

Minutes of the  
December 5, 2017  
Meeting of the  
Chelsea Human Rights Commission

Members absent from the meeting: Essien; Rossi. Members present for the start of the meeting were Gallego, Whitley, Fenton and Power. Staff present: Caiazzi. A quorum of four Members being present, the meeting was opened. Power motioned to adopt the Minutes of the September 19, 2017, Meeting. Gallego seconded. All Members present voted in the affirmative. The Minutes were adopted.

At that point, Member Carella appeared. Whereupon, Caiazzi related that the sole inquiry of the HRC to date came to Staff via City Manager. An investigation was undertaken that involved a claim by a blind man for discrimination in housing but the claim. Staff undertook an investigation to see if the claim had any potential merit but determined it did not. Caiazzi also related that the names of the involved parties would not be disclosed in the interest of privacy and in light of the fact that the investigation determined no further action was necessary. Due to the lack of claims received, the Members revisited the idea of having a time to invite residents to come together, have Members introduce themselves and then listen to the type and kinds of issues on the HRC spectrum that most affect the audience. Fenton, Carella, Gallego, and Power all expressed interest in having such a meeting, or "listening session," on a Saturday; Caiazzi explained some lead time would be needed in order for Staff to make arrangements with school facilities.

Fenton and Gallego inquired as to status of our presence on certain social media outlets; Carella agreed to email Caiazzi with a list of all outlets she recommended publish the HRC Mission Statement and any educational pamphlet. Carella mentioned that, in prior meetings, Rossi had suggested that he might like to prepare such a pamphlet. The group agreed to table the preparation of the pamphlet until the January 2, 2018, scheduled HRC meeting as it would predate any listening session. Carella suggested that the listening session be undertaken on a Saturday after Martin Luther King Day; Power suggested January 27, 2018. Fenton and Gallego agreed. Caiazzi indicated that she would bring this request to HRC Staff for feasibility. Carella also agreed to submit to Staff a list of social media outlets that could publish the names of the HRC Members, the Mission Statement, and a short, informational pamphlet describing various types of discrimination. Fenton mentioned that having the same pamphlet available at the listening session would be desirable; Whitley felt it would look more official, too. Carella then suggested that the Members present themselves as soon as practicable at a City Council Meeting to introduce themselves and to ask the City Council to recommend the HRC to their constituents.

Power asked for clarification about the role of the HRC Members re: when complaints do come in. Caiazzi explained that claims came to HRC Staff who would, as a preliminary matter, investigate and determine if there is arguably a claim for discrimination or some other HRC violation. If there was not, that would end the matter. But if there was even a colorable claim, investigating Staff would then present a summary to the Members who would then discuss, debate, and determine next steps, if any.

Under "new business," Gallego reported that he would be resigning on or before the January 2, 2018, meeting, as he leaves for Washington, D.C., for the next 6 months as part of his college curriculum. Gallego inquired how he should resign; Whitley wondered what the procedure was to replace him. Carella moved to adjourn; Power seconded; all members present voted in the affirmative and the meeting was adjourned.