

Onondaga County/Syracuse Commission on Human Rights

John H. Mulroy Civic Center
11th Floor East
421 Montgomery Street
Syracuse, NY 13202
(315) 435-3565

2018 Human Rights Commission Meeting Dates

Meeting #	Date	Location	Notes
2018 - 1	January 24, 2018	518 James St. (Gifford Rm)	Note: This was held as a board development session, NOT as a business meeting.
2018 - 2	February 28, 2018	518 James St. (Gifford Rm)	
2018 - 3	March 28, 2018	518 James St. (Gifford Rm)	
2018 - 4	April 18, 2018	518 James St. (Gifford Rm)	
2018 - 5	May 23, 2018	518 James St. (Gifford Rm)	
2018 - 6	June 20, 2018	518 James St. (Gifford Rm)	
2018 - 7	July 25, 2018	518 James St. (Gifford Rm)	
2018 - 8	August 22, 2018	518 James St. (Gifford Rm)	
2018 - 9	September 26, 2018	518 James St. (Gifford Rm)	
2018 - 10	October 24, 2018	Temple Society of Concord Community Conference Room - 910 Madison St.	
2018 - 11	November 28, 2018	Temple Society of Concord Community Conference Room - 910 Madison St.	
2018 - 12	December 12, 2018	518 James St. (Gifford Rm)	



Onondaga County / Syracuse
Human Rights Commission

Joanne M. Mahoney
County Executive

Onondaga County Justice Center Oversight Committee

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Barrie Gewanter
Executive Director

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**Human Rights Commission Meeting Notes–
2/28/18 – Approved at 3/28/18 meeting**

Present:

Sanjay Chhablani
David Pasinski
Starr Guckert
Francis M. Parks

John Rushing
Crystal Doody
Doug Mackey
Shelley Skellington (on phone)

Leonardo Sanchez
Mary Alice Smothers
Montanette Murphy

Excused: Suzie Carman, Steve Butler, Bruce Carter, Suzette Melendez, Jeff Tamburo, Rosalie Young, Rabbi Dan Fellman, Rev. Bernard Alex

Absent: Gabe Ramos

Staff Present: Barrie Gewanter (Director) & Kelsey Leeper (intern)

Community Present: Barbara Johnson & County Legislator Ken Bush

Media Present: None

Meeting was convened

1. Introductions of Commissioners & Moment of Brief Sharing

All Commissioners present introduced themselves. Then all present observed a moment of silence in recognition of the recent death of Commissioner Suzie Carman's husband.

Then Leo asked each commissioner to state the "most meaningful thing they did in connection with the Commission in 2017. Barrie explained that the Executive Committee decided to add a different question at the beginning of each meeting, in order to carry through the type of rapport and inter-personal learning that occurred in the board development exercises during the Jan. meeting. In answer to this month's question Commissioners said the following:

Starr Guckert – the meeting with Dr. Gupta, and that when Advocacy Committee members were not available, members of other Committees came to join her in representing the Commission

Francis Parks – the forum the Commission held on International UN Human Rights Day, and that we utilized a quote from Eleanor Roosevelt to ground and give context to the event. She also enjoyed collaborating with All Saints Parish on this event.

Dave Pasinski – the conversations he engaged in with community members as he staffed our table at the Plowshares Crafts Festival in December. Also, working with Barrie on the night of the Point in Time count of homeless individuals in Onondaga County.

Sanjay Chhablani – the gathering in which we supported members of the refugee community in giving voice to their concerns and questions about the proposed new charter school. He valued his and our role in empowering people who may have been voiceless



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Doug Mackey – the many outreach events where we staffed a tent or table. In a couple of conversations people had said about the Commission, “why bother” and that the last Commission had “not done anything.” During his conversations he saw these people shift their opinion a bit.

John Rushing – our presence at the CNY Pride Festival. Even though he is LGBT, this was his first time at Pride and his first opportunity to be present as a new public figure.

Crystal Doody – the West Side Block Party that Mary Alice invited us to participate in. Our presence there was important.

Mary Alice Smothers – the Gay Pride Parade & Festival. Her niece was transgender, and her life was taken from her. She valued hearing the stories of people who came to the table, and being able to give them direction

Kelsey Leeper (part time staff) – hearing about the other parts of the community outside the SU “bubble”

Shelley Skellington – coming to the table with other professionals who share her commitment to advocacy from people who have limited proficiency with English

Leo expressed recognition of all the things that the Commission did in 2017. He suggested that no one should ask “why bother” or sell us short. We have done a lot.

2. Recognition of Visitors

County Legislator Ken Bush introduced himself and stated that he was the first county legislator from the town of Jordan in 25 years. As a new legislator he wants to get to know the boards such as the HRC that are part of the county structure.

Barbara Johnson said that she felt honored to be coming to the Commission meeting. She was introduced to the HRC when she came to a meeting earlier in 2017, and she felt overwhelmed with the warmth and compassion of everyone at the table. She said that she sees all the work that the Commission has been doing and that this has meaning for her as a Native American woman.

3. Consideration of Available Minutes & Review of January Board Development Session

No newly drafted minutes were available covering 8/2017 through 1/2018

Leo asked Commissioners for feedback about of board development exercises conducted in January, and if Commissioners wanted to do something like this in the first meeting of next year. . The consensus of the group was yes. Barrie pointed Commissioners to the draft notes from these exercises in Commissioners packets, and asked those who had not been able to attend to submit their answers to Peter Wilner’s questions starting on page 4. Barrie suggested that, when these 6 Commissioners answers are added, this document could be provided to new Commissioners as part of their orientation.



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4. Election of Commission Officers (Chair, Co-Chair, Secretary)

Leo stated that he and Rabbi Fellman and Rev. Alex were willing to continue in the three leadership roles, and asked if there were any additional nominations. Shelly stated that she appreciated Crystal's nomination of her at the Dec. meeting, but stated that she must decline at this time because at this time she needs to focus on caring for her son as he recovers from illness.

Starr made a motion to approve the existing slate, and Mary Alice seconded the motion. Doug then asked if there was a quorum. This was discussed, especially in light of a few Commissioners awaiting reappointment by the legislature. Doug made a motion to table the vote until we had a quorum at the next meeting. John seconded the motion. All voted in favor of this motion. Crystal made a motion to continue the existing 3 leaders in their positions until the next meeting. Starr seconded the motion. All voted in favor of the motion.

5. Report from Commission Chair Leo Sanchez

Leo stated that the Executive Committee met Feb. 26th.

Leo stated that he will be approaching newly elected Mayor Walsh to introduce him to the HRC. Shelly stated that she has made a few phone calls to the office of Mayor Walsh stating that she was seeking re-appointment. Crystal, who is also seeking reappointment, said she will look who else in the Mayor's office might make sense to get in contact with about their reappointment.

Leo stated that he intends to go to the State of the County address on March 6th. Barrie mentioned that the County Executive sent invitations for the Chairs of both the HRC and JCOC.

Doug asked for an update on the remaining open positions. Shelly asked if Lauren Rosenstein is still on the list of potential candidates. She stated that she is a younger person who is an advocate who works in the mental health field, and that she remains very interested in serving on the HRC board.

Crystal suggested that quorum be reconsidered based on which Commissioners have expired and are awaiting reappointment to a 2nd term. She pointed out that the board is still not at a quorum to vote.

Barrie pointed to the previous list of potential candidates in the Commissioner's packets, as well as a resume from Marsha Weissman. John suggested Alexandra Elias as a new candidate, and said that he would reach out to her. Barrie pointed out that her resume would be needed.

Barrie was asked to create a new candidate list for 2018, including a few of the people already on the list who were not chosen for appointment. Francis Parks said that she would reach out to the two people from the refugee community who are on the list, who have not yet been contacted and may not yet know that they have been recommended.



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Crystal stated that in thinking about board development, we should be intentional about who is invited to serve and think about who is missing from the table. For example, there are currently not Commissioners who are transgender, and may be missing other identities as well. It was also pointed out that while inclusiveness is desired, we don't we don't want to rely on only one person to be representative of a people. Mary Alice also stated that just a with the diversity trainings led by the HRC Staff, we should not talk about people who are not in the room.

Shelly suggested that she and Barbara have a co-worker named Dicey who may be a good candidate in representing people who are transgender or gender non-conforming. They agreed to talk to Dicey about serving on the HRC. Barrie mentioned two people who identify as transgender – Tyler Sliker and Rob Putsch. Crystal agreed to reach out to Tyler. In response to a question from a Commissioner, Barrie offered information about how best to ask about gender identity in a respectful way.

Francis suggested that we need to be more deliberate about inviting people from the Onondaga Nation, and not in a way that suggests tokenism. She suggested that perhaps First Nations people would have been the first to be seated on the HRC board. There was agreement with these sentiments. Mary Alice suggested a member of the Onondaga Nation that she and Barbara know, Sissy Elm, who is a member of the Snipe Clan and Barbara's first cousin. They agreed to reach out to her.

Doug asked if we are only reaching out to add commissioners to our list who represent a group, or should we also seek people who have a type of "expertise" or resource. Barrie suggested that the Outreach Committee could develop a list of people within the community who may be willing to be a resource to the HRC or to whom the HRC could reach in regards to advocacy issues.

Crystal stated that the HRC board should put priority on identifying people for open positions... Leo suggested that we should invite potential candidates to come to a meeting as Barbara has, in part to see if serving would be a good fit for them.

Barbara pointed out that she does not represent all of the Onondaga Nation, as she grew up in the city and only got her Indian name five years ago. She pointed out that there can be a divide for some between the Nation and the County. Some of the more traditional people might also question the value of being asked to serve on a government board in the County, as the Nation is a separate and sovereign nation. She said that in many cases non-native government entities have had a lot to do with Native People's feelings of inferiority. Barbara stated that she wants to come to the HRC as a Native Person in order to have a voice for Native People, no matter where they may reside, but she acknowledged that other Native people may not feel the same way. Barrie suggested that given that the Onondaga were a separate sovereign nation, it may make the most sense to ask the County's elected leaders to reach out to the Onondaga's traditional leaders about their preferences in reference to the HRC.

Shelly asked if we should reach out to SAGE Upstate. Mary Alice said that she would reach out to Akosua, who is a leader among LGBT people of color.



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Crystal suggested that the HRC may need a subcommittee to deliberately discuss diversity and inclusion on the HRC board and bring it back to the group as a whole. Leo suggested tabling this discussion and bringing it back at the next meeting as old business.

6. Report from the Executive Director

Barrie stated that the Board needed to set dates for HRC Board meetings through August. The following dates were selected: May 23, June 20, July 25, Aug. 22. Barrie will find out if the Gifford Room is available on those dates.

Barrie cited the Next 3 Diversity Training Dates as 3/15 & 4/17 in the County Office Building, and 5/8 at Circare. No Commissioners expressed interest in attending these trainings. However, several Commissioners expressed interest in participating in a Bridge Builders in an upcoming training with Onondaga County Sheriff's Office cadets in a spring or summer date that is TBA. These included Starr, John, Montanette and Leo, as well as visitor Barbara Johnson.

Shelly stated that it is important for law enforcement to know about interpretation issues when they go out on calls that involve people who are LEP. Barrie stated that this is not part of the diversity training sessions, but suggested that we could offer this as a separate training.

Barrie stated that the ACR administrative team was pleased with their experience of the Diversity Training in January, and that she is talking with their Executive Director about rotating their staff through the monthly trainings. Barrie also stated that there are funds in her budget to send one person to the four-day NCBI train the trainer program. Normally she can only send county employees, but she will see if she can send a Commissioner. Crystal and John, as well as visitor Barbara Johnson were interested. Crystal suggested that Legal Aid might be able to send her.

Barrie provided the following updates:

- She submitted an article about providing Language Assistance to people who are LEP to the Onondaga County Medical Society for publication in their online newsletter. This is as a result of and HRC Advocacy Committee meeting with Health Commissioner Dr. Gupta, after which the Dr. approached the Medical Society. The Society chose to solicit this article instead of having Barrie and members of the HRC Advocacy Committee come to a Society meeting.

Starr suggested that the Advocacy Committee could work on an article for the Bar Association newsletter. Crystal said she might be able to assist making that connection. Shelly stated that she has done outreach on this topic with medical professionals while caring for her son in Buffalo. She spoke about difficulties she continues to have with doctors offices in Syracuse who refuse to provide interpreters for Circare clients. She stated that the next Trabajandos Juntos meeting was the next day.

Starr asked if there would be an interpreter at the State of the County address. Barrie stated that she expected there to be, and that she had pro-actively contacted the County Executive's office about



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this, and about posting a recording of the signer or a transcription with the video if it was posted on the County website.

Barrie reported that she successfully facilitated a discussion between members of the CNY Pride and Juneteenth boards and two representatives from Black Cuse Pride. She said that 2 way learning occurred, that information was shared, and that she is hopeful that this meeting initiated a new level of communication between the groups.

Barrie provided an update on discussions about a controversial mural in the Hotel Syracuse lobby. A number of proposals have been made in relation to covering parts of the mural or soliciting proposals for another more historically accurate mural. She said that African-American leaders at the last meeting want to have a public forum to discuss this. Barrie suggested that covering up the controversial parts of the mural would create its own problems by eliminating any people of color from the mural. The owner of the building has said that he cannot remove the mural because of a tax break related to the historical nature of the artwork.

Barrie pointed to a newspaper article in Board member packets that reports that locally new refugee arrivals dropped significantly in 2017. Doug pointed out that there had been a change made to the mission of a federal agency taking out language that called the U.S. a "nation of immigrants." Francis reported that a memorial service was held for Nona Stewart, a person from Interfaith Works who helped many refugees resettle in Syracuse. Doug pointed

Barrie pointed to a newspaper article in member packets related to an assault on two women at Destiny Mall. She said that she had spoken to one of the women and to supporter Herve Comeau from Black Lives Matter who helped her that evening after the incident. Barrie said she has also spoken with the attorney assigned to prosecute one 17 year old man taken into Custody after the incident and initially charged with robbery. She reported that the Grand Jury did "take action" but they are not finished with their process. Also, the prosecutor needs to conduct further interviews with the two women who were assaulted. Barrie also reported that police would not let one woman who was injured go to the hospital before they questioned her, and that they interrogated the two women separately. Mr. Comeau suggested that they were treated more like potential suspects than victims. Shelly suggested that the assault seems to have been a hate crime and that the HRC should address this aspect of the incident. Barrie relayed Mr. Comeau's request for caution given the African-American communities experience of mass incarceration, and conveyed his reluctance to push for aggressive prosecution of another young African-American man. Commissioners asked Barrie to keep them updated on this case.

Barrie described another intake involving two youth athletes and a coach of a local Catholic high school basketball team. A parent contacted Barrie about how the coach handled the expression of a racial epithet by one of the students. Before speaking further to the parent, Barrie will gather information to understand more about the hierarchy within the Catholic school system.



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Barrie reported that Bridget has returned to work but will most likely be retiring in 2018. Barrie will be looking for candidates to fill this position. She is also looking for candidates to fill a one-year position promised to the HRC at the legislature's final budget meeting.

Barrie reported that several organizations are sponsoring an event focused on criminal justice reform on 3/5. She also said that she assisted organizers of a local Poor People's Campaign effort by leading a bridge building exercise at a 2/12 meeting. Barrie reported that the following Commissioners attended the SU Martin Luther King event on 1/28: Suzette, Dave, Doug, Shiu Kai, Jeff, Francis and John. Jeff, John and Barrie sat at a table with members of Jeff's family. Barrie also reported that she and Francis and Starr attended the Interfaith Works Racial Justice Awards event at Syracuse Stage on 2/21.

A board member mentioned that a picture of, and article about, Francis Parks was featured in an exhibit at ArtRage that focused on elder women activists.

Mary Alice reported that last night the Syracuse City School Board passed a motion to have Syracuse Police Officers stationed in all schools. She said that a group is gathering to talk about related concerns. Barrie asked her for more information about this group. Previously School Resource Officer were not stationed in the elementary schools. Leo mentioned that the School District may also be increasing the use of metal detectors. John reported hearing that a student had brought a "large weapon" into a school. John said that this had been discussed in a law enforcement accountability meeting he attended the day before.

7. Reports from Committee Chairs

There were no reports from Committee Chairs.

8. Old Business

Doug asked about initiating the HRC a presence on social media. Barrie stated that will follow up with the County Executive's office to find out if this is possible, and how the Commissioners could begin.

9. New Business

Dave mentioned the recent publication of an article about an undocumented immigrant family facing deportation in the Post Standard. The father's name is Hector. He asked that the article be included in the packets for the next board meeting. Dave also pointed out that the original headline of the article was something like "illegal released from jail" and that after someone called the paper to suggest an alternative headline. He said the word "illegal" was changed to "undocumented."



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Francis stated that the Anti-Deformation League has recently announced that violence against Jewish Americans increased last year, and that they continue to monitor it. Barrie reported that there may be an opportunity for two or three Human Rights Commissioners to participate in the observance of Yom HaShoah on 4/8 in the Jewish Community. Francis, Starr, Montanette, and Dave expressed interest in participating. Barrie stated that she will let them know if they are requested by the Jewish Community members organizing this year's event.

Dave also asked what the HRC could do about gun violence issues now since the Parkland school shooting. Mary Alice said that there might be an upcoming event related to this on the 18th. She said that there is also supposed to be an urban/suburban youth march about gun violence, and suggested that more information about this may be posted on Helen Hudson's Facebook page. Leo said that there was also a meeting at the Peacemakers tree for remembrance of the lives lost, and that the March for Our Lives will be held on March 24th.

Legislator Ken Bush asked to speak briefly. He stated that he is looking into why several Legislative appointments to the HRC have taken so long to be made. He said that he spoke with other legislators about this yesterday, but that the mayoral appointments are another issue. He also stated that, after observing his first Human Rights Commission meeting, he feels that the HRC is "a true blessing to the community."

10. Announcements

Barrie reviewed several upcoming events that were listed at the bottom the meeting agenda. She stated that Rabbi Fellman will be an honoree at the 5/1 Interfaith Works Dinner Event. She also mentioned the ACTS Dinner on April 24, the RISE "Night of Nations" Dinner Fundraiser on April 7, a Community Partner Summit being held by DSS on April 4, and a Social Justice Event being held by the Falk College at SU on March 19. Starr added that the annual ADA Celebration will be held on July 26.

Francis Parks made a Motion to Adjourn the Meeting at 7:57pm. John Rushing seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.



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Human Rights Commission Meeting
March 28, 2018 Meeting Minutes DRAFT

Present:

Bruce Carter	Starr Guckert	David Pasinski
Shiu-Kai Chin	Doug Mackey (phone)	Gabe Ramos
Sanjay Chhablani	Suzette Melendez	John Rushing
Crystal Doody (phone)	Montanette Murphy	Leonardo Sanchez
Rabbi Dan Fellman		

Absent or Excused: Khadijo Abdulkadir Rev. Bernard Alex Steve Butler, Suzie Carman, Francis or Parks, Shelley Skellington, Mary Alice Smothers, Jeffrey Tambura, Rosalie Young

Staff Present: Barrie Gewanter (Director) Kelsey Leeper & Juliette Rawda (Interns)

Community Present: County Legislator Ken Bush, Bob Gardino

Media Present: N/A

Meeting Convened at 5:37 pm

Agenda Item 1 – Introductions of Commissioners & Moment of Brief Sharing:

All Commissioners present introduced themselves. Then Rabbi Dan stated that they were moving towards having committee chairs submit written reports prior to the meetings in order to save time. Each Commissioner was then asked to respond to the “moment of sharing” question: “What Issue or Action would you like to focus on as a Commissioner in 2018?”

Rabbi began the statements by sharing that he wants to bridge relationships with elected officials and be more active on sharing advice with them.

Starr shared that now that the HRC has gotten a head start on educating the healthcare community about the need for access for people with limited English proficiency, she would like to see the HRC approach the legal community and do much the same there.

Shiu-Kai stated that he approves of efforts to hold elected officials more accountable, and that we should continue focusing on doing the right thing.

Suzette agreed with Starr that much can be improved upon in the legal community with regards to access for persons with disabilities. She also thinks there is an opportunity right now, because there are people within the Onondaga Bar Association who are very open to that idea. We could seize the moment on that issue. Suzette would also like to start focusing on advancing the rights of young people in Syracuse, particularly those in the inner city and those attending SCSD. She



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mentioned having attended the local March for Our Lives event. She commented that young people in Syracuse have, for years, lived with the gun violence we are now talking about. She suggested that we seize this moment on behalf of all children.

Bruce stated that Suzette touched on what he was hoping to touch on as well. He wants to focus on encouraging continued education of children and youth, especially in regards to human rights struggles and how they can procure their own rights.

Sanjay stated that he wanted to see an emphasis of education for human rights of others. He would also like to see the HRC continue its work supporting refugee and immigrant communities. He said he appreciated that this year, when things happened at a national level, we were able to provide support at the local level, and were responsive to our local leaders.

Montanette said she wanted to ensure that we stand up for everyone who is a human being, regardless of color, regardless of the issue involved. She hopes that all remember that they are humans and people first, and that we fight from that angle because we are a Human Rights Commission.

John stated that his thoughts were the same direction as Montanette. He hoped that this year we will act to bring togetherness in the community. As a Commission, he feels that we need to cover all realms and aspects of human rights that we are here to protect. No matter what we want to accomplish individually, if there is a stance of togetherness in the community overall anything we want to accomplish will be easier to do.

Dave stated that the word poverty comes to his mind when he thinks of human rights. He does not know what form of action the HRC may take in regards to this, but he wants to know how we can be more committed to addressing this issue. He recalled passed a sign coming to the meeting that said that Syracuse is the 13th poorest city in the nation.

Gabe said he would like to see a focus on working with the various police agencies in the county, and helping them develop a better rapport with the communities that they serve. He said that the issue of language is also an issue in the criminal justice system, not just language assistance but in equal representation. He sees some possible reform on the way in the criminal justice system, particularly in NY State. He hopes it is moving in a more positive direction.

Doug stated that he would like the Outreach Committee to be more involved and proactive with what is going on in community conversations.

Crystal would like us to do a better job in relation to what is going on in Syracuse with deportations, to see if there is a place for us to help. She would also like to improve our status as a sanctuary city.



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Leo said he would like to see a healthier Syracuse. He would also like to see the Human Rights Commissioners as a bigger part of the community and interacting with the community more. He would like us let our presence be known.

Agenda Item 2 – Election of Commission Officers

There was a quorum to enable voting on board officers. Two of the three current office holders were present. A question was raised by Leo or Rabbi Dan whether they have authority to lead the voting process. Barrie stated that the Commission had approved a motion by Crystal at the last meeting to let Leo and Rabbi Dan continue in leadership until this election occurred.

Rabbi asked for nominations for Chair candidates. Leo was the only nomination. Bruce made a motion to close nominations. This was seconded by Gabe. Leo was reelected as chair by unanimous vote.

Leo then asked for nominations for Co-Chair. Rabbi was the only nomination. Bruce made a motion to close nominations. This was seconded by Gabe. Rabbi Dan was reelected as co-chair by unanimous vote.

Leo then asked for nominations for Secretary. Rabbi Dan point out that Rev. Alex was the only nomination. Bruce made a motion to close nominations. This was seconded by John. Rev. Alex was reelected as secretary by unanimous vote.

Leo then asked that Bruce would serve as the parliamentarian and timekeeper for this meeting.. Bruce agreed.

Agenda Item 3 – Consideration of Available Minutes

Board members reviewed the draft February 28, 2018 meeting minutes. Barrie mentioned that this draft had been sent to Board members the night before by email for review, and did not receive any responses with edits. Rabbi Dan made a motion to approve the Feb. 28, 2018 minutes. This was seconded by Starr. This motion was approved unanimously. Barrie then put a copy of the approved minutes on the table for any visitors to the meeting, and stated that she will upload this document upon her return from vacation.

Agenda Item 4 - Report from the Board Chair & Co-Chair – Leo Sanchez & Rabbi Dan

Leo stated that he and Rabbi Dan are pursuing the scheduling of meetings with the County Executive, Legislature Chair and Syracuse Mayor. Leo also sent a related letter to Mayor Walsh but has not yet received a response. Leo stated that he is also working on arranging meetings with local police chiefs. He reported that he sent letters to 12 Onondaga County police chiefs



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across the County. Barrie recalled a suggestion during the Executive Committee Meeting held on March 27, that Leo should let the Co-Chair know as soon as he gets responses from these Chiefs, and link up with Gabe to work out strategies for one on one meetings as they are scheduled.

Leo stated that he and a couple of other commissioners attended a School Board meeting in which input was sought about a change in the label of the current "Columbus Day" holiday on the school district calendar to "indigenous People's Day. The other Commissioners present were Dave, John, and Mary Alice. Prior to attending this meeting, information about the meeting was sent by email to all Commissioners and to the Executive Committee. A majority of Commissioners and a majority of Executive Committee members responded that they were in support of the HRC making a statement in support of the proposed holiday label change. Barrie offered a clarification as she assisted in this communication, and that this followed the written procedure in the HRC governance document about how to take an action, or make a statement, or take a position between meetings. The Executive Committee was polled and its members made the decision, and the statement was made by the HRC Chair. As parliamentarian, Bruce confirmed that the steps in the governance document were taken properly and fairly. Barrie added that her email recalling the statement that was made was included in the board member packets.

Rabbi said that Commissioners may have received letters from their appointing authority that they needed to be notarized. He encouraged everyone to get those notarizations done, and pointed out that there are at least two notaries on the board

Rabbi Dan stated that Rosalie and Dave had sent letters to the legislature chair seeking to be reappointed, and the legislature seems to have found that very helpful. This fall he suggested that Commissioners follow Dave and Rosalie's model. He also stated that the Commission is also waiting on two reappointments from the Mayor's office, and that there is still one open legislature slot. Barrie pointed out that she included an updated contact sheet in the packets that has Commissioners terms and expiration dates noted along with a few updated emails.

Barrie also shared the current list of the HRC Board's suggested candidates for future appointment that was discussed at the last meeting, and stated that Barbara Johnson was on this list. Leo asked everyone to look this document over after the meeting and email Barrie to indicate your agreement or concerns. Barrie asked if anyone had reached out to the people indicated on the list. Only three Commissioners responded, John and Dave and Crystal. Barrie noted their responses. Leo added that he would speak to Shelly about two of the candidates on the list. Barrie pointed out that resumes indicated for candidates were distributed to the board at previous meetings. Leo asked Commissioners to contact Barrie if they have any contact updates or progress. Barrie suggested that it might be helpful to narrow the list of potential board member candidates. She asked Commissioners to let her know when they wanted her to forward a final list to the Legislature Chair. She also mentioned that she had received



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information from two people who expressed interest in serving: Marsha Weissman, the former Director for the Center of Community Alternatives who is now retired, and Hiba Atia who is the Community Engagement Coordinator for the Northeast Community Center. Barrie said that Hiba had fought for human rights for people in Egypt, and that she would ask Hiba to send her resume.

John emphasized his feeling that the board should continue to consider candidates from the Native American and Transgender Communities. Leo suggested that the board might want to consider being strategic in identifying potential board candidates moving forward.

Agenda Item 5 - Report from the Executive Director—Barrie Gewanter

Barrie stated that there is a list of upcoming board meeting dates in Commissioner's packets. She confirmed that the Gifford room will also be available during these times, and asked everyone to note these meeting dates.

Barrie also stated the upcoming Diversity Training dates are 4/17 and 6/19 in the County Office Building, and 5/8 at Circare. Barrie asked if anyone was interested in attending one of the trainings. John stated that he was interested in the April 17th training. Barrie shared that one of her goals for the trainings was to begin moving the trainings out into other local nonprofit agencies that partner with the County. She stated that Circare and ACCESS CNY currently rotate their new employees through and that ACR Health was starting to do so as well. This is a step forward in relation to her goal.

Barrie reported that she was given the "okay" to submit paperwork to have a second Human Rights Specialist hired to work and be trained during the last months before Bridget's expected retirement. Barrie said that this is called "double encumbering" and that she submitted the paperwork today. She said that Bridget's time away from work has left money in the salary budget to do this. She also suggested that it will be better to train Bridget's replacement gradually rather than having someone come in and face a steep learning curve all of a sudden.

Barrie shared she will also be out of state from 3/29 to 4/2 to spend a religious holiday with family, but will still be accessible by cell phone and email.

Barrie is working with Juliette and Kelsey to try to catch up on drafting outstanding board minutes. She stated that we have gotten way behind due to her workload and the short staffing in the office. She also says that they are now recording Board meetings to help the interns produce an accurate first draft of the minutes. Recordings will be destroyed after the minutes are produced and approved.

Barrie also shared some intake statistics. The HRC staff has now been through two full years of intakes since the office was reopened in 2015. There were 985 individual contacts for 2017, compared with 858 in 2016. Contacts can be walk in's, phone, voicemail, email, mail or website



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contact. In 2017 318 phone calls were answered, 436 voicemails recorded, about 100 pieces of mail received, and there were 113 walk in's without an appointment. That worked out to about 82 contacts a month on average, and 4 to 6 contacts per work week day. She also offered some insight into how fast people got responses. In 2017, 25% of the time people got a response on the same day, cumulatively 35% of the time people got a response within 4 days, and 44% of the time they got a response within 9 days. Barrie explained that Kelsey is also working on a breakdown of intakes by category. In 2016, about 20% of the complaints were related to the jail, 13% about employment discrimination, 11% came in about landlord/tenant issues, and 10% came in about some aspect of the process of a criminal case. Also, 9% of the complaints were about a criminal attorney, 5% were about either police misconduct and 5% were about Jamesville Correctional. Kelsey and Barrie are now working on this same category analysis for 2017. Barrie added that contacts that relate to the Jail are screened for whether they meet the criteria for consideration by the Justice Center Oversight Committee. If so, then an active investigation is pursued for those cases. In a given year, we may have 15-25 new JCOC cases.

Barrie reported the results of an HRC team effort, the publication in the Medical Society online newsletter of her article about the need to provide language assistance to patients who have limited proficiency with English. Barrie thanked Dr. Gupta for making this happen after the HRC Advocacy Committee arranged a meeting with her. The publication of this article means that every doctor associated with the medical society has now been informed of their obligations under state and federal law to provide language assistance, an important first step to gently push medical practices that are not providing language assistance to start doing so. Barrie explained that our approach is to start with more general education in the medical community before initiating individual education interventions. Barrie thanked Starr for arranging the meeting with Dr. Gupta, and to the Commissioners who participated in it. Barrie described this as a major HRC milestone in advocacy.

Building on this approach, Barrie said she is starting to talk to the Bar Association, Hiscock Legal Aid and Legal Services about the idea of convening a meeting of members of the judiciary. lawyers, court officers, Assigned Council Program administrators, and the Sheriff's Office to talk about how people in the court system get language assistance. Barrie stated that she has received complaints about this in city courts and family courts, and suggested that it is time to have a discussion about if there are procedures to ensure language assistance, and to identify what is working and what is not

Barrie said that at the last Commission meeting she was asked to include an article about Hector Navarro and his wife Amely, who are both facing deportation. A copy of the article was included in Commissioner's packets. Barrie also reported that the immigration detention facility in Batavia, New York started accepting women detainees in December. For the first time Amely has been directed to appear at her "check-in" with immigration officials in Batavia, instead of in Syracuse. Barrie reported that there was a related demonstration in Batavia today, specifically



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about women detainees. Barrie did not attend but knows that there was a call from across the state to demonstrate Batavia. Crystal stated that Amalie was not detained during her “check in” appointment.

Barrie updated Commissioners on the case she described last meeting in which two African American lesbian women were attacked in Destiny mall by three or four men. One person was arrested at the scene. Barrie reported that a second person has been arrested, and the first arrestee was indicted. Barrie will be unable to observe his 4/2 court appearance, but the date may not be held if there are new developments. This is an active prosecution about which Barrie will keep Commissioners updated.

Barrie reported that local organizers of a fledgling “Poor People’s Campaign” recently had a meeting with three African American leaders to discuss some tensions in regards to perceptions of the campaign and a lack of acknowledgement of existing anti-poverty efforts led by African and Latino community leaders. Montanette asked what the Poor People’s Campaign was. Barrie explained that the campaign is inspired by the campaign Dr. ML King Jr.’s was leading at the time of his death, and that when local organizers of the new campaign began to organize meetings that drew up to 50 people at a time there had been no outreach to leaders of an antipoverty efforts that were already led by African American leaders. Dave and Barrie have attended some of these meetings, and wanted to let HRC know about the tensions surrounding this effort. Barrie state that some of the local campaign leaders have stepped back to rebuild bridges, and become more informed about these existing antipoverty efforts.

Barrie reported the Yom HaShoah event will be held on Sunday 4/8 at 2pm. This is an annual commemoration of the Holocaust organized by the Jewish community. For the first time, event organizers discussed inviting a couple people from the larger community to participate. Barrie suggested that members of the HRC might be available. Barrie has been asked to speak about her own family’s experience and the impact it had on her. Starr has been asked to light a candle in recognition of other victims of the Holocaust. Starr and Barrie pointed out that the first group of people put to death in the Holocaust was people with disabilities. The organizers also discussed asking Francis Parks to read a poem about resistance, but they have decided there is not enough time during that portion of the event. Barrie asked any Commissioners who decides to attend to please let her know.

Agenda Item 6 – Committee Chairs

Starr reported that she intends to try to shift the Advocacy Committee’s attention to the legal community in regards to provision of language assistance.

Doug reported that the Outreach Committee is trying to initiate a discussion with County officials about establishing a social media presence for the HRC. He also stated his interest in building a



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list of community advocates and resources that Commissioners can reach out to and work with. He asked Commissioner for suggestions for building this list. Barrie stated that a related email from Doug was included in Commissioner's packets.

Bruce stated that he had nothing to report on behalf of the Education Committee

Gabe stated that he had nothing to report on behalf of the Law Enforcement Community Relations Committee.

Agenda Item 7- Old business:

Leo stated that the only related agenda items was already covered by Doug

Agenda Item 8-New Business:

There was no new business to discuss.

Agenda Item 9-Recognition of visitors:

Leo asked if any of the visitors would like to make a comment. Bruce clarified that the policy on public comment the HRC approved a year ago stated that public comments were limited to three minutes, that visitors can speak to the whole Commission, but that the Commission generally does not respond. He stated that the Commissioners would listen to comments, concerns or advice and go from there.

The first visitor introduced himself as Bob Gardino. He stated that he is a lifetime resident of the city of Syracuse, and that he taught in the city school district for 32 years and has been retired for 22 years. Mr. Gardino stated that he was not sure if he was going to ask or comment on anything, and that this depended on what Commissioner discussed. He stated that there was one thing that he would like to make a comment, and get a response at some point in the future. He stated that the Executive Committee made a statement about the holiday label change without the full board's approval, and that this was defined as "legal" tonight. He said that he was glad to hear that. He said that he has looked at the Commission brochure, its statement of the HRC mission and goals, typical questions for the Human Rights Commission and examples of cases, but he did not see the relevancy of this "endeavor" voted by the "Executive Council." He did not see the relationship to the HRC's "stated path." When he hears something, or reads something, that has been endorsed by the Human Rights Commission, he assumes it relates to the mission and all that is in the "packet." He stated that he would like at some point to have a response, and stated that he plans to be at the next meeting.



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Bruce informed Mr. Gardino that he still had some time remaining. Mr. Gardino stated that he could defer to some other things but he declined. Mr. Gardino then stated that he would defer to the person on his left.

The second visitor, Ken Bush, introduced himself as a county legislator. He stated that he had been present at the last meeting, and wanted to bring everyone on the board up to date on a couple of matters. He stated that one of his main concerns was ensuring full membership on the Commission, and he has been working to get the board up to the maximum members they are allowed to have. He said he is also working on is getting support for the Office of Human Rights. Mr. Bush stated that we need to have a stable support system and work environment for Barrie. Mr. Bush said that he has been having conversations about this, because the office cannot function on just interns and people looking at retiring. Mr. Bush stated that he is focusing on having an adequate staff and that is very important. Mr. Bush also reported that the county legislature has created a new committee, called the Human Services Committee, which Mr. Bush is a part of. He believes this is going to be a very important committee that will help serve the basic needs of people in the county, and he is looking forward to serving on this committee. Mr. Bush mentioned that he had discovered that someone whose term they thought had expired had actually not expired, and these were just "housekeeping" things. He also said that he knows the board is focused, but urged Commissioners to also pay attention to the words Onondaga County. He pointed out that there are 19 townships, 15 villages, and one city in this county. Mr. Bush hopes that Commissioner appreciate the diversity of this county, and that will reach out to the whole county in their efforts. He urged Commissioners to not be tightly focused to one demographic or one municipality, and stated that this is a small part of this whole county in terms of population. Mr. Bush also wanted to ensure that all the police departments were considered. Mr. Bush stated to keep up the good work.

Then Mr. Gardino asked if he could have his remaining minute. Bruce stated that Mr. Gardino would need to ask to Chair for approval. Mr. Gardino asked Leo, who approved the remaining minute to speak.

Mr. Gardino stated that Legislator Bush's comments reminded him to address something. Mr. Gardino stated that he is interested in transparency, and that if one goes to the HRC website, they will see missing months and months of minutes. He stated that as someone in the public, in the county, "we need to know, we need to see it." He stated that the low staffing of the office was mentioned by the Legislator, but that someone on the commission has to take responsibility to make it clear to the public what is going on at your meetings. He pointed out that Commissioners are public servants

Agenda Item 10: Announcements



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Leo announced that everyone should take a look at the dates listed on the Agenda. Barrie stated that there were related flyers in the packets. Leo reiterated that there is a DSS Summit on 4/4, the RISE Dinner on 4/7, the ACTS Dinner on 4/24, a Criminal Justice Reform Event on 4/21, and that Rabbi Fellman is the honoree at the 5/1 Interfaith Works Dinner.

Barrie reported that she added two things to Commissioner's packets at the last minute. One was a flyer listing items sought by Interfaith Works related to its programs for Refugees, including cleaning and health care supplies. She also included a flyer about one of the issues that will be discussed at the upcoming Criminal Justice event. This was in regards to bail reform.

Montanette stated that Legislator Bush brought up a good point about reaching out to police agencies, and asked if we would be reaching out to every single one. Leo said that yes that is the goal. Barrie said that she has the list of to whom letters were sent, that they are starting with 12 and that is almost every single one.

John made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Bruce seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting concluded.



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Barrie Gewanter
Executive Director

APPROVED
Human Rights Commission Meeting Minutes
April 18, 2018

Present: Steve Butler, Bruce Carter, Sanjay Chhablani, Shiu Kai Chin, Crystal Doody, Rabbi Dan Fellman (co-chair), Starr Guckert, Montanette Murphy, Suzette Melendez, Dave Pasinski (E), Gabe Ramos, John Rushing, Leo Sanchez (chair), Shelly Skellington (E), Rosalie Young (E).

Absent/Excused: Rev. Bernard Alex, Suzie Carman (E), Francis M. Parks, Mary Alice Smothers, Khadijo Abdulkadir

Staff Present: Barrie Gewanter, Kelsey Leeper (Intern)

Community Present: Bob Gardino, Ray Robinson

1. The meeting began with Commissioner introductions, and a moment of sharing. The topic was, "Who in your life would be most surprised that you were serving on this Commission?" All Commissioners present offered a response to this question.

2. The minutes for the HRC meeting of March 28, 2018 were reviewed. There were minor editorial (spelling) changes to the minutes which were accepted for inclusion. The minutes were approved by acclamation.

3. Commission Chair Leo Sanchez reported on activities of the HRC during since the March 28, 2018 meeting of the Commission. An Executive Committee Meeting was held on April 16. The agenda for the April 18th Board Meeting was discussed. The Chairs' letter to area police chiefs has resulted in an invitation to make a presentation at the April 19th meeting of the Onondaga County Association of Chiefs of Police. A meeting of the Chairs has also been scheduled with Mayor Walsh in the first week of May. Commission Co-Chair Dan Fellman reported on his activities since the March 28, 2018 meeting. He has not yet been able to schedule a meeting with the County Executive or the Legislature Chair. Leo stated that the Executive Committee would like to reduce the list of names of potential HRC board candidates before it is sent to the Legislature for consideration in filling the one open position. This reduced list will be brought back to the Board at the next meeting. In the interim, Leo asked Commissioners to provide Barrie with any updates on their outreach to the listed candidates.

4. HRC Executive Director Barrie Gewanter reported on her activities since the March 28, 2018 meeting of the Commission. She has uploaded the approved minutes from the Jan. 2017 and Feb. 2018 meetings to the HRC website, and continues to work with interns to produce drafts of outstanding 2017 Board minutes. Two language assistance outreach/education projects are currently on hold due to her current workload. She has received a request from the CRB Director to assist in preparation for community



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Barrie Gewanter
Executive Director

presentations related to interacting with law enforcement. She listed the dates of upcoming diversity trainings, and reported on board member participation in the Yom HaShoah event on April 8th. Rabbi Fellman commented on the meaningful remarks offered by several speakers at the event, including Barrie. Sanjay Chhablani stated his support for doing Holocaust Education. Crystal Doody mentioned a travelling exhibit that is part of a Holocaust Studies Project in Rochester. Barrie reported that Access CNY will be hosting a Police Chief Search forum on 4/30. Barrie also offered a description and flier for the Gideon's Boutique program that is run by Gabe Ramos to provide "court clothes" for indigent defendants.

5. Reports from Committee Chairs:

- a. **Advocacy:** Starr Guckert reported on the Committee's effort to provide language assistance in medical settings. This work, in coordination with Onondaga County Commissioner of Health, Dr. Indu Gupta, has resulted in information being provided to the Onondaga County Medical Society. Starr mentioned that 6 medical practices or day programs were recently selected by members of Trabajandos Juntos as initial priorities for educational follow up, and that the Committee will try to set up related meetings. Starr, Crystal Doody, Gabe Ramos and Shelly Skellington commented on the importance of interpreters in legal settings as well as healthcare settings. Khadijo Abdulkadir will be joining the Advocacy Committee as her Wednesday night college class will be ending soon.
- b. **Outreach:** David Pasinski reported for the Committee. There was nothing to report
- c. **Education:** Bruce Carter (Chair) reported for the Committee. There was nothing to report.
- d. **Law Enforcement/Community Relations:** Gabe Ramos reported for the Committee. He will be joining Leo Sanchez, Rabbi Fellman, and Barrie Gewanter in the presentation to the Onondaga County Association of Chiefs of Police on May 19th to apprise them of the availability of the HRC to help prevent and solve issues. Discussion followed. John stated that he continues to attend meetings of a Police Accountability Group. Crystal Doody reported that she is part of a new Emergency Response Team that has been formed to respond when immigrant/refugee individuals are detained by federal agencies such as ICE. An individual had been taken into custody in Rome and was brought to the Immigration office in Syracuse today. Suzette Melendez reported that there is a Law School clinic intern who is working on special immigrant status for children.

6. Old Business: None

7. New Business:

- a. Rev. Alex no longer has the time to serve as secretary to the Board. Nominations were solicited for the position. Both John Rushing and Bruce Carter were nominated for the position. Because there was no longer a quorum present, no vote could be taken.



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Additional nominations and an election will be held at the next HRC meeting (assuming a quorum is reached).

- b. The timing of the public comment period in the HRC Board meetings was discussed. Other County boards allow public comments to occur at the beginning of meetings rather than at the conclusion. The Executive Committee unanimously recommends that HRC shift its public commentary period to the beginning of the meeting. This item will be discussed at a subsequent meeting when a quorum is present.

8. Mr. Robert Giardino spoke during the public comment period.

9. Several announcements of upcoming events were offered. John Rushing stated his appreciation for the diversity training her recently participated in. Suzette Melendez and Bruce Carter also reported on campus reactions to the reported activities of a fraternity at Syracuse University.

10. The meeting adjourned at 7:36 PM

Respectfully submitted,

D. Bruce Carter & B. Gewanter
Notetakers



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Barrie Gewanter
Executive Director

APPROVED
Human Rights Commission Meeting Minutes
May 23, 2018
Minutes

Present: Bruce Carter, Shiu Kai Chin, Starr Guckert, Montanette Murphy, Doug Mackey, John Rushing, Leo Sanchez, Jeff Tamburo

Present Expired Term: Suzie Carman, Dave Pasinski, Rosalie Young

Excused: Rabbi Fellman, Steve Butler, Sanjay Chhablani, Crystal Doody, Shelly Skellington

County Officials & Staff Present: Barrie Gewanter

Community Members Present: Hiba Attia, Ken Bush

1. Meeting began at 5:35 PM. Commissioners introduced themselves and reflected on tonight's opening question: "Who would be least surprised that you were serving on this Commission?"
2. In the absence of a quorum no vote was held to approve the minutes nor could a secretary be elected. Neither Chair Leo Sanchez (absent at the outset of the meeting) nor Rabbi Fellman were present so their reports were summarized by Ms. Gewanter. (Mr. Sanchez arrived later due to a work obligation)
 - a. Next Executive Committee meeting is on June 11, 2018 at Temple Concord at 5 PM.
 - b. Ms. Gewanter discussed some outcomes of the meeting with Mayor Walsh. The Mayor is interested in cooperating with the HRC in several areas including Police-Community Relations, an Office on Disabilities, and his Innovation Team, focusing on Housing Stability. The full report is attached.
 - c. Ms. Gewanter discussed the meetings with Onondaga County Association of Police which went well. There are plans to meet with other chiefs as well. Details are attached.
 - d. The obituary former HRC Board member (1989-2000) Shirley Wenger DeHority. Members shared memories of her contributions to the community and to the HRC. A memorial service will be held June 16, 2018. A moment of silence was observed.
 - e. A reduced list of nominees to the HRC Board was discussed. The Executive Committee has shortened the list to be sent to the County Legislature to 3 individuals in order to give the Legislature choices without overwhelming them with potential nominees. Other individuals may be nominated in the future as Commission openings arise.
3. Rev. Doug Mackey discussed that he has been posted to a new position in Saratoga County and will be leaving the Board.
4. Discussion of HRC Board attendance (absence) followed. The issue of establishing a quorum and conducting HRC business was discussed. Ms. Gewanter will query the Board about attendance issues. This will be discussed in the future.
5. Ms. Gewanter's Report:



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- a. We will be setting future HRC meeting dates/times. Please bring calendars to next meetings.
 - b. She distributed a list of County Diversity Training Sessions.
 - c. Bridget's replacement position has been approved. Part-time temporary staff position has been approved. Interns produced first rough drafts of February and March 2017 Board minutes. Ms. Gewanter's attention needs to be focused on hiring and training staff and JCOC issues.
 - d. First "Know Your Rights" training for Citizen Review Board (CRB) was held and was received positively.
 - e. Meeting scheduled with suburban school district superintendent to discuss DASA case and to discuss best DASA practices. Bruce Carter suggested that the Education Committee could take on the task of developing a DASA best practices training seminar.
 - f. Ms. Gewanter discussed meeting with RISE at their Open House. RISE is interested in working with the HRC.
 - g. Still on hold: Ms. Gewanter will follow up with specific doctors' offices and talk with Bar Association, Legal Services etc. about language assistance procedures.
 - h. Ms. Gewanter sent out request from colleague from Center for Community Alternatives looking for volunteers to participate in mock interviews with people attempting to re-enter the workforce.
 - i. Reference to information in packet on Hillbrook and Raise the Age implementation. Information on the distribution table re: Ontech school report in newspaper.
6. Committee Chair reports:
- a. Starr Guckert reported on activities of the Advocacy Committee. Work continues on educating doctor's offices and other settings about need to provide interpreters for limited English proficiency (LEP) and individuals needing live interpretation such as Video Live Interpretation (VLI).
 - b. Doug Mackey for Outreach Committee: Sign up sheets for Pride Parade and Festival AND Juneteenth activities were distributed. Commission members are needed to participate and staff information tables for both events (which are on the same day, June 16th).
 - c. Bruce Carter for education Committee: no report.
 - d. Law Enforcement- Community Relations: John Rushing reported on activities regarding school districts School Resource Officers (SROs) and related issues. Meeting is Thursday May 24th at H.W. Smith school at 5 PM.
7. Old Business:
- a. Executive Committee would like to amend policy to have Public Comment period at the beginning rather than the ending of the meeting (consistent with other County boards and commissions).
 - b. Ms. Gewanter reported that she continues to interact with the County Executive's Office regarding social media and building HRC resource lists. No action to date. Ms. Gewanter will continue to contact them to pursue this topic.
8. Visitors: Ken Bush (County Legislator) and Hiba Attia introduced themselves.
9. Next Human Rights Commission Meeting is June 20th at 5:30.
10. Meeting ended at 7:45 PM



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Respectfully submitted, **D. Bruce Carter - Notetaker**



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Executive Director

APPROVED
Human Rights Commission Meeting Minutes
June 20, 2018

Present: Rev. Bernard Alex, Bruce Carter, Suzie Carman (E), Shiu Kai Chin, Steve Butler, Starr Guckert, Montanette Murphy, Suzette Melendez (on phone), Francis M. Parks, Rabbi Dan Fellman, Crystal Doody, John Rushing, Leo Sanchez, Jeff Tamburo, Rosalie Young, Shelly Skellington

Excused: Sanjay Chhablani, Dave Pasinski, Doug Mackey

Absent: Khadijo Abdulkadir

County Staff: Barrie Gewanter

Community Members: County Legislator Ken Bush; Lydia Rojas, Bob Gardino

1. Meeting began at 5::40 PM. Commissioners introduced themselves and reflected on tonight's opening question: "Bruce is going to China for 6 weeks. If you accompanied him and met someone there who asked, 'What is the Human Rights Commission?', how would you respond?" Shiu Kai Chin spoke briefly about the Chinese system of government, Chinese values and culture.
2. Minutes from the April 18, 2018 and May 23, 2018 meetings were reviewed. Minutes were approved with minor corrections.
3. Bruce Carter was elected Board Secretary by acclamation
4. The Outreach Committee voted to replace Doug Mackey as Outreach Chair. Dave Pasinski has agreed to serve. He was elected unanimously.
5. Motion to amend procedure to have community comments at the beginning rather than the end of the meeting was made and seconded. Motion passed unanimously. New procedure (to allow community members to comment at the beginning of the meeting) will be implemented at the July meeting of the Commission.
6. Rabbi Fellman reported that he had met informally with County Executive Joanie Mahoney. She was interested in the Commission, interested in working cooperatively with the Commission, and supportive of finding additional staff for the office. This informal meeting will be followed up with a more formal meeting later. Meetings with the Legislative Chair have not been scheduled; this will continue to be pursued. Dave Pasinski and Rosalie Young have been reappointed to new 3 year terms. Shortening of reports was a reflection of the Executive Committee's decision that time allocated for Committee work was important and that meeting time should be devoted to Committee efforts.



Onondaga County / Syracuse
Human Rights Commission

Joanne M. Mahoney
County Executive

Onondaga County Justice Center Oversight Committee

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7. Leo Sanchez reported that Frances Macmillan Parks had been honored at the NAACP celebration.
8. Barrie Gewanter reported that:
 - a. we needed to set future Commission meetings. Future dates are:
July 25, August 22, September 26, October 17, November 28, December 12
Meetings to be held in the Rosamond Gifford Room and will start at 5:30 PM
 - b. Diversity Training will be held July 19th and August 14th at the County Office Building Room 803 & 9/11 at Circare.
 - c. Bridget Owens retired last Friday. Barrie is interviewing for a replacement.
 - d. Significant updates:
 - Governor Cuomo is issuing limited pardons to convicted felons on parole to allow them to vote. Parolees may need information and instruction about voting procedures.
 - Barrie met with a suburban school district superintendent re: racist incidents & DASA best practices.
 - HRC/JCOC had an outreach presence at the Interfaith Works Duck Race to End Racism, GLBTQ Pride, and Juneteenth events
 - Barrie will be meeting with CNY Pride Committee and group of LGBT individuals of color/allies regarding in scheduling of Juneteenth and Pride events.
 - Barrie may be asked to follow up with local nursing home with no language assistance program.
9. Committee Updates: No updates.
10. Old Business: None.
11. New Business: Rabbi Dan Fellman announced that he will be leading a trip to Texas to monitor border events. No other new business.
12. Francis Parks asked if materials currently in writing about voting procedures for formerly incarcerated individuals be made available orally.
13. Visitors introduced themselves. All declined to make any statements.
14. Meeting adjourned at 6:40 PM & Board Members moved into meetings of the Education, Advocacy, Outreach, Law Enforcement/Community Relations Committee until approx. 7:30pm

Respectfully submitted,

D. Bruce Carter, Commission Secretary



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Barrie Gewanter
Executive Director

Approved (at Sept. 26 Meeting)
Human Rights Commission Meeting Minutes
August 22, 2018 Meeting Date

Present: Bruce Carter, Sanjay Chablani, Crystal Doody(phone), Rabbi Dan Fellman, Starr Guckert, Dave Pasinski, John Rushing, Leo Sanchez, Mary Alice Smothers, Rosalie Young

Excused: Steve Butler, Suzie Carman, Suzette Melendez, Jeff Tamburo, Shelly Skellington, Shiu Kai Chin

Absent: Rev. Bernard Alex, Gabe Ramos, Francis Parks

Community Members Present: Charity Copeland, Bob Gardino

County Staff Present: Barrie Gewanter, Montanette Murphy

1. All commissioners present introduced themselves and commented on the questions "When was the last time you went to the State Fair and what is your favorite thing to do there?"

2. Neither of the visitors requested time to speak.

3. Commission Chair & Co-Chair reports: HRC Executive Committee will meet Sept. 25th at 4:30 at Temple Concord. Leo met with the Chair of the Jail Oversight Commission. He will attend their next meeting (which is Sept. 5th at 5:30 at Rosamund Gifford Room and is open to the public). Rabbi Fellman reported that he will be meeting with County Executive Joanie Majoney to talk about budgetary issues. The County Executive is still considering nomination of Barbara Johnson. Bob Gardino's nomination is being considered by Legislative Committee. Barrie presented information on appointments by Mayor. Additional information is in the Agenda

4. Location of meetings for October 24th and November 28th were discussed. Both meetings will be held, at Temple Concord at 5:30 PM. Room is accessible; parking is available.

5. Barrie's report. Diversity Training 9/11 at Circare and 10/18 County Office Building Room 803. Volunteers needed for Outreach Table at the State Fair & the Westcott Street Fair. Office Staffing- Montanette Murphy started 8/13 as new Human Rights Specialist; her focus will be on training. No current interns. Trying to identify candidates for the new Part-Time Information Aide. Webinar on Language Assistance rescheduled to 8/28 at 11 AM. She mentioned recent complaints at Catholic Charities Men's Shelter (The Ox) and the Zoo. Complaint about access for service dog in training to the Zoo. Star volunteered to provide information in reference to Service Dogs Barrie will be working with the leadership of the Vietnamese community to assist with leadership transition. She also mentioned an opportunity to work with the New American's Forum (NAF) on a guide to leadership transitions for ethnic community organizations. Sanjay Chablani expressed interest in working with Barrie on that project



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6. Old Business: 2nd Annual Dec 10th International Human Rights Day Event at All Saints Church. Education Committee will be working on the event. Focus could be on young refugees. Mary Alice Smothers agreed to make contact with Hendricks Chapel at SU in relation to the Martin Luther King event: Syeisha Byrd from Hendricks Chapel 315-443-1254 engagesu@syr.edu.

7. New Business. Rabbi Fellman asked if the HRC be reactive, proactive or both? Suggestions made for outreach to League of Women Voters to include human rights issues in questions to political candidates. He also asked Commissioners to consider two questions on the Agenda related to goals and priorities for the HRC and the work of other HRC. Rabbi Fellman asked Barrie to email all members of the Board the related materials she provided in Board member packets. Dave Paskinski & John Rushing agreed to staff an outreach table at the 8/31 showing of Black Panther in the Everson Plaza, a project of the Urban Video Project.

Respectfully submitted,
D. Bruce Carter, Commission Secretary
with input from Barrie Gewanter



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Human Rights Commission Meeting Minutes

Sept. 26, 2018 Meeting Date

APPROVED in HRC Meeting on 10/24/18

Present: Sanjay Chhablani, Bruce Carter, Shiu-Kai Chin, Bob Gardino, Starr Guckert, Suzette Melendez, Francis Parks, John Rushing, Leo Sanchez (Chair), Mary Alice Smothers, Rosalie Young, Shelly Skellington, Crystal Doody

Excused Jeff Tamburo, Dave Pasinski, Crystal Doody, Rabbi Dan Fellman, Suzie Carman

Absent: Rev. Bernard Alex, Khadijo Abdulkadir, Steve Butler, Gabe Ramos

Community Members Present: Maya Stubbs

County Staff Present: Barrie Gewanter & Montanette Murphy (staff) & Emmanuel Sagoe (intern)

1. Meeting began at 5:35 PM

2. Marissa Saunders- Center for Community Alternatives- presented as one of community partners.

- a. Non-profit agency that deals with advocacy, re-entry, youth, etc. Work with people who have been incarcerated to help them transition to the community. Agency in existence for more than 30 years and has offices in Rochester, Syracuse and New York City.
- b. She currently works with a program that helps youth transition back into schools or community, and a program that deals with the Raise the Age legislation (diverting 16 & 17 year olds from of adult detention & court adjudication.). Beginning Oct. 1, 2018 18-year-olds will not serve in adult facilities; Oct.1, 2019, 17-year-olds will not serve. Treatment must be age and developmentally appropriate. New procedures (misdemeanors heard in Family Court) will be instituted. New category of Adolescent Offender will be added for 16-17 year olds, with 13-15 year olds remaining as Juvenile Offenders. All felony cases will be heard in Youth Part of Criminal Court. Under extenuating circumstances (not defined under the law) non-violent felonies may be transferred to Family Court or heard in Youth Part of Criminal Court (request of DA, approved by judge). Other cases (e.g., unlawful sexual contact) may be adjudicated in either. Youth cases will be held in OCFS facilities rather than jails or prisons. Judge Vanessa Bogan will hear the youth cases in Onondaga County. All under 18 will be moved from Rikers Island in NY City by Monday.
- c. PowerPoint related to implementation of Raise the Age in Onondaga County, including construction at Hillbrook Detention Center, will be distributed electronically. CCA is on a Task Force that is overseeing the implementation process.
- d. Contact: msaunders@communityalternatives.org
- e. Discussion followed. Shelly Skellington suggested that the Commission should advocate for parents and children in this system. Discussion & questions followed. Bruce Carter pointed



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out that Direct Services is really not the role for the Commission, but that the exchange of information with Ms. Saunders is valuable. .

3. Minutes of August 22, 2018 were reviewed. Minutes were approved.

4. One Visitor was recognized, but did not offer a public comment.

5. Commission Chair report. Executive Committee discussed agenda for today's meeting. Have not determined whether the next Executive Committee will be the 22nd or 23rd of October, probably at Aurora. Rabbi Fellman will be travelling and not available. Leo expressed thanks for the outgoing County Executive's support of the Commission. Executive Committee will be sending 3 candidates to the Legislature for consideration. Renewal of commissioner terms were discussed. Importance of attending & participating in Commission was discussed. Future guest speakers were discussed. Mary Alice Smothers suggested that at some time in the future, the Commission might choose to focus a particular month's meeting on a specific topic, perhaps with a panel of speakers. Barrie suggested that this might be an approach to a public discussion of an issue that Commissioners were concerned about.

6. Director's report.

- a. Diversity trainings on 10/18 and 11/15. Barrie will be out of town 9/28 to 10/5 and 10/11 to 10/15.
- b. Office- Montanette has adapted well to the job; one new intern Emmanuel Sagoe; will start interview with candidates for part-time information aide in October.
- c. Several significant updates were discussed:
 - i. Webinar on Language Assistance went well Will post link on website.
 - ii. Productive meeting with Circare re: accommodations for persons with visual impairments;
 - iii. Attended Vietnamese Community event at Community Association Board invitation;
 - iv. Thanks to those who worked the Westcott Street Fair;
 - v. Facilitated Onondaga Votes Sessions for voter registration in the jail;
 - vi. Crisis Intervention Training led by county ALTC Dept. to begin Oct 15 & related ACCESS-CNY training in 2019; Law Enforcement Committee members may be interested in hearing more about this training;
 - vii. Progress on scheduling medical practice educational intervention meetings;
 - viii. Conversations with 2 key members of the legal community re: language assistance issues and training.
- d. Barrie was asked to look into getting a display rack to reduce the number of brochures and pamphlets on the table at outreach events. Others stated that they were able to approach people with HRC brochures beyond the booth during the Westcott event and supported that approach as well.



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7. Old Business

- a. 2nd annual International HR Day event at All Saints Church; 12/9 at 4 PM
- b. Contact for MLK event may be Syeisha Byrd (Hendricks Chapel; 315-443-1254)

8. New Business

- a. Discussion of leadership of Law enforcement/Community Relations Committee
- b. Discussion of meeting dates in 2019

9. Meeting adjourned at 7:22 PM

Respectfully submitted,
D. Bruce Carter, Commission Secretary
with input from Barrie Gewanter



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Executive Director

APPROVED Human Rights Commission Meeting Minutes

November 28, 2018 Meeting Date

APPROVED in HRC Meeting on Dec. 12, 2018

Present: Khadijo Abulkadir, Suzie Carman, Bruce Carter, Sanjay Chhablani, Shiu Kai Chin, Crystal Doody, Rabbi Dan Fellman (co-chair), Bab Gardino, Starr Guckert, Suzette Melendez, Dave Pasinski John Rushing, Jeff Tamburo, Rosalie Young.

Excused Shelly Skellington, Francis Parks, Steve Butler

Absent: Rev. Bernard Alex, Gabe Ramos

Community Members Present: None

County Staff Present: Barrie Gewanter & Montanette Murphy

1. Meeting began at 5:37 PM

- a. Rabbi Fellman announced that Commission Chair Leo Sanchez had hip surgery 2 weeks ago but fell today in his house on the way to the meeting. He is going to the hospital and cannot attend this evening. Rabbi Fellman will chair this meeting.
- b. Damian Pratt (Juvenile Justice & Detention Coordinator; Onondaga County Dept. CFS) was introduced and presented on the Juvenile Justice Services in Onondaga County. A small percentage of youth in the county are getting into trouble; the majority of youth are not involved. The slides for his presentation are attached. Commissioners asked a number of questions for clarification and further information.

2. October board minutes were not yet available for review

3. No visitors were present so no recognition was necessary.

4. Highlights from Commission Chair

- a. Executive Committee met 11/26 to discuss agenda for 11/28 meeting; next meeting is Monday 12/10 at 5 PM at Temple Concord (Rabbi's office)
- b. Leo has a meeting set up with County Exec (Ryan McMahon) regarding reappointments of Commissioners. Rabbi Fellman will be meeting with county legislator Linda Ervin.
- c. The Syracuse Mayor has reappointed Suzie and Shelly; he will consider reappointing Sanjay & Jeff
- d. Nominations for Board Executive members are open. Vote is likely to occur at the February meeting.
- e. Discussion of representatives for presentations were discussed.
- f. January 2019 meeting will be Board Development meeting; it will be a potluck. Please provide list of ingredients on a card so everyone can know what your dish contains.



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5. Report from Executive Director

- a. Upcoming Diversity Trainings will be held on 12/11/18 & 1/24/19 & 2/12/19
- b. Commissioner staffing for work shifts at the Plowshares Craft Fair was reviewed
- c. Availability of tickets for the 1/27 Dr. M. L. King Event at SU was discussed
- d. Barrie has re-scheduled a Disability Awareness Training for Circare Staff to 2/15/19
- e. Barrie and Starr reported on the first 2 educational intervention meetings with administrators of medical practices and programs about patients language assistance needs
- f. Information from the Syracuse Mayor's office was provided in Commissioner packets about new Syracuse Police Chief Buckner

6. Old Business was discussed.

- a. No progress on UN Human Rights Day recognition. Several suggestions were made for follow-up.
- b. Reports on contacts with other HRC directors. This will be discussed at December meeting.

7. New Business:

- a. 2019 Meeting dates were selected as follows: January 23, February 20, and March 27
- b. Locations were discussed; locations will be announced later.

8. Announcements were made (details in handouts)

9. Meeting adjourned at 6:55.

Respectfully submitted,
D. Bruce Carter, Commission Secretary
with input from Barrie Gewanter, Director



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Barrie Gewanter
Executive Director

Human Rights Commission Meeting Minutes
December 12, 2018 Meeting

APPROVED in HRC Meeting on February 20, 2019

Present: Bruce Carter, Crystal Doody, Daniel Fellman, Bob Gardino, Starr Guckert, John Rushing, Suzette Melendez (on phone), David Pasinski, Leonardo Sanchez, Shelly Skellington, Mary Alice Smothers, Rosalie Young.

Excused: Jeff Tamburo, Khadijo Abdulkadir, Sanjay Chhablani, Francis Parks, Shiu Kai Chin

Absent: Steve Butler, Suzie Carman, Gabe Ramos

Community Members Present: Ken Bush & Troy White

County Staff Present: Barrie Gewanter & Montanette Murphy

1. Meeting convened at 5:39 PM.

2. Sarah Reckess, Esq., Director of the local office of the Center for Court Innovation presented on related resources available for intersection of legal system and clients at risk (especially Mental Health Court). Contact information: Sarah Reckess, Director Upstate Office of Center for Court Innovation (sreckess@nycourts.gov; phone 315-266-4332; cell 315-373-6468; 601 Tully Street; Syracuse, NY 13204. Website: <http://courttinnovation.org>. Ms. Reckess also provided written materials about her organization. There was some discussion of working with CCI to provide training in Title VI obligations/procedures for members of the judiciary. Information was requested about other CCI trainings in CNY.

3. Statements from Visitors:

Mr. Troy White spoke briefly about the Black Leadership Commission on AIDS.

4. Minutes for November 28, 2018 were approved unanimously. Crystal made the motion and Shelly seconded the motion.

5. Highlights from Commission Chair

- a. Leo reported that a 12/4 meeting with County Executive Ryan McMahon went well. He is aware of need for appointments and committed to making them. Bruce and Dave P. participated. A second meeting will be scheduled in early 2019 to discuss other matters related to the HRC.
- b. Executive Committee met to discuss agenda for this meeting. Next meetings will be January 7 and January 22, 2019 at Temple Concord.
- c. Issue of open seats on Commission was discussed. Once nominations are made, legislature has to vote to approve. Related issues were expressed to Legislator Ken Bush who was present.



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- 7 Commissioners whose terms end Dec. 31 2018:

CE Appointees: Bruce Carter, Rabbi Fellman, Starr Guckert

Leg Appointees: Crystal Doody & Khadijo Abdulkadir

Mayor Appointees: Suzie & Shelly were finally reappointed on Nov. 28 - Dec. 2019

Re-Appointments of Sanjay & Jeff will be considered

- 5 Open Positions from Resignations: CE: Rev. Alex, Rev. Mackey, J. Suslovic, G. Ramos
Leg: J. Suslovic

d. No external speakers are lined up yet for February, March, or April board meetings.

Board members are asked to reach out to specific organizations or representatives for possible presentations. Crystal reported that Josh Cotter from Legal Services is willing to speak to the board about their Jail and Juvenile Justice Initiative in Feb. or March 2019.

e. Elections for Board Officers will be in February. Nominations should be forwarded to Leo Sanchez. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor.

f. The January meeting will be annual Board Development meeting on January 23rd at 5:30 PM.

6. Executive Director Report

a. Upcoming diversity training dates are 1/24 & 2/12 2019 in the County Office Building

b. Thank you to John, Starr, Dave, Suzie, Crystal, Bruce, Rabbi Dan for Staffing Booth at the Plowshares Craft Fair

c. Barrie reviewed 3 advocacy updates –

1. A local hospital's problematic handling of end of life decision making for an injured family member
2. A potential mediation of an internal conflict in a refugee community. Rosalie Young said she would be willing to assist with this as needed
3. A new complaint related to a language assistance issue within the court system. Crystal and Suzette said that they would be willing to assist with this as needed.

7. Old business: Reports from Commissioner conversations with other HRCs are still being solicited.

8. New Business: Barrie presented a chart of stated goals and accomplishments for 2018 and possible goals for 2019. Leo asked board members to review the chart prior to January 2019 board development session.

9. Meeting adjourned at 7:02 PM. The next board meeting will be at 5:30 PM at site to be determined. Board members will bring a food dish to share (no pork or shellfish) and a card with ingredients.

Respectfully submitted,

D. Bruce Carter, Commission Secretary
& Barrie Gewanter, Director