculture Building**

**4000 Kozlowski Road, Freehold, NJ 07728**

**Attendance: Nina Anderson, Sondra Cannon, J. Manuel Castillo, Patrick Collum, Jeff Delaney, Sami Elmansoury, Mary Lee Gilmore, Darryl Hughes, Fatima Jaffari, Rosa Lee, Ricky Pierce, Michael Schneider, Carolyn Schwebel, John Schwebel, Philip Smith, Sherri West, Linda Zucaro, John Curley, Monmouth County Freeholder and Liaison to Human Services. Guest: Phil Welch, Jr., Family Promise of Monmouth County**

- I. Call to Order – The meeting was called to order at 3:35PM, followed by the salute to the flag.**
- II. Approval of December 2013 Meeting Minutes-The minutes were approved by the members in attendance.**
- III. Treasurer’s Report-Sondra reported that this is no budget as of yet, but to anticipate a cut of 10%. Freeholder Curley, Liaison to Human Services, mentioned that revenues were down as a result of Hurricane Sandy, and, while he has tried to maintain the Human Services budget, there are many additional demands.**
- IV. Standing Committees and Support Teams**
  - a. Membership - Membership retention strategy (Tabled until May). Danny Weiss has submitted his resignation due to job demands and Sherri will send him a letter thanking him for his participation on the committee. Linda Zucaro mentioned a prospective member, Janet Kolibas, Monmouth Medical Center, who has been chosen by the Center, who was approved by the committee, and present at the meeting.**
  - b. Communications- Carolyn gave a short report on the dismantling of the Middletown HRC and also relayed correspondence from Earl's sister. She commented that, while several members from the Commission spoke to the Middletown Township Committee, to no avail, as the Human Relations Commission was dismantled. The**

meeting was filmed, so contact Carolyn to get a link to the video if desired. Earl's sister, Nisi, donated some pictures of the presentation of the Teasley Award to Pastor Porter. John delivered the revised certificate to Pastor Porter. Jan Sweeney, former longtime member, was planning to attend today's meeting, but unable to due to family illness.

- c. Incident Response and reporting- Bias complaint response protocol committee (Tabled until May)

#### **V. Unfinished Business:**

- a. Teasley Award Committee—Linda announced that the committee selected to choose the next award recipient will be Darryl Hughes, Rosa Lee, and Sondra Cannon.
- b. Report on the MOSAIC Project – Fatima updated the group on the programs held to date. Students representing 7 or 8 different faith groups have worked to achieve two goals—to learn about each others' cultures and faith backgrounds, and for students to work collaboratively on a community project. 32 students attend regularly with meetings at various sites throughout the county. The last meeting will take place at the Quaker Meeting House, Shrewsbury, on Sunday, April 27, 2014, beginning at 3:30PM. They have begun a short term program for the collection of food and clothing to distribute in NYC, and a longer term project, which will continue through next year and include middle school students. They are also working to develop a curriculum on intolerance (Teens Against Intolerance). A date for the closing ceremony will be chosen soon and Fatima will circulate the information when available.

#### **VI. New Business: 2014 strategic activities planning - tabled until May.**

- VII. Presentation and Training: Wanda Nieves, Director of Fair Housing, NJ HUD – Carolyn introduced Wanda Nieves who gave a lively and informative presentation on the history and evolution of the Fair Housing Act. She began by mentioning the first Teasley recipient, Frank Vespa-Papaleo, who has just taken a new position at HUD in Washington, DC. Her presentation began by commenting that this

year marks the 46<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Fair Housing Act, which was passed, in part, to honor the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., assassinated in 1968. Ms. Nieves then explained the purpose and benefits of the act, using various personal examples and her 40+ years of experience in the process. Over the years, the act has been revised to make it more effective through enforcement and various protections. Initially, it covered race and color, national origin, religion, and gender. In 1988 the act was amended to include persons with disabilities, with Families with Children a status that was added later.

The theme of this year's Fair Housing Month (April 2014) is, "Housing is your right. Use it." Education is a key aspect of the act and the continuing work of the department. It is an under-utilized law, despite attempts to create awareness, including the undocumented, which are reluctant to secure redress due to fear of. Fair Housing is for all.

After an investigation of the complaint, there are attempts to resolve issues through reconciliation rather than through the formal legal process. Every program area is reviewed to insure that HUD funds are spent efficiently and fairly, including for those with limited English proficiency. Many examples of types of discrimination in housing were presented, including those with disabilities and LGBT equal-access provisions, which also complies with NJ Civil Rights Law.

#### **VIII. Announcements**

- a. **Sherri mentioned an upcoming Chhange Colloquium on May 14, 2014, at Brookdale, which commemorates the 20th anniversary of the Rwandan Massacre. The link for information for the event is:**  
<https://secure.chhange.org/np/clients/hghrec/event.jsp;jsessionid=2168D30DBF0332545C961D092F34E507?event=124>
- b. **Freeholder Curley mentioned the placing of food collection sites throughout the County at public sites like local libraries to help alleviate food shortages and encouraged donations from members.**

#### **IX. Adjournment—the meeting was adjourned at 5:15PM.**

**Submitted by Sherri West, Secretary**