

City of Tampa
Human Rights Board
Meeting Minutes
February 13, 2013

The City of Tampa Human Rights Board held their annual meeting on Wednesday, February 13, 2013 at 8:30 a.m., in the 2nd floor conference room of the Department of Neighborhood Services, Division of Community Affairs, 2105 N. Nebraska Avenue, Tampa, Florida.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Laila Abdelaziz
Anthony Carswell
Phil Dinkins
Amy Mandel

John Perry
Jeffrie Van Loveren
Elias Vazquez

CITY OF TAMPA REPRESENTATIVES IN ATTENDANCE:

Mayor Bob Buckhorn
Maritza Betancourt
Rebecca Cortes

Margarita Gonzalez
Deborah Marshall
Jake Slater

Call to Order and Roll Call

Chairman Phil Dinkins called the meeting to order and welcomed Mayor Buckhorn.

Community Affairs staff member Rebecca Cortes called the roll.

Mayor Bob Buckhorn's Comments

Mayor Buckhorn began by saying that there is a need to attract people, and that Tampa is a diverse and stronger community. He would like to leave the city in a better shape than how it was given to him.

Mayor Buckhorn thanked everyone for all they do. He said that the City of Tampa is facing challenges and will have a significant budget deficit this year. There is recognition that Tampa is ready to grow, and there is a need to attract and create an environment, where young people can make decisions to either stay here or come here. We have been hopeful about what we want, what it is that makes us better, what it is that we celebrate and why we celebrate and economic reasons, way to do, and there are also the right reasons. We are better together, whether it's the passage of the Domestic Partner Registry, which stimulates in every other jurisdiction except friends down the street. The community recognizes that there are differences and that this is a welcoming place and that is a good thing. That's why the Human Rights Board is here, to safeguard the progress that has been made and we will continue to do it. He thinks that over the next decade, we will see Tampa in many ways that we cannot even imagine, and we are not going to recognize this place when we are done, and that is a positive thing. When we hosted the RNC, that was a great step in the right direction, because the world got to see us like they had never seen us before, and all of our diversity that was used, which is a good thing. It is a real exciting time. Once we come out of this recession, and permit activities go up, both residential and commercial, the value of permits go up, we'll see the light at the end of the tunnel. We have got to keep on going. He's excited and goes to work motivated every day, and he feels there's a reason for this, that his obligation is to leave

the city in better shape than it was given to him. At the end of this, we are going to be a different place. He said the board members are like the watchman of the tower, making sure that those who do not subscribe to the same philosophy pay the price. Mayor Buckhorn concluded at this time.

Chairman Dinkins continued the meeting at this point, by informing the Mayor that the proposed amendment changes to the City of Tampa Human Rights Ordinance of increasing the board by five members came up several months ago. He said that members serve on jobs in the 9:00-5:00 world and bring those skills to the board, and no one really knows how the slots were determined. Somebody many years ago determined that. The board attempted to determine where the talent efficiencies are and are looking at the vision that the board serves and human rights for the City of Tampa, ADA compliance and all those issues that they deal with. The board members determined that there are several slots and moving through the process now and once approved by City Council, the board members will ask the Mayor if he would like to nominate anyone for those slots and if none, some suggestions have been received from some board members about some folks that they think would like to be involved with the board. The Mayor asked if that's what the board wanted, and Chairman Dinkins said yes, that they thought about it for a long time.

Chairman Dinkins then announced that a group photo had been planned and the meeting was adjourned for a moment. The Mayor agreed and the photo was taken by Deborah Hanson, Office Support Specialist of Code Enforcement, outdoor at the front steps of the German American Club. Upon returning, the Mayor commented that he watched Ms. Abdelaziz grow up within the past ten years and was glad that she is serving on the board.

Regular Reports

Administrator's Report – Jake Slater said that there are two changes coming – Chairman Dinkins' term expiration on May 30, 2013, as well as the Hearing Officer's term expiration on March 14, 2013. Mr. Slater informed members that the Mayor made recent changes to rename Clean City to Neighborhood Enhancement Division and merge it with Code Enforcement. Mr. Slater will be in charge of about 144 persons and the budget is about \$10 million dollars. He will have updates at the next meeting. Mr. Slater also informed members that Allison Singer was unable to attend this meeting. The process for the proposed changes to the City of Tampa Human Rights Ordinance is not going as quickly as anticipated, due to other things going on. He hopes to have a first reading in March 2013. He does not have the actual draft, since Ms. Singer is working on it. Mr. Slater hopes to have more information on changes to the board at the next meeting.

EEOC/Employment, Public Accommodations and /Fair Housing/HUD Reports - Ms. Betancourt informed members that the Mayor has just signed the work sharing agreements. Washington requested a copy and Ms. Betancourt offered to send it immediately upon receipt from Mr. Slater. Mr. Slater provided the copies and Ms. Betancourt took care of sending copies to Washington.

Ms. Betancourt received an audio version of a 6-minute video. There was a problem with compatibility on Facebook and the City of Tampa Technology & Innovation (T & I) department is working on it. The video is to be aired on social media and television for public awareness. Anthony Carswell asked what the roll-out was and if was through Clear Channel. Ms. Betancourt said the video is on public relations/public affairs and the purpose is to let people know who we (Community Affairs) are, what we are, and what we do. She will forward an audio version once approved by Mr. Slater. It will then be

translated in Spanish, and she is hopeful that the video will be ready for viewing at the next meeting. The consultant (Mercury Productions) reviewed previous videos on what had been done in the past, to get an idea on what Community Affairs was looking for. It has taken longer than expected. The bilingual video will be presented as a public service announcement (PSA) and included in the City of Tampa website.

Mr. Carswell made a suggestion to ask the consultant about the roll-out plan, if it is going to be through Clear Channel's family of radio stations, PSA's, staggered, etc. Ms. Betancourt understands that there will be a combination of all venues of all media.

Mr. Slater said that once the roll-out happens, there will be a concern in the increase of office mobility, since there are two investigators and we do not know what to expect. Ms. Betancourt said that the consultant has worked with the City of Tampa in the past and she has been satisfied with their work. Mr. Slater said they were contracted for \$25,000. The scope includes brochures. Copies were provided for review, which need updating to add two more bases, gender identity and expression. Other updates include department name change and new office address, due to the recent move.

Ms. Betancourt asked if members received a copy of the final CAPERS report. Mr. Slater said he received a draft copy. Ms. Betancourt will send board members a copy for FY2012, which contains department (Community Affairs) activities, and other City of Tampa projects in housing, planning, CDBG, TPD, and Fire Rescue.

Ms. Betancourt and the two human rights investigators attended an annual Regional FHAP Conference, from January 29-31, 2013, in North Carolina. She said this conference was one of the better conferences, since opportunities were given to ask questions during the conference. Conference topics included intake, case processing, TEAPOTS (program used to process housing cases), fair housing investigations, report writing, multi-jurisdictional processing, FHAP performance criteria (what HUD expects of FHAP agencies). Some things in housing have changed and additional things are expected from FHAP agencies. One other topic presented, was Section 504 on disability discrimination. A manual was given at the conference and is available for anyone interested in viewing.

ADA Disability Rights Coordinator - Karen Sinnreich was unable to attend this meeting, since she went on a cruise to celebrate her anniversary. Ms. Betancourt said that Ms. Sinnreich is very resourceful and knowledgeable, has been working hard on a grievance procedure, and has already given a copy to Mr. Slater for review.

Ms. Betancourt said that Ms. Sinnreich continues to update information in the Accessible Tampa Guide, which is available in the City of Tampa website. The guide covers topics such as not having insurance, getting a ramp for a child, accessible places to go to, such as restaurants, hotels, attractions, etc. Mr. Slater encouraged the board members to go in to the City of Tampa website and look at the guide at their convenience.

Mr. Vazquez said the guide can also be found in the Tampa Police Department's web page.

Ms. Betancourt announced that the Paralyzed Veterans 33rd annual wheelchair games will be held in July 2013. Details will be sent to the board members.

Ms. Betancourt announced that April 19, 2013 is Fair Housing month and Fair Housing Consortium. Participation by other entities include Bay Area Apartment Association (BAAA), Bay Area Legal Services, City of Clearwater, Gulfcoast Legal Services, Greater Tampa Association of Realtors (GTAR), City of Largo, Pinellas County Office of Human Rights, City of St. Petersburg, and City of Tampa. The consortium will be held at Centre Club, 123 S. West Shore Boulevard, Tampa, Florida. Details will be sent to the board members.

Ms. Betancourt thanked the Community Affairs staff for their hard work. She is working with Ms. Cortes on form letters used to communicate with complainants and respondents. She asked Ms. Cortes about how many form letters are used and Ms. Cortes said there were quite a bit, possibly a little over 100. Updates to the letters include the department name change, new address, and new director. Margarita Gonzalez is also working on website changes for Community Affairs and Ms. Marshall continues to work diligently. Community Affairs is a small group, but a strong team and is grateful for Mr. Slater's leadership and support. Mr. Slater in turn appreciates the staff's understanding and patience.

Approval of Minutes – December 12, 2012

Chairman Dinkins said that the approval of minutes had been skipped and asked for approval of the minutes for December 12, 2012 at this time.

Chairman Dinkins asked members to review the minutes for December 12, 2012 for corrections (the minutes had been mailed to members and copies were also available at this meeting). Motion was made by Anthony Carswell and seconded by Elias Vazquez, to accept the minutes as submitted. The **motion** was accepted unanimously by all members present.

Old Business

(Closed Board Business) Update on Reasonable Cause Case – no report at this time. Per Mr. Slater, an update to be provided by Ms. Singer at the next meeting.

Proposed Amendment Changes to Human Rights Ordinance (increase in board members and quorum definition) – addressed by Mr. Slater earlier and he will notify board members of approval.

Update – Fair Housing Consultant, Mercury Productions – addressed earlier by Ms. Betancourt. Chairman Dinkins said the board is looking forward to hearing the consultant's updates from Ms. Betancourt.

New Business and Announcements

Board Member Term expirations- Chairman Dinkins received a recommendation for a board member for one of the new slots from Ms. Van Loveren. He said board members can provide candidates for new slots, after the Mayor has had an opportunity to recommend anyone. After that, recommendations will be taken from board members.

Chairman Dinkins reminded the board members of the categories: architecture, healthcare, hospitality, transportation, and At-Large. The At-Large category would be to fill in any gap.

Hearing Officer's Term – Clinton Paris' term expires on March 14, 2013 and Chairman Dinkins asked Mr. Slater if he had heard from Mr. Paris. Mr. Slater said he has not heard from Mr. Paris. Since Mr. Paris has reached the term limit of three consecutive years, Mr. Slater is to check with the Mayor and Ms. Singer, if the term could be extended or if another person needs to be selected. There are no pending cases at this time.

Board Member Term Expirations – Chairman Dinkins said that the board members' terms that expire on May 30, 2013 will need to be addressed and the board will need to vote at the next meeting on April 10, 2013.

Mr. Slater asked the board members if they would like for him to provide or present topics other than the consultant, Mercury Productions. He suggested that that the consultant be invited to the next meeting to discuss method of distribution. Once the roll-out happens, there will be a need to know what worked best. Mr. Carswell said that when you engage a public relations firm, you really want to know what's working and what's not working, like phone calls occupying time, limited staff, or meaningful calls, which is what your're really looking for. It's important to know what really worked and what to target further down the road.

Chairman Dinkins said there is a need for election of officers at the next meeting.

Next Meeting

The next meeting has been scheduled for April 10, 2013, at 8:30 a.m., at the German American Club, 2105 N. Nebraska Avenue, 2nd floor conference room, Tampa, FL.

Adjournment

A **motion** to adjourn the meeting was made by Amy Mandel, seconded by Elias Vazques, and the motion was passed by all members present, to adjourn the meeting. Chairman Dinkins asked that a copy of the photo be sent to the board members. This concluded the business of the Board at 9:15 a.m.

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