

DOVER HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

The Dover Human Relations Commission (DHRC) meeting was held on October 18, 2016 at 6:10 p.m. with Vice Chairman McGiffin presiding in the absence of Chairman Henderson. Members present were Ms. Mullen, Reverend Paige, and Mrs. Sadusky. Ms. Bogle was absent.

AGENDA ADDITIONS/DELETIONS

Mrs. Sadusky moved for approval of the agenda, seconded by Ms. Mullen and unanimously carried.

Mr. McGiffin welcomed Reverend Rita Paige as a new member, stating that the DHRC was delighted to have her.

Election of Committee Chair - Community Engagement Committee

Reverend Paige nominated Ms. Wanda Mullen to serve as Chair of the Community Engagement Committee. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Sadusky and unanimously carried.

DHRC Diversity Research Project

Mr. McGiffin advised that, a couple of years ago, former Commissioner Gene Ruane had discovered *Reinventing Diversity*, a book about measuring diversity in local government, which Mr. Ruane thought was done well. The book described a very extensive process by which one could investigate a local government to determine where it stood on diversity and cultural competency. Mr. McGiffin advised that, before Mr. Ruane left the DHRC due to moving to California, it was agreed that the DHRC would conduct a diversity survey. Rather than hiring someone to do the extensive academic-level survey recommended by the book, it was agreed to do a non-scientific study that would assess the City government on issues of diversity and cultural competency.

Mr. McGiffin explained that he had developed questions that would allow the Government Policy, Programs, and Practices (GPPP) Committee to interview department heads for about 45 minutes regarding diversity, and he also devised an online or paper survey that would be made available to all staff. It was hoped that information received from the survey and interviews would allow the DHRC to come to some conclusions about where the City was with respect to diversity and make recommendations. Mr. McGiffin stated that he and Mr. Henderson interviewed eight (8) or nine (9) staff members from December 2015 through January 2016. They then posted the online survey and made printed copies available. Mr. McGiffin estimated that there were approximately 23 responses to the survey. Noting that the City has over 300 employees, he stated that between the interviews and the surveys, they heard from approximately 10% of the employee base. Mr. McGiffin wrote up the results in the Dover Human Relations Commission Diversity Research Project report, which was distributed to members of the Commission. He had hoped that members would read and react to the report by making observations and possibly developing recommendations, which had been their assignment between the last and current meetings.

Referring to his email dated October 6, 2016, DHRC Diversity Research Project, Mr. McGiffin stated that he had submitted his own observations regarding the report. Members were provided a handout entitled "Response, Observations and Recommendations to DHRC Regarding Cultural Competency and Diversity Survey Conducted by Jim McGiffin and Ted Henderson," which was

submitted by Mrs. Sadusky (*Attachment #1*). Mr. McGiffin advised that other members had not been heard from in regard to the report.

Mr. McGiffin explained that the report was not something that the City could rely on as scientifically valid; however, he believed it provided some insight on where the City is with respect to diversity and cultural competency. For example, he noted that City staff tended to respond well regarding the City Manager with respect to diversity issues and thought that the City Manager was sensitive, aware, and talked about and promoted diversity. However, Mr. McGiffin stated that the City has a profound commitment to diversity in some documents and most department heads do not know about it unless it is something that they work with. For example, he indicated that the finance director knows what the budget states about diversity because she writes the budget, and the Human Resources (HR) Director knows what the HR policies are with respect to diversity; but no one else knows about these things. Mr. McGiffin believed that employees have a sense that the City tries to promote diversity in the workplace, either through recruiting and hiring or through actual workaday matters, but they do not really have a sense about where that comes from, and he found it interesting that staff was unaware. He noted that there was also a sense among some of the survey respondents that talking about diversity is a load of rubbish and distracts people from doing their jobs, or that it is too political and the City has no business doing it.

Mr. McGiffin asked members to share their thoughts regarding how they would like to proceed. Mrs. Sadusky stated that she believed that members should come up with some formal recommendations, noting that she had suggested that two (2) DHRC members meet to discuss this. Mr. McGiffin felt that the Government Policy, Programs, and Practices (GPPP) Committee could discuss formal recommendations. He indicated that the GPPP Committee currently consists of himself and Mr. Henderson, and Mr. Henderson sat in on all of the interviews and was an active participant. He expressed disappointment that Mr. Henderson was not present because he felt that Mr. Henderson's perspective might be different than his own, noting that he and Mr. Henderson come from very different backgrounds. Mr. McGiffin stated that they had both talked to the same people at the same time, and he would love to hear how the information struck Mr. Henderson. Mr. McGiffin believed it would make sense to work up some recommendations and he believed the GPPP Committee could do this.

Mr. McGiffin believed that the survey revealed that there were issues regarding diversity awareness all through the ranks of City staff, with the possible exception of the City Manager, who received positive ratings from those addressed. He noted that he and Mr. Henderson had not talked to the City Clerk's Office about diversity, because he felt they were part of the DHRC. Mr. McGiffin did not feel that there was a lack of goodwill; however, he felt there may be a lack of awareness regarding: a) how important the City has made diversity and cultural competency, b) how important diversity and cultural competency are on their own, and c) how spending more time and giving more attention to diversity and cultural competency might make the City a better place to work and live. He noted that respondents pointed out a lot of positive things that the City does; for example, they loved the cadet program, which they felt was recruiting people from diverse backgrounds, which was a great thing.

Responding to Mrs. Sadusky, Mr. McGiffin explained that the cadets are employees who are in the jurisdiction of the police who are trained but are not armed officers. He noted that there are cadets who work at the libraries and patrol on bicycles.

Mr. McGiffin noted that respondents also liked the clean-up day and the many festivals, stating his opinion that the diversity of these festivals was interesting. He felt that there were some very good things that the City was not publicizing or making information available about to staff and the general public, so there would be room for recommendations and growth in this area.

Ms. Mullen agreed that there was room to educate employees from the top level all the way down. She expressed interest in hearing from staff who are not managers regarding their feelings, knowledge, and ideas about cultural diversity and competency, as well as what kind of training they had been provided. Ms. Mullen advised that she is a firm believer that anything that is not understood can easily be abused. She expressed a desire to get information out on this subject as something that needs attention and felt that there was room for improvement.

Reverend Paige asked if there was a mandatory requirement for diversity training in City government. Responding, Mr. McGiffin stated that such a requirement was not discovered through the course of the interviews and survey, although he knew that training had been available. He indicated that, when serving as a City Council representative, he attended training that was not specifically diversity training but had to do with gender roles in the workplace. Mr. McGiffin stated that the training was not well received by participants, and he got the sense that employees were required to be there. He was not aware of any mandatory training on diversity or cultural competency. (*City Clerk's Office Note: Subsequent to the meeting, Mrs. Kimberly Hawkins, Human Resources Director, advised the City Clerk's Office that diversity/harassment training is required for all employees under the supervision of the City Manager.*)

Reverend Paige felt that diversity training should be required, at least for senior staff and supervisors. Responding, Mr. McGiffin stated that they had talked to a lot of the senior staff and no one had mentioned any type of training; therefore, he did not believe there was this type of mandatory training. Reverend Paige suggested that this be a recommendation, and Mr. McGiffin agreed.

Reverend Page asked if there was a requirement that at least one (1) member on interview panels be a minority. Responding, Mr. McGiffin could not recall whether there was any particular requirement for panel composition.

Responding to Mr. McGiffin, Mrs. Jody Stein, Administrative Assistant, advised that the HR Department has three (3) staff members. Mr. McGiffin stated that Mrs. Kimberly Hawkins, Human Resources Director, had impressed Mr. Henderson and himself with her knowledge of diversity issues in the workplace, particularly in recruiting and hiring; however, there was not a lot of protocol that Mrs. Hawkins was bound to follow. They got the sense that Mrs. Hawkins generally does the right thing, but there were not a lot of requirements. He explained that Mrs. Hawkins indicated that she was open to improvement, as were all of the managers they spoke with. Mr. McGiffin stated that diversity issues were a high priority for HR and Procurement, but not for other departments.

Mr. McGiffin felt it would be helpful for a couple of people to develop a plan regarding the observations and conclusions from the report outside of a DHRC meeting, but he was unsure who those people would be. Mrs. Sadusky offered to work with Mr. Henderson on developing a plan in this regard. Mr. McGiffin stated his understanding that members would encourage Mr. Henderson to get a couple of members together to develop a plan.

DHRC Committee Updates

Government Policy, Programs, and Practices Committee (McGiffin)
No update was provided.

Community Engagement Committee
No update was provided.

Education Committee (Bogle)
No update was provided.

New Business

Development of Concise Statement - Mission and Functions of DHRC

During the Dover Human Relations Commission meeting of September 21, 2016, members discussed DHRC Updates, Education Committee report. Ms. Bogle felt it would be useful for DHRC members to have a session to develop an “elevator speech” or unified message about the DHRC, and for members to know what each of its committees stands for so that they could speak intelligently about what they do. Mr. McGiffin suggested putting discussion of who the DHRC is and what they do on the next meeting agenda.

Mrs. Mullen moved to table the discussion regarding the “elevator speech”, seconded by Mrs. Sadusky.

Mrs. Sadusky suggested that members give themselves some homework and look at the DHRC’s mission and vision statements and each come up with a thumbnail message in layman’s language.

Mr. McGiffin asked if notice could be sent out to remind members to do this homework and questioned if it would be appropriate for it to come from Mr. Henderson. He suggested that Mr. Henderson be asked to send something to members asking them to review the mission statement and other documents in anticipation of the discussion of this agenda item. Mrs. Sadusky asked if this could possibly be done a week prior to the meeting.

Mr. McGiffin requested the Clerk’s Office to request Mr. Henderson to send something out to members a week before the meeting to remind them to review the Commission’s mission and vision statements and to develop a thumbnail message in layman’s language.

The motion to table the discussion regarding the development of “an elevator speech” was unanimously carried.

Old Business

DHRC Vacancies (First and Fourth District)

Mr. McGiffin advised that this would be the only meeting where he would share attendance with Reverend Paige because he had been appointed to another governmental entity and, under the City’s rules, he could not serve in his new capacity and on the DHRC. Mr. McGiffin noted that a number of engaged, talented, and interested individuals had been unable to continue service on the DHRC because they had been appointed in a capacity that made them ineligible to serve on the Commission, and he felt that this prohibition reduces the pool of potential commissioners. Mr. McGiffin advised

that he had suggested someone who was unaffiliated to take his place and that Mrs. Sadusky also had some potential candidates in mind.

Responding to Mr. McGiffin, Mrs. Jody Stein, Administrative Assistant, stated that the DHRC had two (2) vacancies in the First District and one (1) in the Fourth District. In addition, she noted that Mr. McGiffin's seat in the Third District would become vacant effective October 19, 2016. She indicated that several applications had been submitted and provided to Council for review, one (1) of which was from the Third District.

In response to Mrs. Sadusky regarding the appointment procedure, Mrs. Stein explained that the Council President makes nominations for DHRC appointments, which must be approved by City Council.

Mr. McGiffin suggested that members schedule their next meeting. Ms. Mullen stated that she preferred Tuesday nights to Wednesdays. After further discussion, members agreed to tentatively schedule the next meeting for Thursday, November 17, 2016 at 6:00 p.m., subject to Mr. Henderson's approval.

Mrs. Sadusky expressed thanks to Mr. McGiffin for his service on the Commission and her regrets that he was leaving and members congratulated him on his new opportunity.

Reverend Paige moved for adjournment, seconded by Ms. Mullen and unanimously carried.

Meeting adjourned at 6:38 p.m.

James G. McGiffin, Jr.
Vice Chair

JGM/JS/tm

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Attachment

Attachment #1 - Response, Observations, and Recommendations to the DHRC Regarding Cultural Competency and Diversity Survey Conducted by Jim McGiffin and Ted Henderson, submitted by Mrs. Lynne Sadusky

Response, observations and recommendations to DHRC regarding
Cultural Competency and Diversity Survey conducted by
Jim McGiffin and Ted Henderson

In light of the importance of the survey and interviews conducted, it seems it may be advantageous and beneficial for at least 2 DHRC commissioners to meet at least 2 times to discuss the results and make recommendations back to the DHRC by January's meeting as to make recommendations of Action Steps. Then after approval of the recommendations by full DHRC, request to meet with at least two council members to discuss the recommendations, and give a final report to City Council by May 2017. And finally follow up and discover how city responded to the recommendations by May 2018. By Sept. 2018 DHRC will report/recommend/revisit to discover if more DHRC action is needed or may be beneficial at that time.

Possible Immediate Action Steps:

1. Recommend City ensures by Dec. 2017, that 90% of all official city documents reflect diversity and cultural competency as a value.
2. Ask City Council to provide a plan to DHRC as to how the **value of diversity and cultural competency** will be communicated to all staff/employees of the city, as internal policy. Or if it is already being done, report how this is already accomplished.
3. Recommend city plan one ½ day staff training on the importance of the value of diversity, cultural competency and inclusion in the workplace. As a follow – up recommend city provide at least 2 subsequent workshops, (possibly show movie and discussion sessions) during 2 additional staff training reflecting the value of cultural competency and diversity within any work environment.

Lynne Sadusky

I recommend this important survey and results be evaluated more closely by at least two commissioners with recommendations made to DHRC by Jan 2017 and to City Council by