

One City for All People

**Full Commission Meeting Minutes**

**Monday, July 11, 2016, from 4:00 PM to 5:30 PM**

**Metro Office Building, 800 Second Avenue South, 2nd Floor**

**Davidson Room**

***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.***

**Commissioner Attendees**: Phyllis Hildreth, Aisha Lbhalla, Lethia Mann, Abdishakur Mohamed,

Avi Poster, Ellen Register, Marisa Richmond, Janice Rodriguez, Frank Trew, Peter Woolfolk

**Commissioner Absentees**: Samar Ali, Jeremy Davis, Jeff Gibson, Marcela Gomez, Oscar Miller, Erin Pryor

**Others**: Mel Fowler-Green (Ex. Dir., MHRC), Barbara R. Gunn Lartey (Dir. of Community Engagement, MHRC),

Josh Lee (Metro Legal), **T.I.M.E. Youth Program**: Melissa Gordon, Ex. Dir., Chemaine Bishop,

Anna Carella (Adult Volunteer), Cekira Frierson, Iyen Frierson (Adult Volunteer), Tim Gibson, Amy Guerrero,

Victoria Moore, Donnell Sandifer, Ja’Santey Spencer, Aminah Stratton, Tanyenika Woodruff, David Woodard

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

The Full MHRC Commission meeting was called to order at 4:00pm by Frank Trew, Commission Board Chair (“CBC”). Before welcoming and acknowledging guests from the T.I.M.E. (youth leadership) Program, CBC Trew acknowledged the difficult climate of current events regarding police-related shooting deaths (MN and LA) and subsequent police deaths (TX). Comm. Poster echoed his concern, adding that these incidents indicate that it is important and clear that MHRC should lead conversations about these issues.

1. **CONFIRM QUOROM** (Share regrets from Commissioners not in attendance; introduce guests)

CBC Trew confirmed quorum and welcomed the T.I.M.E. Program youth.

1. **REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

In consideration of Comm. Hildreth having to leave the meeting early for another civic engagement commitment, this item was held until after the Commissioners elected the Executive Committee. Upon concluding elections, CBC Trew proceeded with the meeting as scheduled and requested Commissioners to review and approve the minutes from the Commissioner Board Meeting held on June 6, 2016.

After Commissioners reviewed the minutes, CBC Trew inquired if there was a motion to approve them. Comm. Lbhalla moved to approve the minutes. Comm. Woolfolk seconded. Minutes were approved.

IV. **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTIONS**

CBC Trew yielded the floor to Comm. Woolfolk to conduct elections for the Executive Committee.

1. **Election of Commission Board Chair**
2. Comm. Woolfolk, Chair of the Nominating Subcommittee, commenced the election process.
3. Comm. Woolfolk requested current Board Chair Comm. Frank Trew to leave the room.
4. Comm. Woolfolk announced Comm. Trew’s nomination for a second term.
5. Comm. Woolfolk asked if all were in favor.
6. All Commissioners responded “yea” or “yes” by a show of hands.
7. Comm. Woolfolk asked if there were any objections or abstentions.
8. There were no objections or abstentions.
9. Comm. Woolfolk announced that Comm. Trew had been re-elected Commission Board Chair.
10. Comm. Woolfolk requested someone to welcome Comm. Trew back into the room.
11. Comm. Woolfolk congratulated Comm. Trew on his re-election as Commission Board Chair.
12. **Election of Commission First Vice Chair**
13. Comm. Woolfolk repeated the above-referenced process for current First Vice Chair

Comm. Avi Poster.

1. Comm. Poster was re-elected First Vice Chair of MHRC.
2. **Election of Commission Second Vice Chair**
3. Comm. Woolfolk repeated the above-referenced process for current Second Vice Chair

Comm. Phyllis Hildreth.

1. Comm. Hildreth was re-elected Second Vice Chair of MHRC.
2. **Election of Commission Secretary**
3. Comm. Woolfolk repeated the above-referenced process for Comm. Aisha Lbhalla, nominee

for Secretary.

1. Comm. Lbhalla was elected to her first term as Secretary of MHRC.
2. **Election of Commission Treasurer**
3. Comm. Woolfolk repeated the above-referenced process for Comm. Ellen Register, nominee

for Treasurer.

1. Comm. Register was elected to her first term as Treasurer of MHRC.

Comm. Woolfolk congratulated the newly elected slate of Commissioners for the Executive Committee. All applauded.

V. **GUEST PRESENTATION**

CBC Trew introduced Melissa Gordon, Executive Director of the T.I.M.E. Program. E.D. Fowler-Green asked Ms. Gordon to describe the T.I.M.E. Program and to explain why they are here.

Ms. Gordon asked one of her student trainees, Ja’Santey Spencer, to speak for T.I.M.E. Mr. Spencer introduced T.I.M.E. as a program that trains high school youth to secure internships to prepare them to be responsible employees in the future. Ms. Gordon added that of the many topics they have discussed this summer, sexual orientation has emerged as a major theme. E.D. Fowler-Green noted that the way we classify ourselves can lead to conflict, and applauded Ms. Gordon for addressing this with her interns.

In response to queries about the age range of the youth and how they are recruited, Ms. Gordon said trainees are ages 13-17, primarily beginning with rising ninth-graders. They are identified through community centers, coaches, guidance counselors, teachers, and word-of-mouth. CBC Trew asked about the length of the program. Ms. Gordon said the module is roughly nine weeks. This year it started on

June 2nd and ends July 26th.

Comm. Rodrigues asked about the T.I.M.E. acronym. Ms. Gordon replied that T.I.M.E. stands for the ***T****een* ***I****ntern and* ***M****entor* ***E****xperience*, and that it is a stipend-based job readiness program that focuses on career exploration, communications workshops, and workforce literacy education.

Comm. Poster asked a few of them to describe where they are interning. After initial responses, CBC Trew requested ***each*** of them to share where they’re working. All ten youth responded, and intern sites were varied and creative, including a teen institute in an area of the city where there are few youth-centered activities, a food pantry, and even several real estate initiatives.

Comm. Register inquired about how they find or secure sponsors. Comm. Trew asked if they are able to accept individual donations. Ms. Gordon explained that the West End United Methodist Church is their fiscal agent and that, yes, they accept donations. Comm. Poster congratulated her for helping our youth by offering constructive, education experiences.

He also wondered about how they debrief to assess or measure the program’s effectiveness. Ms. Gordon said that on Mondays and Fridays they check in and discuss skill-building, conflict resolution, workplace etiquette and other issues. In addition, she conducts un-announced site visits. CBC Trew said the program is “super fabulous” and invited them to stay at the meeting as long as they’d like. Comm. Lbhalla asked E.D. Fowler-Green if there will be a way to follow up with or contact them. E.D. Fowler-Green said she will be sure to pass along their information.

CBC Trew yielded the floor to E.D. Fowler-Green for the Director’s Report.

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

ED Fowler-Green said she’s excited about the new Commissioners joining MHRC and welcomed them. She thanked the ones who were able to attend the Meet-and-Greet Lunch on May 25th at our office.

1. **Budget Report**
2. Unfortunately, we did not receive requested funds to employ an administrative assistant, even though we had champions on Metro Council. We will revisit next year. E.D. Fowler-Green is encouraged because now we have the assistance of our new Treasurer, Comm. Ellen Register. She does think, however, that we have enough money in the new budget to hire temporary admin talent to work on the database.
3. We do not yet have a year-end profit and loss statement. The ledgers will close on July 15th, so next month we’ll be able to report the final numbers. We will likely be over budget by about $650 ($400 for the E.D.’s tax payment and a last-minute request of $250 for an extra bus for World Refugee Day). The overage has been discussed with the Office of Budget and Management. There appear to be no issues or concerns.
4. Several of our large expenditures this year were non-recurring one-offs, *e.g.,* the brochure design and printing, computer program licenses, and the Celebrate Nashville week-long sponsorship. Because these were one-time expenses, we will have funds for temporary admin help to assist with a few projects.
5. **Events in June—Intense because there were *Nine* MHRC-Sponsored Events**
6. **June 7, MNPD Mobile Diversity Seminar:**

* E.D. Fowler-Green thanked Commissioners Hildreth, Lbhalla and Richmond for their support and participation. She said it was a true community effort and has received overwhelmingly positive results. Upon reflection our office deems it to be such a success that we think it’s worth committing resources for future MNPD trainings. E.D. Fowler-Green said she’s already received feedback from Cpt. Stephens (MNPD Academy) and he’s made it clear that he wants to continue the training.
* A debriefing meeting is scheduled with Cpt. Stephens on Wednesday, July 13th at MHRC.
* Mayor Barry referenced the training in a statement after the latest cycle of police-related violence.
* E.D. Fowler-Green was contacted to participate in a conversation convened by Nashville Unites (Bishop Walker). There will be about 40-50 individuals/organizations working with them. She suggests we wait until we learn more about their messaging, goals and objectives.
* She also mentioned that the success of this event further proves that we are equipped to engage the community in positive ways. However, she is cautiously optimistic because this is just the beginning; a one day training cannot resolve the all the frictions between the police and local communities.
* E.D. Fowler-Green referenced the Post-Event Analysis that was distributed to Commissioners by email before the meeting and hardcopy in today’s meeting. Comm. Poster said that the feedback was impressive and well-presented in the report.

Comm. Woolfolk agreed, noting that it is very helpful and that such a reflective report is not always produced. He also inquired if the recommendations had been researched to ensure they can be implemented. E.D. Fowler-Green said that for the most part, yes. Some of the suggestions will require MNPD support; we are unable to confirm their level of commitment to the recommendations until we meet with them on Wednesday.

Significant conversation ensued about the relevance, timing and importance of the training.

Chief Diversity Officer Michelle Hernandez-Lane said that while the mobile training was a good way to expose the trainees, it’s just one arrow in the quiver. She said that there are other types of training that the department offers, such as conflict resolution, and that, in actuality, 25 or so officers have recently received implicit bias training.

Comm. Poster said that it is important that we don’t negate or minimize the impact the *Mobile Diversity Semin*ar had on the culture. Comm. Aisha concurred, and asked if the meeting with Cpt. Stephens was open to Commissioners. E.D. Fowler-Green said that it is. Comm. Lbhalla requested the details because she has concerns about the manner in which the police communicate with people, including their manner, tone and general lack of appropriate interpersonal skills.

E.D. Fowler-Green said that there are conversations about these issues throughout the City and she will be sure to make information available to the Commission as she receives it.

1. **June 10, Title VI Training for the Staff of Juvenile Court:**

* Was co-facilitated by Barbara Gunn Lartey (Dir. of Comm. Engagement) and Samantha Perez (Dir. of Policy and Research) for over100 attendees. Juvenile Court has requested that we repeat the training in early Fall.

1. **June 14, Music City Iftar:**

* E.D. Fowler-Green reported that we were co-hosts (with Faith and Culture Center) to the largest group yet—over 350 people.
* She also noted that the venue, OZ Arts, was great but not cheap.
* Comm. Poster expressed that he thought the setting was excellent. The quality of the event was polished and beautiful. He noted that having the food brought to the table to engender communal dining was a nice touch.
* Comm. Poster asked if anyone complained about the location. E.D. Fowler-Green said yes--on the front end. But on event day and after, no. People complemented the site, the valet parking, everything.
* E.D. Fowler-Green also shared that the OZ Arts staff was amazing. For example, though the planning committee arranged for rugs to be delivered for prayer, they couldn’t be transported (because they were too big). So OZ Arts pulled it off by using their own carpeting.
* E.D. Fowler-Green said that as nice as it was, a part of her regretted moving it from the Music City Center—a more centralized, identifiable Metro location. CBC Trew said that ***that’s*** what he liked about it. Comm. Rodriguez concurred, saying that the iftar was more elegant.
* Comm. Register asked how people were able to attend (*e.g., tickets*?). E.D. Fowler-Green said that in addition to tickets reserved for the mosques and others, guests registered online.
* E.D. Fowler-Green said that the event received great press coverage. She specifically acknowledged that the reporter from Channel 4 (Liz Lohuis) who “got it right” in terms of accuracy and tenor.
* Finally, in addition to the cuisine, speakers and the spoken word artist, E.D. Fowler-Green referenced the numerous signatures on the Orlando Pledge poster—a public statement of our united commitment to ensure that all people are treated fairly with dignity and respect.

1. **June 24, Two Events:**

* E.D. Fowler-Green highlighted two MHRC-related events on this day:

-- ***The Lunch-N-Learn*** presentation about the Flint water crisis that she gave to the Nashville Bar Association

-- ***The Southern Foodways Alliance Summer Symposium*** which focused on the diverse eateries of Nolensville Road. She said that she will send the Commissioners the documentary that was featured at the event.

1. **June 25, Three Events:**

* E.D. Fowler-Green highlighted three events on Saturday—the very next day:

-- ***Fisk Food and Music Fest***, staffed by Barbara Gunn Lartey at MHRC booth. Despite the extreme heat, Comm. Hildreth also represented MHRC for several hours. A Proclamation signed by the Mayor was presented acknowledging the University’s 150th Anniversary.

-- ***Nashville Pride***, attended by Barbara Gunn Lartey on Friday and E.D. Fowler-Green, who participated in the Equality Walk on Saturday with Councilman Freddie O’Donnell and others. She noted the visible support by MNPD at the Walk.

-- ***World Refugee Day,*** convened by TFLI (Comm. Rodriguez) to celebrate refugees in Nashville. MHRC provided transportation for families to attend the events at Coleman Park Community Center.

1. **Upcoming Events**
2. **July 12, Guest Lecture at MTSU:**

* E.D. Fowler-Green will share her expertise on labor trafficking as a guest lecturer

1. **July 13, Language Access Focus Group:**

* To be held at Casa Azafrán—and we’re expecting a sizeable turnout. Relatedly, MHRC is collaborating with Bridges to organize a focus group exclusively for the deaf and hard-of-hearing community for early next month. After these last two groups are done, the data collection component will be over and we will move into the analysis phase.

E.D. Fowler-Green mentioned that she is in discussion with Mayor Barry regarding a collaborative rollout of the Language Access Study.

1. **July 13, *MNPD Mobile Diversity Seminar* Post-Analysis Meeting with Cpt. Stephens:**

* Cpt. Stephens will journey to MHRC to discuss next steps for this training. We will review the report that includes analysis of cadet and community partner feedback.

1. **July 20, Meeting with Dr. Joseph**

* Dr. Shawn Joseph, new Director of MNPS, has requested a meeting with E.D. Fowler-Green. She will meet with him next Wednesday at 11:00am. She said that in addition to discussing *IncluCivics: MNPS*, she will inquire about his vision for his newly-created Office of Diversity and Equity. She will be sure to ask him how we can help him achieve his goals.

1. **July 26, Report Card Committee Meeting**

* These meetings will start on this day. E.D. Fowler-Green will represent MHRC.

Comm. Register said she thinks representing MHRC on the Report Card Committee is a good idea. E.D. Fowler-Green said the primary focus is on diversity and inclusion. Comm. Abdishakur asked for a description and purpose of this committee. E.D. Fowler-Green responded that for the last 25 years community members and leaders have convened to assess a number of metrics regarding the success of MNPS. She noted, though, that those metrics have not included diversity and inclusion.

Comm. Poster added that the role of public school is not just about academic skills; the value of developing social and communal skills to make good decisions needs to be revisited and he hopes E.D. Fowler-Green shares these sentiments with Dr. Joseph. E.D. Fowler-Green agreed, saying that students need to be able to function in diverse settings.

Comm. Poster expounded that developing these types of skills can be intentional and measurable. Comm. Register referenced the groundbreaking insights of Timothy Shriver and his research regarding social-emotional learning. She specifically referred to the nationally recognized study commissioned by CASEL (the Collaborative for Academic Social, and Emotional Learning, which found that 93% of the educators surveyed want more focus on social and emotional learning).

E.D. Fowler-Green concurred with the teacher insights, which is why she had Sam Perez review teacher surveys during her data analysis for *IncluCivics: MNPS*. E.D. Fowler-Green found their views about discipline particularly interesting. Comm. Woolfolk said that’s not surprising because getting expelled gets brought up a lot, especially the fact that minority kids are dismissed for disciplinary reasons in greater quantities than others. E.D. Fowler-Green said that expulsions are down at MNPS, but demographically kids of color are expelled at higher rates.

Comm. Poster said surveys are fine, but we need to get inside of schools to have conversations, not just rely on surveys. Comm. Woolfolk asked whether disciplinary policies are equitably-interpreted and applied. He referenced Tony Majors’ initiative, but the name escaped him. Josh Lee (Metro Legal) said Majors’ project was called Passages. Comm. Poster concluded that since Passages has not been fully implemented there is no way to assess its effectiveness.

E.D. Fowler-Green said that after her conversation with Dr. Joseph she plans to meet with Dawn Deaner (Public Defender) and Tom Ward at Oasis to explore plans for listening sessions. Comm. Lbhalla said she is excited about that concept, offering that as a Commission we should be leading the effort to assess the temperament of society. She continued that we can set the stage for people to be honest about their fears and mistrust. Comm. Woolfolk complemented her sentiment by saying that one of the reasons why adults don’t trust is because of negative experiences in school when younger.

1. **Commissioner Calendar**

Commissioner Register expressed that she’s impressed by all of these events and activities and requested a follow up on the MHRC lunch discussion for a centralized Commissioner Calendar. E.D. Fowler-Green said that she is researching the most efficient options.

She asked if the Commissioners would prefer to be committed to another calendar like Outlook, or a cloud-based, project management alternative such as Apollo. E.D. Fowler-Green offered the Metro calendar could be another option, but it would not be comprehensive because it does not

include events and projects without public notice. She said that Apollo would be the most efficient, accessible and manageable and asked Commissioners to let her know if they’d be interested. Comm. Register said she’d be okay with simple monthly updates and reminders. E.D. Fowler-Green replied she’d be happy to do that.

At the conclusion of the Director’s Report Comm. Hildreth had to leave the meeting. She explained that she is participating in a small stakeholder conversation for the Every Place Counts Design Challenge (the DOT project that aims to transform our transportation network into a system that reflects and incorporates the input of the people and the communities they impact.). She said that North Nashville was one of four communities chosen (Spokane, Philadelphia and Minneapolis were the others). Comm. Hildreth was careful to mention that while the design consultants will create a plan for the stakeholders to present to the Mayor, this initiative in not in competition with NashvilleNext. She will send a link to Barbara Gunn Lartey share with the Commissioners.

The T.I.M.E. Project youth thanked the Commission for inviting them to the Commission Meeting and also excused themselves. CBC Trew and E.D. Fowler-Green expressed their gratitude for joining us. Comm. Poster reiterated how impressed he is by their presentation and their projects.

1. **FINANCIAL REPORT**

There was no additional Financial Report beyond E.D. Fowler-Green’s Budget Summary.

1. **COMMITTEES**

* Nominating—Comm. Woolfolk facilitated Executive Committee elections which were completed at the beginning of the meeting.
* Orientation—Comm. Poster gave the summary. He said the Orientation Committee is designing a day to discuss the role of Commissioners, and the Commission’s mission and vision. He updated that since former CBC Deb Palmer George trains and facilitates professionally, his Committee requested that she lead the Orientation. Former Comm. Palmer George agreed, but the only date she’s available is Saturday, September 10th, so the Commissioner Orientation will be on that day.

Comm. Richmond asked if the September 10th date was changing from the previously agreed upon August 27th date. Comm. Poster said yes because former Comm. Palmer George was not available on that date. Comm. Poster also discussed the value and possibility of a uncomplicated pre-retreat self-reflection.

* Bylaws—There was no Bylaws report.

CBC Trew asked if there were any questions. Since there were none he proceeded with the Agenda.

1. **NEW BUSINESS**

There was no New Business to report.

1. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no Public Comment.

1. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Comm. Poster announced that there will be an *Ad Hoc* Working Groupmeeting to addressaffordable housing on Wednesday, July 13th. He said the committee will discuss proposed legislations and recommendations. He also noted that it has been a positive experience to see the community so

engaged—especially with Councilmembers. Comm. Woolfolk asked if there were any developers in the group. Comm. Poster said there were. Comm. Woolfolk said good; he just wanted to ensure that everyone was at the table. E.D. Fowler-Green added that all parties had been invited all along.

1. **ADJOURN**

CBC Trew called for a motion to adjourn. Comm. Rodriguez seconded.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:30pm.

**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.