

**MEETING MINUTES FOR
MICHIGAN CITY HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

September 1, 2020

PRESENT: Albertine Allen Judy Lange Mary Ellen Quinn
Dennis Carroll Abagael May
Bunny Dimke Nancy Moldenhauer

ABSENT: Marty Corley Melody Haynes Nancy Moldenhauer
Diana Gore Tyra Robinson-Walker

OTHERS Ta-Tanisha George Pat Harris
PRESENT: Larry Arness

CALL TO ORDER: The Zoom meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m. by Abagael May

PLEDGE OF ALLIGIANCE: Not Conducted (Zoom meeting)

ROLL CALL: Roll call was conducted. Attendance and absences are recorded above.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: A motion was entered by Dennis Carroll and second by Bunny Dimke to approve minutes for July 2020. Motion carried. Vote 7-0.

FINANCE REPORT:

Mrs. George reported that there had been no activity since March 2020.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Executive Director Ta-Tanisha George informed commissioners that during the COVID-19 crisis, she is taking the opportunity to provide human rights training through webinars which include cultural diversity and implicit bias. She noted Purdue University Northwest has a series on race and racism through zoom meetings. She will forward information to all commissioners.

Mrs. George announced an employee working at the City Hall building tested positive for COVID-19 in late July. As a result, the building was closed for two weeks. A team was brought in to deep clean the building (twice) and all the employees were tested for COVID-19. Everyone tested negative.

She also reported that the State eviction moratorium ended on August 14th. The office has received several telephone calls from renters worried about being evicted. She directed most of the callers to Indiana Legal Services. Along the same lines, she has been in communication with residents of a local trailer home park which has been recently purchased by a company from Illinois. The new owners of the property are making changes that the residents feel are setting them up to be evicted from the property. Everyone agreed that the end of the Governor's and President's moratorium on evictions is going to cause a large increase in landlord/tenant issues.

Attorney Arness recommended utilizing the services of North Central Community Action Agencies (NCCAA) and the Township trustee offices. He reminded Mrs. George that judges are the only ones that can legally put the tenants out of the property. In addition, he emphasized that shutting off utilities is against the law. Albertine Allen suggested contacting Catholic Charities concerning the Tenant Rights Act. A discussion followed concerning the Tenants Rights Act and the City's attempt at instituting a landlord registry last year. Commissioner May requested information on the registry. Albertine Allen stated that she also has a document from Minority Health Partners that she will provide for review. Abagael May suggested that the HRC and City Council conduct a workshop to review the registry ordinance to determine how to make it work. Mrs. George and Attorney Arness will discuss strategy.

STAFF ATTORNEY'S REPORT:

Attorney Arness reminded commissioners that there are legal aid sources available for tenants who need them.

SSAAM COMMISSION:

Pastor Carroll reported that SSAAM had not met since the COVID-19 crisis shutdown in March. He announced that Arthur Payne resigned from the Commission and a new chairperson has not been elected.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: No Report.

SPECIAL EVENTS COMMITTEE: No Report.

SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE:

Mrs. George announced the Scholarship Committee recommended a winner for each scholarship:

Hawkins-Williams Scholarship – Janaya Blakely

Judi Huber Educational Scholarship – Alexis Reynolds

She presented the committee's recommendations for Commission approval. A motion to approve the committee's recommendations was entered by Abagael May and second by Nancy Moldenhauer. Motion carried. Vote 7-0

Mrs. George will contact them. A discussion followed about how/when to present the scholarships to the young ladies. Abagael May suggested a zoom event.

FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE: No Report

EDUCATION COMMITTEE: No Report

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE: No Report

MLK COMMITTEE: No Report

LAPORTE COUNTY PFLAG:

Nancy Moldenhauer informed members that the Pride celebration was cancelled for 2020 and that the committee is planning to have the event in 2021.

There are two PFLAG meetings on the schedule for 2020. The first is October 7 and the second is November 4. The meeting will be held at the Stan Holdcraft Center located at the Elston facility on Detroit street.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

The discussion about tenant rights will be added to the agenda for the October meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mrs. George asked the reminded commissioners to begin thinking about next year (2021) activities such as the Black History Month Essay Contest (February) and the annual dinner/event.

She also pointed to the quilt in the background. The quilt was part of Black History month contest many years ago. The them was "Human Rights: The Stitching of Our Society". A local Quilting Society took the winning "quilt squares" and placed them together on the quilt for the department.

Nancy Moldenhauer announced that the Main Street Association submitted and received a grant for the erection of a sculpture of Naomi Anderson in Westcott Park. She gave a brief history of Naomi Anderson, a Michigan City native of African American descent who was a suffragist and abolitionist among other things.

ADJOURN:

Motion, Albertine Allen, Second Dennis Carroll, Vote 7-0
The meeting concluded at 5:18 p.m.

NEXT MEETING:

Tuesday, October 6, 2020, 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Ta-Tanesha George, Executive Director