DOVER HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 28, 2011
CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Present: Chair Roy Sudler, Jr. Commissioners Ellen Wasfi, G. Thomas Steele, Dawn Allen-Pyne, and Phyllis Edamatsu.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:12 p.m. and roll was called. There was a moment of silence.

Agenda Additions/Deletions: Under New Business was added section B. "Discussion of elimination and/or consolidation of the DHRC" by the Finance and Administration Committee for the City of Dover.

Adoption of Minutes: A motion was made by Commissioner Wasfi to adopt the minutes from July 27, 2011 and the minutes from August 24, 2011. It was seconded by Commissioner Edamatsu, all voted in favor and the minutes were adopted.

Comments/Presentations from the Community: Faye Della White came to the meeting in response to hearing that the DHRC was to be reviewed for Consolidation and/or Elimination by the Legislative, Finance, and Administration Committee. She said that she fears that she will have no representation or voice in the community if the DHRC is eliminated. It has been in service from 2001 to 2011, and she wants to see that DHRC stays. Commissioner Wasfi thanked her and invited her to express her concerns at the meeting of the Legislative, Finance, and Administration Committee at City Hall tomorrow night at 5:00 to give her input there. Chair Sudler instructed her to call the City Clerk's Office and ask to be put on the list of speakers. Ms. White said that she feels the DHRC should not be consolidated either because each group has its own entity. "Human" relations are separate from the others. DHRC works for the people to bring groups together. Ms. White stated that she is from Philadelphia where she worked on committees for the city and state. She is now a Senior Citizen and loves her community and children. Commissioner Wasfi invited her to apply for a seat on the DHRC. Ms. White thanked the DHRC for their work, and worries that people will have no place to go if the Commission is eliminated.

Chair's Report: Chair Sudler read his report (see attachment #1).

Committee Reports: Commissioner Allen-Pyne reported that she had contacted the Star Hill Church near Camden Wal-Mart as a place to have a community meeting for October or November. She needs to find out for sure if the church is in the City limits of Dover before DHRC schedules an event there.

Unfinished Business:

A: Commissioner Steele's recommendations from his e-mail sent Feb. 24, 2011 (see attachment # 2) were reviewed and discussed. Commissioner Wasfi will revise and incorporate his thoughts into a final draft for the Commission to approve.

B: Recommendations and minor corrections were made to "Third Draft" (see attachment # 3) regarding the Reed and New Street Brawl. Commissioner Edamatsu made a motion to approve the letter and send copies addressed to the Mayor and City Council. Commissioner Allen-Pyne seconded and all voted in favor.

C: After much discussion, the Commission approved a motion made by Commissioner Allen-Pyne to send a letter to the Police Chief asking him to consider sending a representative from the department as an observer to DHRC meetings for the purpose of facilitating communications and understanding between the DHRC, Dover PD, and the Community. (CC to the City Council). Commissioner Edamatsu seconded and all voted in favor. A motion was made by Commissioner Allen-Pyne to draft another letter to the Police Department asking about the nature of the GREAT program which tracks gang activity. Commissioner Wasfi seconded the motion, all voted in favor. A third motion was made by Chair Sudler to appoint Commissioner Steels as a liaison between the Dover Police Department and the DHRC. Commissioner Steele would meet with the Police Chief before the letters are posted, in order to begin a dialog between the two groups. Commissioner Wasfi seconded and all voted in favor.

New Business: Discussion of the Elimination and or Consolidation of the DHRC by the Legislative, Finance, and Administration Committee. Commissioners expressed their views and opinions in regards to the review that would be coming up at the meeting of the Committee on Thursday night.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9: 15 p.m.

Minutes taken and submitted by Mary Walson

ATTACHMENT #1

September 28, 2011

Agenda Addition:

New 9-7

B. Discussion on the Elimination, and or Consolidation of the DHRC by the Finance and Administration Committee for the City of Dover

Chair's Report [Sudler]

On **September 23, 2011,** I received a phone call and message from David McGinnis in reference to his application for the Dover Human Relations Commission. In the message Mr. McGinnis indicated that he was still interested in being a Commissioner and had submitted his application in to the City Clerks Office about one year ago [**2010**]

On **September 23 - 26, 2011,** I received numerous phone calls from citizens of Dover who were upset and puzzled as to why the Dover Human Relations Commission was on the Finance and Administration Committee's Agenda for Elimination or Consolidation. At that time, I just listened to them vent and encouraged them to voice their concerns to the Finance and Administration Committee.

ATTACHMENT #2
SEPT. 28, 2011

Devine, Denise

(2 PAGES)

From: Devine, Denise
Sent: Friday, February 25, 2011 11:37 AM
To: DePrima, Tony
Cc: City Clerks Office
Subject: FW: DHRC meeting last night.

Please see the email below, sent at the request of G. Thomas Steele, Dover Human Relations Commission member. Please note that Mr. Steele is referring to the Dover Human Relations Commission meeting of February 23, 2011, which was a community meeting held at the Simon Circle Boys and Girls Club.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you,

Denise L. Devine
Assistant City Clerk
City of Dover
e-mail: ddevine@dover.de.us
(302) 736-7008 phone
(302) 736-5068 fax

This e-mail was sent to members of City Council and the Dover Human Relations Commission.

From: G. Thomas Steele [mailto:mspcio@aol.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 24, 2011 10:21 AM
To: Devine, Denise
Subject: DHRC meeting last night.

Having attended my first meeting of the Commission I have several observations/suggestions I would like to pass along for your consideration.

1. Is there an Ombudsman for the utility companies in Dover? Several questions/suggestions last night appear they could be settled by such a position. Such a person would be able to coordinate the funds collected for fuel assistance through various organizations as well as serve as a source of statistics for legislation in the future. This position should be an out reach activity of the companies and not one funded by any tax or city budget.

2. Pastor Gordon appears to be a person dedicated to his mission of serving the needs of the community. May I suggest your consideration in requesting him to form a "Council of Churches" and/or other such organization to speak with a united voice for the needs of the community? (If such action is within our purview) People such as the Pastor frequently offer a greater solution to problems than government action. Many organizations exist to help the needs of our community outside the government offices yet there does not appear to be any "non-government" place for co-ordination within our city.

3. The continued subject of gang involvement within our community as voiced by the attendees seems to speak of a need for the Commission to briefed on what the status of the activity is and proposed response. My personal opinion is this is the type of subject the Commission needs information on in order to be able to assist/aid the city and community in dealing with the problem as well as understand it ourselves.

4. May I suggest the Commission urge the City to employ a grant writer to take advantage of federal grants to assist the youth within our city and surrounding areas? It appears from the testimony of several attendees that there is no such activity taking place by the city at the present. Many of these grants do not require matching money and would go a long way in providing both funds and educational opportunities to the city and community in subject areas related to the youth of the community. Gangs thrive on the ability to fill the void created when family and communities fail to fill the need of

social activities. However, in the case of gangs their activities lead to destruction of communities and family unity. Such grant information can be found at such federal agencies as the National Institute of Justice.

Respectfully submitted,

G. Thomas Steele

ATTACHMENT # 3
(2 PAGES)

THIRD DRAFT

September 28, 2011

City Council President
Dover City Council
City Hall
Dover, DE 19903

To The City Council President:

On March 17, 2011, the Dover Human Relations Commission scheduled a Special Forum in City Council Chambers to review the circumstances surrounding the disruptive behavior leading to injuries and arrests that occurred on Reed and New Streets on March 2, 2011. The Commission sought to ~~determine whether or not~~ UNDERSTAND WHY the incident ~~met~~ did not meet the criteria of a hate crime and whether all those involved were treated fairly. Dover Police Chief James E. Hosfelt, Jr. presented the police report on the event which characterized the altercation as an alcohol-related brawl. The questions that were raised at the meeting included:

1. Did the victim's actions contribute to the brawl?
2. Should the brawl have been considered a hate crime?
3. Was alcohol involved in the incident?
4. How was the evidence gathered?
5. Did Internet blog comments promote racial tension in Dover?
6. Did the victim receive any reprimand for her provocative behavior that contributed to the brawl?
7. Should there be greater police presence in the area?
8. Is gun control a necessary response to recent shootings in downtown Dover?
9. Should landlords have more discretion to evict residents who have willfully participated in incidents such as the Reed & New Street brawl?

A prime concern voiced by State and Dover Human Relations Commissioners and audience members in their questions to Chief Hosfelt was that the ~~white~~ Caucasian female who sustained injuries requiring emergency care had escalated what began as verbal exchange with ~~black~~ African American individuals congregating on the sidewalk to a physical fight by throwing a cup of liquid on them. Some of the other participants in the confrontation were arrested. The Dover Police indicated that no racial slurs were involved.

After hearing the comments of Chief Hosfelt, the Commissioners, some of whom had seen a video of the incident, concluded that the white female's provocative disorderly conduct while not premeditated did constitute, at the very least, a misdemeanor offense under sections 1315 and 1301 of the Delaware Criminal Code. The Commissioners concurred, therefore, that the instigator of the violence who was deemed intoxicated and

disorderly should be required to participate in sensitivity training and mandatory counseling. Punishing only the black participants in the confrontation could be perceived by many in the Dover community as racial bias on the part of the Dover Police. Further recommendations suggested by the Commissioners include:

1. Establishing a community workshop on hate crimes and brawl-prevention strategies;
2. Seeking the assistance of interfaith and faith-based agencies to help promote such community workshops in various areas of Dover; and
3. Mandating cultural sensitivity training and counseling for participants in hate crimes.

DHRC jurisdiction in these matters derives from **Chapter 2 - Administrative, Article I, Division 6, Section 2 - 21 of the Dover Code,** which grants the Commission the powers and duties to investigate claims of unfair treatment and develop ways to monitor intergroup conflict among all segments of the City of Dover; **Section 58 - 36 Powers & Duties - DHRC 5** to research, educate, engage in such [activities that] in the judgment of the Commission or the City Council may be needed to improve human relations in the City of Dover; **{Code 1981 Code 2 - 21 -; Ordinance of 2 - 11- 2002} and Section 58 - 31 Titled: Purpose:** Promote and develop an environment of fairness and respect among all citizens; and **{Code 1981 Code 2 -16; Ordinance of 2 -11- 2002}**: Develop ways to measure and monitor community relations particularly those that are sources of intergroup conflict.

The Dover Human Relations Commission makes the above recommendations to the Mayor, City Council, and Police Chief in accordance with its responsibilities and duties as outlined in its bylaws and its mission to promote and develop an environment of fairness and mutual respect among the citizens of Dover and to relieve tensions arising from intergroup conflict. It is the intent of the Commission to serve as a catalyst to encourage inclusiveness and civility between all members of the Dover community and the city government. We thank the Mayor, the City Council and the Chief of Police for considering our recommendations.

Sincerely,

Roy Sudler, Jr., Chair
Dover Human Relations Commission