

City of Tampa  
Human Rights Board  
Meeting Minutes  
October 8, 2014

The City of Tampa Human Rights Board held their regular bi-monthly meeting on Wednesday, October 8, 2014, at 8:30 a.m., in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor conference room of the Neighborhood Empowerment Department, Community Affairs Division, 2105 N. Nebraska Avenue, Tampa, Florida.

**MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Anthony Carswell	Anna Ramos
Laila Abdelaziz	Reginald Tim
Amy Mandel	Jeffrie Van Loveren
John Perry	

**CITY OF TAMPA REPRESENTATIVES IN ATTENDANCE:**

Maritza Betancourt	Colin Rice
Rebecca Cortes	Karen Sinnreich
Margarita Gonzalez	Jake Slater
Deborah Marshall	

**GUESTS:**

Qiana Daughtry, Urban Planner w/Housing & Community Development/Planning & Development  
David Lozo, Sr. Fiscal Analyst w/Budget Office

**Call to Order and Roll Call**

The Chairman, Anthony Carswell, called the meeting to order and welcomed back Maritza Betancourt, Anna Ramos, and Rebecca Cortes. He then called the roll.

The Chairman continued and asked guests who were invited by Mr. Slater, for self-introductions. Ms. Qiana Daughtry is an Urban Planner with Housing and Community Development/Planning and Development; and Mr. David Lozo is a Senior Fiscal Analyst with the Budget Office.

**Approval of Minutes – October 8, 2014**

The Chairman asked members present if they received the minutes for August 8, 2014, and if so, to review them for approval (minutes had been mailed to members and copies were also available at this meeting). **Motion** was **made** by Ms. Van Loveren and seconded by Ms. Mandel, to accept the minutes as submitted. The **motion** was **accepted** unanimously by all members present.

**Regular Reports**

**Administrator's Report**

Mr. Slater welcomed back Ms. Betancourt, after an extended leave of absence, and thanked the Community Affairs staff for their assistance during her absence. He also thanked the guests for their attendance.

Mr. Slater went on to report that during Ms. Betancourt's absence, he had no idea of what he and the staff would be involved with, and learned a lot, even when under fire. He expressed the fact that she was greatly missed, and also thanked the Community Affairs staff and Mr. Rice, for pitching in and stepping up to the plate.

### **HUD/Fair Housing, EEOC/Employment, and Public Accommodations**

Mr. Slater asked that on behalf of Ms. Betancourt, Ms. Marshall provide the report for fair housing; Ms. Gonzalez the EEOC and Public Accommodations report; and that Ms. Sinnreich provide the report on ADA.

Ms. Marshall reported that there are seven (7) open cases, two (2) closed cases, and (2) pending cases. On October 2, 2014, she viewed a HUD webinar on Sex Discrimination, Sexual Harassment and Discrimination in Mortgage Lending, based on the terms of Maternity Leave.

A second training for testers under the Community Affairs Division's fair housing testing program took place on September 12, 2014 and is in process. The training that included additional testers was provided by HOPE, Inc., and the Community Affairs Division is in the process of obtaining a start date and schedule upon Mr. Slater's approval.

Ms. Gonzalez reported that Mr. Slater and Mr. Colin assisted her with the EEOC contract extension for fiscal year 2014, and the EEOC Washington and Miami offices are to assist in the process of having it executed. She assisted Mr. Colin with the drafting of the resolution, which was presented to City Council members, and which has been signed by Mayor Buckhorn. She also worked on the EEOC FY 2014 contract modification and draft of the resolution. With regard to cases, there are two (2) local cases open and all fiscal year 2014 EEOC cases were closed per the contract.

Ms. Gonzalez mailed the board member packets per the distribution list, on behalf of Ms. Cortes, who was out on leave. She was assigned to assist with preparing documents for this meeting, which included final approval from the Chairman for today's agenda, the meeting notice, the minutes for August 21, 2014, and request to the City Clerk's Office to post the Public Meeting Notice.

Ms. Gonzalez also assisted and/or participated in the following:

9/10/14 - The Fall version of Accessible Tampa was updated by Ms. Sinnreich and has been published.

9/19/14 – Made arrangements for CTTV to videotape the annual Mayor's Alliance for Persons with Disabilities luncheon. This luncheon was featured as part of the Spotlight Tampa TV program, and both can be watched on the Mayor's Alliance for Persons with Disabilities' webpage, the Community Affairs home page under News and Events, and in the City of Tampa YouTube link. She also assisted Ms. Sinnreich with event related activities, those which Ms. Sinnreich will expand on.

10/1/14 – Made a presentation to the Mayor's Hispanic Advisory Council (MHAC) on October 1, 2014 regarding Community Affairs Division services. The presentation included a video, flyer distribution, and introduction of Karen Sinnreich, who announced the upcoming Employer's Training and Job Fair on ADA.

10/2/14 – Viewed a webinar provided by the National Fair Housing Alliance (NFHA), titled Fair Housing Act: Sex Discrimination, Sexual Harassment and Discrimination in Mortgage Lending, based on Maternity Leave status.

10/5/14 - Helped man the City of Tampa booth at the Feria de la Familia, coordinated by Telemundo, at the Florida State Fair's Expo Hall. Community Affairs posters were displayed and she distributed Community Affairs flyers and information provided by other City divisions. About 18,000 persons attended this event.

Ms. Gonzalez provided copies of a flyer regarding the 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Hispanic Heritage Committee celebration, which has been scheduled for 11:00 a.m., on October 21, 2014, at the Tampa Theatre in Tampa, FL. The keynote speaker is Johnny Suarez with Raymond James Financial.

### **ADA Disability Rights**

Ms. Sinnreich reported that about 220 persons attended the 26<sup>th</sup> annual Mayor's Alliance for Persons with Disabilities luncheon on September 19, 2014. There were about 10 exhibitors. The plan called for 4-5 exhibitors, but ended up with 10, and had to turn away several exhibitors, due to limited space. One reason for the success of the event was due to the upcoming job fair on January 20, 2015. There was also one person who volunteered to serve as secretary to the Mayor's Alliance for Persons with Disabilities.

Planning meetings are taking place for a job fair that will take place on January 20, 2015, at Keiser University. Use of the facility is free of charge and there is space for 40 employers. Otherwise, the cost to use the facility by the private sector is \$100 for two employers per display table.

An employer seminar has been scheduled for November 5, 2014, in the conference room, at the Port Authority. The panel will consist of employers who will speak on the topic of having experience in placing persons with severe disabilities in employment, how it worked out, and how the person(s) were accommodated for employment. An example would be a blind person or quadriplegic person going up to an employer, who would ask, what am I going to do with this person?, and the person does not get hired, because the employer has no idea that accommodations can be made, such as special software and different devices.

Ms. Sinnreich assisted and/or participated in the following:

Ms. Sinnreich has provided training sessions to about 400 City of Tampa employees on Title II (ADA). She made a presentation at the Diversity Council regarding Community Affairs' services. She serves on the Sidewalk Committee, which meets quarterly, and she has met contact persons for immediate resolution to a complaint. She has received about 88 complaints regarding sidewalks, which have been resolved amicably with the citizens.

Ms. Sinnreich attended a one-day training on September 29, 2014, on Title VI, by the Florida Department of Transportation.

The Chairman asked if anyone had any questions. At this time, Mr. Tim asked Ms. Daughtry about her job. Ms. Daughtry stated that she oversees the Housing Opportunities for Persons with Aids or HIV (HOPWA) program with the ESG program for the City of Tampa. She oversees four counties: Pinellas,

Pasco, Hillsborough, and Hernando. ESG stands for Emergency Solutions Grant, which allows an opportunity to provide shelters with operational dollars, as well as a new shelter component as of 2012, to provide rapid rehab services and prevention services. She also oversees the home tenant-based rental assistance and homeless program, where the City of Tampa receives an allocation from Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and chose to use strictly for the City and to assist individuals who are homeless.

Mr. Tim then asked if there were waiting lists. Ms. Daughtry stated that each county is different and that each county has different providers. She could not answer what the need is for every single county, because each provider keeps their own list and provide a different form, either for the HOPWA or ESG program. As far as the ESG program, the shelter component does not have a waiting list, because people are in and out every day. As far as rapid rehab, their office participated in an assessment process that this county adopted and has a waiting list, both for individual or family. The waiting list for individuals is about 700 and for families, it's about twenty-five. This is a low number because some families do not want to lose their children to Child Protective Services. As far as HOPWA, the tenant-based rental assistance program, they're required to maintain a waiting list. The Boley Center is the largest provider in Pinellas County, and has a waiting list of over 200 people. Other providers maintain waiting lists as well for support services, project-based assistance, short-term rental, mortgage, and utility assistance.

The Chairman asked Ms. Marshall if testers are still needed and she responded yes, because there are different types of tests for national origin, sex, and disability. The Chairman asked Ms. Marshall to specify for which categories testers are needed, because the testing program basically, is a match of sending one person of this gender, ethnicity, etc. and a match on the opposite end, such as female, etc. Ms. Marshall said that thirty (30) tests are proposed for the protected classes of national origin, familial status, disability, and race. Testers are sent out in pairs. For example, white male and an African American male. For national origin, one American versus one person of Hispanic descent; for familial status, a single person, a couple or someone who is pregnant, and for disability, one person can be sent. The Chairman asked what the timeline is. Ms. Marshall responded that they are waiting on approval from Mr. Slater, who could expand on the details. Mr. Slater said the program could be up and running next month, and he added that background checks are conducted. The Chairman encouraged the board members to recommend persons for the fair housing testing program.

## **Old Business**

Status – Proposed Changes to Human Rights Ordinance (increase in board members) - The Chairman said Old Business remains the same. He yielded the floor to Mr. Rice for his comments about what the board is trying to do, like perhaps adding order to the Human Rights Board (HRB). The Chairman referred to a question at the last meeting, that if the HRB wanted to institute Robert's Rules of Order, how difficult would it be and what steps need to be taken.

Discussion – By-Laws and Board Structure - The Chairman then asked Mr. Rice about Robert's Rules of Order. Mr. Rice said he reviewed samples of by-laws and was able to provide a copy of the Mayor's African American Advisory Council's (MAAAC) by-laws for members to review. He also found an instructive folder in their K drive, which was created by Allison Singer, former assistant city attorney assigned to Community Affairs. The folder has served as a guide. He went on to say that the MAAAC By-laws serve as an example of how an ordinance would go about. Changes would have to go before City Council. He does not think it's challenging to come up with either a set of by-laws, or to work with

the ordinance in a way to make the board feel comfortable to make the presentation. Additional copies of MAAAC's by-laws were made by Ms. Cortes, in order for the board members to view. Mr. Colin commented that the Chairman had mentioned something about Robert's Rules of Order and something in writing. The Chairman said it would be basically to answer, based on his experience in working with boards on the matter of presenting votes, passing votes, setting any amendments or agenda items, moving through a meeting and some type of order. Moving this through City Council, would the board come to agreement as a board and then formally put something together to be presented to City Council. Mr. Rice said that this was his understanding. For conversation with the board, the Chairman wanted to start small on making changes to the framework of who all are on the board, and to make the board more fluid and more amenable to City staff. The Chairman has been pushing for Robert's Rules of Order to have them in place, and he asked if it was the board's desire to review an entire set of by-laws. The Barrio Review Commission by-laws were reviewed, and now the board has MAAAC's by-laws to review.

Mr. Perry stated that Robert's Rules of Order is a book, and was not sure if the board necessarily needs the rules, and that there's no parliamentary person on the board. This would be better for a larger meeting, and he thinks the board needs to follow a speaking order in making motions, etc. He was not sure on how to name this and does not think the board needs Robert's Rules of Order. He asked if the board could have a sub-committee that could work on the by-laws to present to the board, and the board could make revisions on a finished product, which would be easier to read, than to start from scratch. The Chairman commented that the NAACP follows Robert's Rules of Order, which he reviewed.

### **New Business**

Adoption of By-Laws - The Chairman also commented that the board is initially slated for fifteen. Mr. Perry said that if the board adopts Robert's Rules of Order, the board adopts all fifteen positions. He thinks the board needs a basic framework, for example, when everyone wants to join a conversation, where something comes up, the board could go through the Chair as a speaking order, and occasionally make motions. The board will need to know that you have to have that basic pass/fail, and it's not sure if there's anything else for the board to use from Robert's Rules of Order. It's what the Chairman had in mind, but regarding a sub-committee, there's an issue about the Sunshine Law. The board discussed that it would have to be on public forum, when it comes to board business; the board would actually have to have a meeting to do that, but does not prevent board members from reviewing information individually and moving along to present to the board may be challenging.

Mr. Perry asked if the board can ask for a sub-committee meeting. The Chairman commented that the board could ask for a special meeting, and believes it was done in the past for votes. Mr. Tim asked how the framework would work. Mr. Slater said he was thinking back to when he was chairman of the Human Rights Board, that there was no formal sub-committee, but had discussions, and under the Sunshine Law, he was unsure if such committee has the responsibility to bring back a product to the board. The Chairman commented that if wasn't a sub-committee and just board members needing to get together for a special vote or special meeting, it's not a sub-committee meeting, it would just be an effort to move along a potential agenda item. It's been done in the past, that a special meeting took place and was not on the calendar.

Ms. Van Loveren comments on how to proceed with a meeting and who plays what role, asked that in between regular meetings, can the board just go back to nothing. It's what the board members were asked to do with the email regarding the Barrio Review Commission, to go back on their own time, review, and

check off the ones they found to be of interest or useful, and at the next meeting, state that here are the five that we find useful for the committee and that it is something useful for the board and incorporate on their own. By doing individual research, and going back to a meeting, the board would not have to worry about a sub-committee. Mr. Rice does not see a problem in calling for a special meeting in itself; it's the public that can find access to this meeting. Ms. Van Loveren commented that it could rely on a sense of urgency and was unsure what a sense of urgency is, to adopt any specific by-laws. She thinks it's something that should be done and does think there is a deadline to call for a special meeting. The Chairman said there is no deadline and the board has been operating with the Standard Operating Procedure before he became chairman. He said that the germination of this came about when the board looked at how board's framework was made up. There are a couple of members of the community who would be a huge asset to the board, but because there are certain slots in particular fields, the board is limited as to who can join. He believes it was the board's pleasure that, why keep people that would be huge assets off, just because for example, there are two people in mortgage available, and ask if there was a way to change the slots. This was discussed previously with Ms. Allison Singer (former assistant attorney) and it opened a Pandora's box, that the Mayor is the only person that can appoint people to the board, and what about the board, City Council, etc.? This topic was put on hold. The thought process was to make sure that the board had by-laws in order. Mr. Perry said a question had also been asked on what constitutes a quorum, and that's what led to this topic. According to the Chairman, a quorum is a percentage of the entire board, etc. Mr. Rice read the description: "a quorum means the majority of the members of the Tampa Human Rights Board". The way Mr. Rice reads this is, you have your total number and you have 51% of that number for a quorum. Ms. Van Loveren asked what the number was for the At-Large position. The Chairman responded it was two. Ms. Sinnreich said she had a conversation with her daughter on Robert's Rules of Order, since her daughter is a certified parliamentary. She read her daughter's note that Robert's Rules of Order is out for the relaxation of formality and there is a section on small boards, which is P476-479 in the 1990 edition. The Chairman asked Ms. Sinnreich to pass on a thank you to her for this information. The Chairman said that the board should outline what the board wants in there. If it's bits and pieces, then to do bits and pieces on things that the board feels strongest about, adopt them and formally put together, in order to present to City Council.

The Chairman will request that a copy of the by-laws for MAAAC and rules of procedures for other boards/commissions, be sent to the board members for their review.

A **motion** was made by Ms. Van Loveren and **motion seconded** by Ms. Abdelaziz, for board members to review on their own time, regulations or guidelines for presentation at the next Human Rights Board meeting for discussion and possibly adoption, at the February 2015 meeting. The Chairman said this was okay, but that the next meeting is the annual meeting with the Mayor, but for this item to be added to the agenda for the meeting on February 11, 2015 as New Business. The Chairman will coordinate, apart from the meeting, with Ms. Cortes and Ms. Gonzalez on which commission/board by-laws copies to re-send, including the MAAAC by-laws that Mr. Rice presented. He said those commissions/board were already in existence and is not a believer of reinventing the wheel of something that is already there.

Mr. Tim asked for clarification on what is to be reviewed for discussion later. The Chairman said that this particular board (Human Rights Board) does not have a formal set of by-laws. However, other boards within the City of Tampa have by-laws in place. In the next email from staff, the board members will receive three (3) sets of by-laws to review on their own time to see what articles in those by-laws

would be applicable to this board (Human Rights Board), and to be prepared to discuss and present for a motion to be put forward to City Council to have adopted for this board.

Mr. Perry would like to request from staff to have copies re-sent electronically, and to the Chairman, to make sure this is added to the agenda as a reminder, in case someone has not completed the review at that point, to be ready for the next meeting. The Chairman said this has been on the last three agendas, but thanked Mr. Perry for pointing this out, and will work with staff to move this forward, and also thanked Mr. Rice, and asked if there were additional comments. Mr. Slater asked the Chairman to inform him of any assistance needed. The Chairman stated he wants to make sure there will be no issues when someone is looking at the board and raises a question.

The Chairman said a conversation regarding the Ferguson incident took place during the last meeting. He listened to the news about one week ago on the policeman shooting. Mr. Perry commented that other incidents are widely being publicized, and people are becoming aware of more similar incidents not as serious, but perhaps questionable, and are coming forward. Ms. Abdelaziz commented about a new Chief in Missouri that stated that for the past eight years, none of their police officers have killed/shot anyone, and teach on what they do and feels that they have a successful police force that people are afraid of. The Chairman said you cannot assume anything and unfortunately cities change. At the last meeting, discussion took place on how the City of Tampa is different now than what it was in 1990. It's a totally different place and you can't police and communicate the exact same way. Ms. Van Loveren said that the new chief in St. Petersburg issued a decree among their officers, that they are going to adopt a "Park, Walk, Talk policy, that for one hour each day, officers have to get out of their cars and go out and talk to the community, engage in conversation, and establish relationships. Ms. Abdelaziz said that's probably why she has a negative perception of police officers, whenever she sees them and tries to converse with them, they're like, why do you want to talk to me? The group chuckled when Ms. Ramos commented that why would a police officer not want to speak to a beautiful female as Ms. Abdelaziz, and found this to be surprising.

Ms. Mandel informed the board members that since the last Human Rights Board meeting, the Human Rights Ordinance for Hillsborough County passed. The Chairman thinks that progress has been made within the last five years. Ms. Abdelaziz commented that with the Supreme Court deciding to delay a decision, things are changing at the state level everywhere.

The Chairman reminded everyone to attend the annual meeting with the Mayor.

Mr. Rice recently attended a seminar on employment law in Gainesville, FL. Not all topics were pertinent to this board (Human Rights Board), except for the topic on trans-gender awareness. The State of Florida has over 400 counties and municipalities, but there are only 16 counties that have an ordinance that protects the trans-gender class, Tampa being one of the 16 in Florida. He said that if anyone wanted to view information that he brought back from the seminar, to let him know. He said that the City of Miami Beach is in favor of repealing Florida's ban on same-sex marriages. They were trying to circulate through Florida and get other cities and counties on board, and it's gotten the City of Tampa's attention. It's our specific role and this is still under review for participation and support, due to procedural issues, but the message is out there, that Tampa is on board. The Chairman asked members and staff to share information from meetings, as they are out in this community and outside of this community. One of the things that the Mayor is proud of is, Tampa being ahead of a lot of items, and this is one of them. The

Chairman said it's nice to know that you're in a progressive city and he found that with many issues, the City of Tampa has been on the front end of a lot of information, and the Mayor pushes for this. He thinks this is something to be proud of when talking to colleagues, whether here in Florida, California, or New York, etc. Ms. Sinnreich commented that perhaps in seven years, the figures would be reverse. Ms. Abdelaziz referred to Martin Luther King, Jr.'s statement on "the ark toward moral justice" and heard a recent comment by someone saying "that it doesn't vent on its own".

Mr. Tim referred to a recent report that he read on salary ranges of State employees, that Florida is the lowest paid. An example of our human rights issue being in front of us is when someone is being paid \$70/hr. in Georgia and \$15/hr. in Florida. Ms. Abdelaziz said with the elections coming up, this is something that DUC is trying to put on the agenda and is interesting, but she personally feels it is a human rights issue, and you are talking about the stability and the opportunities in the community, and so there's a lot of work to be done in educating people of why this is such an important issue that needs to be elevated. For example, IKEA, as a corporation, is going to formulate and decide what a livable wage is and which cities to put people in, and on their own do livable wages, regardless of what the minimum wage is by law. The Chairman said this was interesting, since the election is coming up and there's one candidate is pushing jobs and we're back to work, etc. and another candidate is trying to put more funds back to folks by lowering taxes. He agrees with Mr. and Ms. Abdelaziz that economics is everything. We can say it's not a human rights issue, but it definitely is.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday, December 10, 2014, at 10:00 a.m. It is the annual meeting with the Mayor at City Hall, in the Mayor's conference room.

### **Adjournment**

A **motion** to adjourn the meeting was made by Anna Ramos, seconded by Ms. Van Loveren, and the **motion passed** by all members present, to adjourn the meeting. This concluded the business of the Board at 9:24 a.m.

/rc