

Meeting Minutes
Human Relations Commission
April 29, 2009

The State College Borough Human Relations Commission met on Wednesday, April 29, 2009, at 12:00 noon in Room 321 of the State College Municipal Building, 243 South Allen Street, State College, PA. The meeting was called to order at 12:06 p.m.

Present: Charles Dumas
Lauren Dornell-Neal
Michael L. Eggert
Absent: Gregg J. Mussi
Matthew R. Smith

Public Hour - Hearing of Citizens. There being no members of the public present; no comments were received.

The Commission began with introductions. Staff provided an overview of the adjudicatory role of the Commission and the rules regarding communication among members in regards to the Sunshine Law.

The Commission reviewed the Borough's website showing the links to the different forms available to the public. The Commission also reviewed the anti-discrimination ordinance and the history on how it was developed. The Commission members discussed the different groups covered and those that were not covered, the alternatives to filing a complaint at the local level, and the ability for a Penn State employee to file. Staff explained that employees at Penn State were covered by the ordinance. However, since the passage of the ordinance in December 2007, no complaints had been filed.

Commission members discussed the public's knowledge of the ordinance. Staff explained that notices had been sent to all the known employers in the Borough early in 2008. It was suggested that additional advertising could be done. It was noted that business owners and managers may know about the ordinance but the employees may not. Outreach could be done through public bulletin boards or CATA buses.

Staff explained that the Fair Housing ordinance was being reviewed to determine the inconsistency with the language in the anti-discrimination ordinance. Amendments to the ordinance would be considered by Council.

The Commission reviewed the complaint/respondent documents. A question arose on why the date of birth was needed on the complaint form and that some people may be reluctant to file if they have to provide their birthdate. It was suggested that a statement be added indicating that the information would be

treated confidentially. Also, many people do not know what constitutes a discrimination case; it was suggested that user-friendly examples be provided.

The Commission declined election of a Chair until more members could be present.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Sharon K. Ergler
Recording Secretary