



One City for All People

**Metro Human Relations Commission**  
**Full Commission Meeting Minutes**  
**Monday, February 4, 2019, from 4:00 PM to 5:30 PM**  
**Lentz Public Health Center**  
**2500 Charlotte Ave, Nashville, TN 37209**

*The mission of the Metro Human Relations Commission is to protect and promote the personal dignity, peace, safety, security, health, and general welfare of all people in Nashville and Davidson County.*

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** MHRC Board Chair, Dr. Janice Rodriguez  
The meeting was called to order at 4:07p.  
  
**Commissioners in Attendance:** *Jeremy Davis, Dave Garrison, Marcela Gomez, Lethia Mann, Oscar Miller, Avi Poster, Kobie Pretorius, Erin Pryor, Marisa Richmond, Janice Rodriguez, Davie Tucker, Irwin Venick*  
**Commissioners Not in Attendance:** *Samar Ali, Jeff Gibson, Aisha Lbhalla, Linda Robinson,*  
**Others in Attendance:** *Alex Dickerson (Metro Legal), Mel Fowler-Green, Barbara Gunn Lartey, Sarah Imran, Jonathan Joseph, Vanessa Lazon, Members of the Public*
- II. **CONFIRM QUOROM** (Share regrets from Commissioners not in attendance; introduce guests)  
A quorum was achieved at meeting's inception.
- III. **REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES**  
Commission Board Chair ("CBC") Janice Rodriguez requested that the date in the header of the January minutes be revised. Comm. Richmond noted that the January minutes should have included her request about assistance for furloughed federal employees.  
  
Comm. Gomez moved for approval of the January minutes. Comm. Richmond seconded—as amended. Upon board's approval, CBC Rodriguez entered the amended January minutes.
- IV. **FINANCIAL REPORT:** Executive Director, Mel Fowler-Green
  - E.D. Fowler-Green reported that MHRC has been very frugal this fiscal year. She noted that the Commission, in response to Finance's request to spend \$13,000 less than originally appropriated, was unable to sponsor or participate in community initiatives as envisioned.
  - Comm. Poster asked if there is a way to request an exception to this budget mandate savings requirement given the small size of our department and budget.
  - E.D. Fowler-Green said we'll know something by month's end regarding whether we can proceed with our budget status quo. If not, we will have to revisit our FY programming.
  - E.D. Fowler-Green also noted that several budgetary requests have been made for an additional staff person. This employee would address Title VI and Language-Access matters.
  - The board, including Commissioners Gomez, Miller, Poster, Pretorius, and Rodriguez discussed creative options to resolve the budget shortfall.

V. **NEW BUSINESS**

- In house equity training led by Executive Director Mel Fowler-Green – *Systemic Inequality: What's Past is Prologue*
- E.D. Fowler-Green facilitated this discussion, as well as fielded comments and concerns from Commissioners and members of the public.
- **Seven Highlights** from the *Systemic Inequality: What's Past is Prologue* training:
  1. Should people of color be primarily responsible for resolving or redressing inequity?
  2. Where you live is deeply connected to a person's access to resources, including:
    - Schools
    - Health Care Facilities
    - Supermarkets
    - Public Facilities
    - Green Spaces
    - Places to Work
    - Transit Options
    - Safety
  3. Evidence, including map imaging and a review of policies and practices, prove that the federal government, banks, and other housing-/mortgage-related entities, intentionally and structurally designed strategies that rendered certain neighborhoods accessible to white people while excluding people of color.
    - Comm. Mann recommended the book *Color of Law* by, by Richard Rothstein, regarding housing discrimination.
    - E.D. Fowler-Green also referenced *The Case for Reparations*, by Ta-Nehisi Coates
    - Comm. Tucker added that because of these practices black wealth has been determined to be 1/11<sup>th</sup> of America's dominant class.
  4. Irrespective of the intent to discriminate, the following sectors are the primary areas of structural inequity:
    - Criminal Justice
    - Education
    - Employment
    - Health Care
    - Housing
  5. Structural inequity perpetuates the reality of white privilege.
    - Sociologist Peggy McIntosh captures this concept: "*An invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools and blank checks" that as a white person she can count on cashing in every day.*"
  6. The myth of colorblindness
    - Colorblindness is an aspiration based on the belief that everyone, white people as well as people of color, should not care about race, or even notice it.
    - The concept of colorblindness actually fuels structural racism because it keeps us from noticing racial disparities and their structural causes.
  7. Invisibility
    - The structures that perpetuate racial disparities are so embedded, that they are not only invisible; they appear *normal*.

- This reality is often not seen even by those who are working to increase diversity and inclusion.

- E.D. Fowler-Green will send Commissioners the Power Point presentation.

VI. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT:** Executive Director, Mel Fowler-Green

- Commissioners reviewed the report that was included in their meeting packet.

VII. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no public comments.

VIII. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- [Work, Wages & the Future of Nashville: An Open Forum](#)  
Saturday, April 6, 2019  
9:00am – 11:30a  
TSU Avon Williams Campus (330 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue, North)

Comm. Poster requested that this item be placed on the agenda for the March meeting.

- Comm. Miller is seeking members for the Community Advisory Board that addresses cancer disparities among African American Hispanic, low-income, rural, and other underserved populations.

Meetings for 2019 are:

- February 19, May, 21, August 27, and November 19
- 5:30p—7:00p
- Lentz Public Health Center (2500 Charlotte Ave, 37209)
- Dinner is served and stipends are offered for meeting participation
- For more information please contact:

Dr. Oscar Miller

Professor of Sociology at Tennessee State University

615-963-5559

IX. **ADJOURN**

Comm. Richmond motioned for meeting to be adjourned. Comm. Mann seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 5:45p.

### MHRC Priorities

Racial/Social Inequity	Affordable and Fair Housing	Law Enforcement/Policing	Title VI
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#### Appeal of Decisions From the Metro Human Relations Commission

If you are not satisfied with a decision of the Metropolitan Human Relations Commission, you may appeal the decision by petitioning for a writ of certiorari with the Davidson County Chancery or Circuit Court. Your appeal must be filed within 60 days of the date of the entry of the Human Relations Commission's decision. We advise that you seek your own independent legal advice to ensure that your appeal is filed in a timely manner and that all procedural requirements have been met.

If any accommodations are needed for individuals with disabilities who wish to be present at the meeting, please contact MHRC at 615-880-3370 or [MHRC@nashville.gov](mailto:MHRC@nashville.gov). Requests should be made as soon as possible but at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled meeting in order for the entity to provide such needed aid or service.

February 2019 -- MHRC Director's report

Ongoing Projects and Programs

<i>Project</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Relevant Dates</i>
Sharepoint Site	We will launch our Sharepoint site for the Commission next month. This will allow us to maintain a shared calendar and to share documents with you.	March, 2019
Affordable housing educational series	<p>Second in the series is complete and has been released. Supported by MHRC Fund of the Community Foundation of Middle TN.</p> <p>Please share these! Also be sure to share the website where the information can be downloaded:</p> <p><a href="http://www.housing101.us">www.housing101.us</a></p> <p>The third in the series will investigate the human civil rights impact of market-based displacement and the demographic changes in Nashville (placing it in historical context).</p>	
Public Safety and Criminal Justice	<p><a href="#">1. Results from the Policing Project study and report were released. Recommendations from the report have not yet been implemented or fully acknowledged – a concern that several commissioners have raised with me</a></p> <p><a href="#">2. We are working closely with Mayor's Office, MNP, NFD, and others following the transgender shaming incident reported on in October. We will be working directly with the departments to implement training recommendations, including other Metro employees, generally, not just MNP and NFD.</a></p> <p><a href="#">3. Community Oversight Board:</a></p> <p><a href="#">- I will be facilitating the first public meeting of the COB – Feb 12, 2019 at 4:00. If they do not elect a</a></p>	<p>COB First meeting: February 12, 4PM (in city hall)</p> <p>COB Symposium: March or April, 2019</p>

	<p><a href="#">chair at that time, I may be asked to facilitate the second meeting as well.</a></p> <p><a href="#">The Mayor’s Office has asked that we co-sponsor a one day symposium to hear from COB experts on what the community should expect and how best to use the COB</a></p>	
<p>PolicyLink – All-In Cities Anti-Displacement Initiative</p>	<p><a href="#">Team representing Nashville in the All-In Cities initiative by Policy Link addressing policies to avoid or mitigate displacement due to gentrification</a></p> <p>Anyone can follow the PolicyLink process and the work of our team, and provide feedback.</p> <p><a href="http://www.nashvilleallin.com">www.nashvilleallin.com</a></p>	
<p>Maddox Diversity Equity &amp; Inclusion Taskforce</p>	<p>Sarah is serving on the Dan and Margaret Maddox Foundation’s Equity taskforce, to participate in developing a strategy for the organization to implement DEI practices.</p>	<p>Yearlong project</p>
<p>Nashville Rising: Work, Wages, and the Future of Nashville</p>	<p>Sarah has been on the planning committee for a forum which aims to highlight the importance of livable wages in Nashville.</p> <p>Venue: TSU</p>	<p>April 6</p>
<p>Youth Violence Evaluation</p>	<p>Collaboration with Gideon’s Army.</p> <p>They are implementing a school-based intervention to combat youth violence. This program is being piloted at Pearl Cohn high school. We are helping implement and evaluate this program.</p>	<p>1-2 year project</p>
<p>Title VI</p>	<p>Still working on a Metro-wide Language Access Plan and Resource Guide; met in June with the Mayor’s office, HR, and General Services.</p> <p>Restructuring Title VI reporting and training in collaboration with HR.</p> <p>In the next few months we will also update our website and make a simple training video for new employees for use by department Title VI Coordinators.</p>	<p>Meeting: to be rescheduled with Mayor’s Office</p> <p>Website update and Video anticipated release: May</p>

Center for Nonprofit Management Training	Workshop to address issues re systemic inequity and building a Nashville-centric equity lens for nonprofits to use.	Two next year: April 25, 2019 Oct 22, 2019
Public Relations	Project introducing each Commissioner on website, in social media and newsletters.	Ongoing

**Events**

<i>Event</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Relevant Dates</i>
Community Oversight Symposium	Co-Lead Sponsor (with Mayor's Office)	March (?), 2019
Mobile Diversity Seminar	Lead Sponsor	March 6, 2019
Wage and Poverty Forum	Sponsorship	April 6, 2019
Fair Housing Matters Conference	Sponsorship	April, 2019
Music City Iftar	Co-Lead Sponsor	May, 2019
Pride Festival	Sponsorship	June, 2019
Celebrate Nashville	Co-Lead Sponsor	October, 2019
Human Rights Day Celebration	Co-Lead Sponsor	December, 2019