SPECIAL DOVER HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

The Special Dover Human Relations Commission (DHRC) meeting was held on January 9, 2015 at 10:10 a.m. with Chairman Wilson presiding. Members present were Mr. Henderson, Ms. Hicks, Mr. McGiffin (departed at 11:04 a.m.), Mr. Ruane, Mr. Roach (arrived at 10:27 a.m.), and Ms. Smith (arrived at 10:16 a.m.). Mrs. Sadusky and Ms. Stewart were absent.

Mr. Wilson requested a moment of silence for the men and women serving in the City of Dover Police Department as they start off the year 2015.

AGENDA ADDITIONS/DELETIONS
By unanimous consent, the agenda was approved as submitted.

Discussion - City Meetings with Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance (IMA) of Dover and Vicinity, Inc. and IMA Committees (Mayor Christiansen)
Chairman Wilson stated that, during a meeting held earlier in the morning with the DHRC Government Policy, Programs, and Practices (GPPP) Committee, Mayor Christiansen had provided information regarding the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance (IMA). The Mayor had advised members that he was meeting with the IMA and desired to ensure that community concerns regarding jobs, housing, education, police issues and other matters were heard. Mr. Wilson stated that the DHRC was invited to attend IMA meetings and encouraged representatives to participate. He stated there would be more discussion regarding the differences between the roles of the DHRC and the IMA and its committees.

Discussion - Implementation of the DHRC 2015-2018 Strategic Plan Committee Objectives
Mr. Ruane stated his understanding that the goal was to coordinate between the various DHRC committees and determine if there was some overlap in terms of what is being proposed for them. Mr. Wilson stated his desire to make sure that the committees were making plans for the entire year and that everyone was on the same page in terms of getting things done. He requested each committee chair to provide an overview of the things they could initially begin or accomplish in regard to the DHRC 2015-2018 Strategic Plan.

Mr. Ruane explained that, during the Government Practices, Policies, and Procedures (GPPP) Committee meeting held earlier in the day, the GPPP Committee, City Manager, Mayor, and Council President discussed the GPPP memorandum dated October 16, 2014, regarding the Preliminary Draft Work Plan for Completing Long-term Objective A-1 of the Strategic Plan 2015-2018. *[Clerk's Office Note: This memorandum was discussed during the DHRC meeting of October 28, 2014, as part of the GPPP Committee meeting report.]*

Mr. Ruane stated that the City Manager, Mayor, and Council President were advised that the DHRC hoped to perform an assessment, or organizational survey, to find out about the current state and climate of diversity and inclusion in the City of Dover so that they could make recommendations to management and Council regarding improvements for City programs. Mr. Ruane indicated that the City Manager, Mayor, and Council President had indicated that they looked forward to working with the DHRC to set up a senior leadership team within the City to conduct this survey and assessment. Noting that the Communications Committee had proposed to look at the City's diversity training, Mr. Ruane stated that this would be included in the assessment and there would be an opportunity for feedback from the DHRC's participants of those diversity training mini-sessions. He assured the

Communications Committee that the GPPP Committee would include this in their first steps. He stated that the GPPP Committee was hoping to engage with employees as the assessment process moves along. Mr. Ruane stated that, although the GPPP Committee had only three (3) members, any other member of the DHRC could work with them and they would regularly report back to the Commission on the status of this project.

Mr. McGiffin stated that the GPPP Committee also intended to reach out to local higher education institutions to try to generate interest in working with the Committee on this project. Ideally, this project would fit in with the discipline of a graduate student looking for a thesis subject. This student could then provide expert assistance in putting together the survey instrument used to address the staff in the City and collect and analyze data. Mr. McGiffin indicated that the City had authorized the GPPP Committee to do this.

Responding to Ms. Smith, Mr. McGiffin stated that it was hoped that the instrument developed would be broad based to address diversity in many different areas, including how the City relates internally and externally to stakeholders, vendors, and others.

Mr. Wilson stated that Mayor Christiansen indicated that he was initially going to develop an instrument to be used to examine the history of the City from the perspective of the older population, in terms of determining what worked well in the past and what is working now. He would also be looking at the police accreditation report and how that will change the way things are done.

Mr. Ruane felt it important for all commissioners to look at the proposed survey questions included in *Reinventing Diversity, Transforming Organizational Community to Strengthen People, Purpose, and Performance* by Howard J. Ross, Chapter 12, "Creating Cultures that Work," as discussed during the DHRC meeting of October 28, 2014. He suggested that members consider ways of reframing those questions or provide their ideas for additional questions to the GPPP Committee.

Mr. Ruane stated that, in terms of avoiding overlap with the Communications Committee when reaching out to the City employees, the first contact employees would have with the DHRC would be through this organizational survey. He advised members that part of the methodology would be to have a focus group and get smaller groups of employees to speak to the GPPP. He suggested that every member of the DHRC engage in this process with the City organization.

Responding to Ms. Smith regarding the timing of working with the focus group, their function and the kind of data that would be gathered from them, Mr. McGiffin stated that the schedule had not been worked out yet and he was unsure if the focus group would be used before the survey. The purpose of the focus group and survey would be the same: to determine how the City is responding to various issues of diversity so that the DHRC can report on "where the City is at" and make suggestions on where it should go. Mr. McGiffin stated that it had not yet been decided who would participate in the survey and in the focus group. He reiterated that it was hoped to get input from one (1) of the local educational institutions which might have definite ideas; however, he felt that it made sense to use a couple of different modalities.

Mr. Henderson stated that, based on the discussion at the GPPP Committee meeting held earlier in the morning, the Mayor and City Manager were on board to provide their assistance, background, staff leadership, and legitimacy, and the Mayor assured transparency of all agencies and access. Mr. Wilson stated that the assurances that he heard from the Mayor, Council President, and City Manager indicated they were open, wanted to listen, and were sensitive and ready to move forward. They were looking for outside agencies as funding sources, to include local resources like Delaware State University and governmental resources such as the Department of Justice.

Mr. Wilson stated his opinion that a summation and a timeline of things to be done was needed, noting that clarity comes from summarizing and making sure that each committee has a responsibility for what is being discussed within this group, and clarity on a possible meeting within each committee to come up with some outcomes in relation to the strategic plan.

Ms. Smith noted that a lot of work had been done; however, she was unsure if a communications infrastructure both online and offline was in place to support this great effort, noting that an effort may not be successful if infrastructure is not in place. She questioned where in the City people would go to understand these efforts.

Mr. Ruane questioned what the Communications Committee could put in place to make this happen and the timeline when the website could provide an outreach to the larger community to gain an understanding about how they perceive the City's organization in terms of outreach, diversity and inclusion. He indicated that he was not aware of any mechanism currently in place to do this. Responding, Mr. Scott Koenig, City Manager, stated that at this point the City did not have an active website manager. In order for the DHRC to understand how to modify the DHRC section of the City's website, Mr. Koenig stated that members would sit down with the City Clerk's Office, IT staff, and himself and decide what access is needed and how information would be reviewed before it goes online. He indicated that some type of review would be needed, but expressed the desire to make sure that the issues that are coming up through the community were being addressed.

Mr. Koenig stated the need to get the leadership team set up, have a few meetings with the Commission, introduce the leadership team to the committee chairmen so that a personal relationship could be developed and it could be determined how to get this information where it needs to go. He acknowledged that there is an internal communication problem within the City, stating that a lot of the issues that affect the City come down to communication. Mr. Koenig felt that this process would be a challenge since it had not been done before but concurred with Ms. Smith regarding the importance of communication.

Mr. Ruane stated this was an example of how the tasks of the GPPP Committee would be integrated with those of another committee, noting that the Community Engagement Committee would hopefully identify what external organizations or individuals in the community should be included in the discovery process of how the City is engaged in diversity and inclusion. He questioned if the Community Engagement Committee knew who should be included as external stakeholders. Mr. Ruane hoped that the Community Engagement Committee would be able to identify individuals and organizations that should be brought in to do a separate survey or be a focus group to tell the City what the citizens think. He felt that there was an opportunity for each of the DHRC committees

to participate in the overall goal to complete the survey. Mr. Ruane explained that the methodology proposed on Page 3 of the GPPP memorandum dated October 16, 2014, was to include not only survey questionnaires but observations, interviews, focus groups, and desk reviews.

Mr. Wilson questioned when the leadership team could be established, as well as a meeting date and time. Responding, Mr. Koenig stated that he could provide a recommendation for a leadership team in 30 days, and agreed to establish a time and date for that meeting and to collaborate on an agenda.

Mr. Wilson stated that the committee chairs and DHRC members could be part of this meeting and requested that Mr. Ruane prepare a one (1) page action outline for that meeting. For clarification, Mr. McGiffin stated his understanding that this would be a one (1) page document listing the things the leadership team is going to do.

Mr. Ruane suggested that the team's first assignment would be to read *Reinventing Diversity, Transforming Organizational Community to Strengthen People, Purpose, and Performance* by Howard J. Ross, noting that he had been presenting the concepts in the book in outline form.

Mr. Ruane questioned if the other committees had additional activities that they would like to engage in during the next six (6) months, in tandem with the efforts already discussed, stating that these efforts were not meant to be the total work of the Commission.

Ms. Smith stated her opinion that the assessment was a major undertaking and may be a year-long project, working collaboratively, in terms of marketing it, engaging the community, creating "the buzz," and performing the research. She stated that the task of looking at a massive organization to determine if it is functioning well in terms of diversity would entail looking at the internal individuals, external customers, and leadership, which would involve three (3) different components and three (3) totally different surveys. In addition, Ms. Smith noted that the DHRC would be attempting to engage a community that may not really be engaged. She questioned how the community could be engaged, what events would be offered to engage them in the process, and how the media could be brought on board to partner with the DHRC to run ads or articles. In her opinion, this was a "huge" endeavor and the DHRC could not work on anything else but this.

Mr. Henderson stated that the community's historical perspective must also be considered. Ms. Smith concurred, stating that this was an additional area to research. Mr. Henderson indicated that during the DHRC meeting of October 28, 2014, he had suggested having observances that are culturally sensitive throughout the year which are related to history; however, he felt that the DHRC must "go a lot deeper than that."

Mr. Wilson stated that he would take the initiative to work on an outline of things for consideration, pass it through Mr. Ruane, and proceed from there. With the City Manager getting the leadership team together, Mr. Wilson felt it important to focus on the agenda for that meeting.

Noting that some members had arrived late to the meeting, Mr. Wilson reiterated that, during a GPPP meeting held earlier in the day with the City Manager, Mayor, and Council President, Mayor Christiansen had provided a briefing on the operation of the Interdenominational Ministerial

Alliance (IMA), its committees, and how it was working with the City. There had been discussion about the DHRC and the IMA in terms of the objectives of their committees and whether or not the DHRC would be an integral part of what the IMA was planning or suggesting. Mr. Wilson stated that the Mayor and the City believed that voices need to be heard, that the City should not get into a liability issue, and that matters should be brought up that the groups can work on collaboratively. Mr. Wilson reiterated that Commissioners were invited to attend IMA meetings and be a part of what is going on. He indicated his desire to ensure that there is no duplication. Mr. Wilson also advised members of the recent development of the new Department of Justice Office of Civil Rights and Public Trust and questioned how that might play into the DHRC.

Mr. Ruane explained that he attended the first meeting of the IMA, which consists of a group of ministers and others who are social action committee chairs of their churches, some in the City and some not. He stated that some of the topics discussed at the meeting were the same topics discussed by the DHRC. Mr. Ruane noted that the IMA had discussed issues with the police, and he had provided the IMA Chair with information regarding the City of Dover Police Department accreditation review; however, no members of the IMA attended the review. Mr. Ruane requested clarification regarding the DHRC role in regard to the City's Police Department, noting his understanding that the DHRC would engage with the Police Department during their survey, particularly to discuss community relations.

Noting that Mr. Wilson had indicated that members were welcome to come to IMA meetings, Mr. Ruane questioned what role the DHRC would play and what Mr. Wilson wanted the DHRC to do. Responding, Mr. Wilson stated that he was not suggesting that members do anything. He stated that the IMA's meetings are open and he would like to know about them for informational purposes. For example, the IMA's agenda for their December 15, 2014 meeting reflected that they have a committee on jobs, on which Senator Brian Bushweller was serving, and other committees dealing with housing, education, and with police issues. Mr. Wilson felt it was interesting that these were some of the same things the DHRC may discuss as far as committees. He also questioned if there would be a conflict in looking at liability issues. Mr. Wilson stated that the DHRC would function according to the City Code; however, there would be people in the community, particularly in the African American community, questioning what the DHRC does versus what the IMA does. He indicated that he was speaking on behalf of those voices he had heard in the community who were concerned about the IMA versus the DHRC; however, he stated that it should not be "us against them." Mr. Wilson stressed the need to work jointly and questioned how this should be expressed to a group that is working with the Mayor and not coming to the DHRC. He stated that he wanted to see everyone working together.

Ms. Smith stated that the DHRC would require all "hands on deck" to execute their plan, noting that members of the DHRC and a graduate student, if offered by a university, could not execute this plan alone; a team was needed. She questioned how the DHRC and IMA could work collaboratively. Ms. Smith felt that the issue of diversity was a piece of what the IMA was trying to accomplish, and it was her belief that everyone was trying to accomplish the same thing in the end. She stated that the DHRC would need to invite the IMA to work together. She noted that there may be other groups with serious concerns and the DHRC would have to do outreach, which would require systems in place for communication and community engagement. Ms. Smith explained that when the

leadership team is brought together, one (1) of the first tasks would be to determine the strategic plan for implementation, including determining the groups that the DHRC can engage that would see this as a common goal. Ms. Smith stated that sometimes people need a personal phone call in order to become involved. She expressed her hope that the DHRC could engage the Mayor to bring everyone together. This is what she saw as a community working towards a common goal, such as the Mayor's motto: "I believe in Dover," and questioned why, if everyone wants the same thing, there were separate pockets.

Mr. Ruane questioned if it was the desire of members to invite the IMA to a DHRC meeting. Responding, Ms. Smith expressed her opinion that this should be done by leadership, possibly Commissioner Wilson.

Mr. Wilson stated that this was not a "one (1) man invitation situation" and preferred the City leadership and the committee chairs to have this discussion. He felt that it should not be the DHRC against or for the IMA, that "it has to come under one tent" in order to get it done. Mr. Wilson believed that the IMA and the DHRC each had an agenda, and felt it important to make sure there was no duplication. He noted this could enhance community engagement in terms of plans or initiatives, noting that he did not want to see isolation on either part. In addition, he stated that he was looking for information from the Attorney General's Office in terms of how the new Office of Civil Rights and Public Trust would relate to the DHRC and the State Human Relations Commission, as well as the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

Noting that Mr. Henderson is part of the IMA, Ms. Smith asked his opinion of the best strategic way to approach the organization so that there is maximum opportunity for success. Responding, Mr. Henderson stated his belief that the incident that took place in Ferguson, Missouri was the "driver" for the IMA. He stated that governments tend to be reactionary as opposed to being visionary; however, there were three (3) City leaders and others who want to be visionary and he felt that everyone should be patient because it is a long process without simple answers. Mr. Henderson stated that Rev. Rita Paige was in charge of the IMA Social Action Committee that was interested in working with the Mayor to ensure that a potential Ferguson does not occur in Dover, because there were some incidents that took place in the community that were potentially explosive. The desire was to be proactive.

Ms. Smith stated that she knows Rev. Paige, and since Rev. Paige is in a leadership position, Ms. Smith suggested having a conversation with her over dinner and asking key questions. In this way, an understanding could be gained of Rev. Paige's vision for the IMA and how the DHRC can work synergistically with the IMA. Ms. Smith stated that this would also help to learn how other organizations in the community could work with the DHRC. Ms. Smith noted that this would not be an easy road; she suggested having the right people at the table from the beginning, allowing Rev. Paige to take the matter back to IMA to get their buy-in, and then working together. She also felt that the Mayor had a major role to play in this because he ultimately has a relationship with everyone.

Mr. Henderson stated that he was very impressed with the meeting just concluded between the GPPP Committee, Mayor, City Manager, and Council President. He indicated that they expressed

willingness to do what they can. He felt that the parts and people were in place, including the City, clergy, DHRC, and Mr. Ruane's excellent outline, and that everyone was headed in the right direction. Mr. Henderson stated that Ms. Smith was an eloquent spokesperson who brings clarity to issues in very few words, asks the right questions, has a probing mind, and is able to put things together; therefore, he felt that Ms. Smith would do well as a leader. He cautioned members that he did not want to pretend to be the representative for the IMA; however, he was trying to do the best he could to explain since he sits on both groups.

Mr. Wilson stated that there were other factions in addition to the IMA, noting that Mr. Roy Sudler, Jr., Social Action Committee Chair from the Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church, also serves as a State Human Relations Commissioner. Mr. Wilson felt that others should be brought to the table, including leaders and non-leaders who have a strong influence on others within the community, noting that leaders come with and without titles. He felt all those with some type of contribution should be part of the decision-making process and the "buy-ins" referenced by Ms. Smith. Mr. Wilson indicated that leaders, such as Rev. Davis from the Whatcoat United Methodist Church, and others from the Union Baptist Church or any other church or synagogue in Dover should be heard from, noting that currently the agenda and voices being heard were very few. He suggested that a summit or some type of important meeting be held to bring all of the people together, which he felt would go along with community engagement.

Mr. Henderson felt that, before the summit, there should be communication, noting that the City Manager had asked for 30 days to provide a leadership team.

Mr. Roach reminded members that the DHRC was charged with the idea of diversity and could not be too focused on one (1) entity, such as the IMA, because the one (1) thing the Commission does not want to do is leave people out. This would result in the DHRC doing the exact opposite of what it was charged to do. Mr. Roach stated that if someone has a voice, no matter how small or big, it needs to be heard. He advised members that the IMA is a very big organization; however, it is not the only one, noting that he had been in contact with some individuals in regard to issues in the Capital School District.

By unanimous consent, the meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

Cecil C. Wilson
Chairman

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