

City of Tampa
Human Rights Board
Meeting Minutes
January 9, 2019

The City of Tampa Human Rights Board held its monthly meeting on Wednesday, January 9, 2019, at 9:00 a.m., Lemon Street Municipal Building, 4900 W. Lemon Street – 1st Floor, Tampa, Florida 33609.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Anthony Carswell	Sylvia Hubbard
Tomika Cole	Janet MacNealy
Parker Homans	John Perry

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Jessica Driggers	Anna Ramos	Ashley Roberts
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CITY OF TAMPA REPRESENTATIVES IN ATTENDANCE

Betina Baron	Patricia Newton
Shakayla Birch	Justin Vaske (via phone)
Rebecca Cortes	Christine Boulos (Cooley Law School Extern)

Call to Order and Roll Call

The Chairman, Anthony Carswell, called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m. Assistant City Attorney J. Vaske was conferenced in telephonically; then P. Newton was asked to introduce Christine Boulos, a third-year law student from Cooley Law School.

Approval of Minutes – (December 11, 2018)

Motion to accept the minutes with the proposed change on page 2, to change the last name of retiring Judge Quint to Quince, was made by J. MacNealy. It was seconded by P. Homans to accept the minutes as revised. The motion was accepted unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None at this time.

REGULAR REPORTS

Supervisor's Report

P. Newton began her report by providing an update on the three (3) Reasonable Cause cases the Board advanced to an Administrative Hearing.

- Ciaccio-Mulligan vs 4711 Himes LLC et al – the hearing was held on September 12, 2018 with Hearing Officer Clinton Paris presiding, after his mandated mediation failed on August 29, 2018. Subsequently, the City of Tampa and the Respondent's Attorney submitted draft statements to C. Paris, and he issued a final ruling on November 15, 2018, which P. Newton will provide a copy to the Board. The Hearing Officer ruled that the Respondent should implement procedures for Fair Housing training and the prevailing parties were entitled to the recovery of reasonable legal fees and costs; however, there were no legal cost to recover. The Board asked several procedural questions, which P. Newton answered, adding that the fair housing training was being scheduled.

- Knott vs Tamplin and Tampa Housing Authority – P. Newton expressed concern about the outcome of this case. While the Administrative Hearing was scheduled for September 12, 2018, the hearing was cancelled due to all parties agreeing to attend a mandatory Mediation Conference scheduled for October 8, 2018, by the Hearing Officer. All parties attended mediation, including J. Vaske, P. Newton and B. Baron, in an effort to reach an agreement. P. Newton reported that the Complainant was advised to bring legal counsel; yet, the Complainant did not and accepted a check for \$1,000.00 from Respondent Tamplin to settle a Reasonable Cause case. However, in order to settle the case, TOHR signed-off on separate Conciliation Agreements – one with the Tampa Housing Authority and another with Tamplin.
- Molina vs Mason Mobile Park – P. Newton conveyed that she had great anxiety about the outcome of this Reasonable Cause case. The Complainant lost money from the sale of her mobile home, her children underwent therapy after being harassed/threatened, and she produced receipts totaling nearly \$10,000.00 to show out of pocket expenses. An Administrative Hearing was scheduled for November 7, 2018, but was canceled due to a mandated Mediation Conference on December 17, 2018, where the Complainant agreed to accept \$3,000.00 to close the case. Because the Complainant had a language barrier, an interpreter was provided, but the Complainant did not have legal representation. J. Vaske and Drew Dayes, the City’s contracted housing attorney, attended on behalf of the City of Tampa; not as legal counsel for the Complainant.

At the end of the update, J. Perry commented that he felt Ms. Molina had been victimized a second time and recommended that the Board discuss a solution for the Complainants not having legal counsel. Discussion ensued with P. Homans recommending that a list or guide be provided to the Complainants when seeking legal representation. The Board was in favor of P. Newton inserting into the Complainant’s charge notification packet a list of agencies that provide pro bono attorneys and to consult with J. Vaske for language to add, regarding legal representation. A copy of the letter is to be sent to the members. In addition, J. Perry requested that TOHR provide the Board with feedback to determine if this solution works for the Complainants.

OLD BUSINESS

Civil Rights Statement Draft – The last statement was added to the Board’s web page in 2016. J. MacNealy provided copies of the last civil rights statement. The Board agreed that the mission statement will stand as is. The Chairman asked if a recommendation could be made to have a canned civil rights statement and the consensus was unanimous. In addition, the Board agreed to have each statement archived by the Technology and Innovation Department. The Chairman added that something current was needed and to have a civil rights statement drafted by the next meeting in February.

Human Rights By-Laws – Attendance Enforcement and Recommendation for Board Member Removal – The Chairman stated that all members should attend meetings in order that a quorum can be met to conduct business. A copy of the attendance log was provided to the members, indicating that Anna Ramos had missed more than three consecutive meetings without prior notice to the Board Recording Secretary. J. Vaske stated that a recommendation for removal of a Board member be sent to Mayor Buckhorn. A **motion** was made by J. Perry for removal of Anna Ramos as a Board member, **seconded** by P. Homans, and the **motion carried** unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Board and Hearing Officer Term List – The Chairman asked R. Cortes to add the number of terms to the list, updating the listed terms for each member. He also asked R. Cortes to re-send the invite to the members for the workshop on January 26, 2019 at Valencia College in Winter Park and for the Black Heritage Expo on February 23, 2019 at University Mall in Tampa, FL. Members can get information from P. Newton.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting has been scheduled for February 13, 2018, at 9:00 a.m., Lemon Street Municipal Office Building, 4900 W. Lemon Street, 1st floor, Tampa, FL.

ADJOURNMENT

A **motion** to adjourn the meeting was made by S. Hubbard, **seconded** by J. MacNealy, and the **motion passed** unanimously. The meeting ended at 10:53 a.m.

Respectfully submitted