

**Montgomery County Commission for Women
21 Maryland Avenue, Suite 330 Rockville, MD 20850**

Summary of Discussion

August 22, 2013

7 p.m.

Attending:

Chandra Walker Holloway, President
Maria Montserrat Alvarado
Linda Amendt
Debra Bright Harris
Maliha Ilias
Nick Martinez
Barbara Mintz
Manar Morales
Safia Qadri
Karmen Rouland
Katie Smith

Absent:

Natalia Farrar
Lorna Forde
Farah Nageer-Kanthor

Staff:

Judith Vaughan-Prather, Executive
Director

Guests:

Stewart Oneglia
Natalie Harris
Katelyn Losquadro
Bobbie Coles

I. Call to Order/Approval of Minutes and Agenda.....President Walker Holloway

The meeting was called to order at 7:12 p.m. The agenda for the evening's meeting and the July meeting minutes were unanimously adopted as presented. New Commissioners were asked to introduce themselves at the end of the meeting to accommodate late arrivals due to a traffic incident. President Walker Holloway thanked Commissioner Martinez for so generously providing dinner and Commissioner Ilias for the beautiful dessert she provided.

II. Executive Committee Report..... President Walker Holloway

A. September 12 Planning Meeting

Commissioners were reminded that the August CFW meeting will serve as the Commission's annual planning meeting and will start at 6pm. Planning meeting materials will be circulated ahead of time. Commissioners were asked to review the criteria ahead of time so that major projects and initiatives as well as committees can be adopted efficiently.

B. New Commissioner Recruitment

Commissioner Debra Bright Harris announced a new vacant term on the CFW. Newly appointed Sheena Collier received a job offer in Boston and resigned before she had an opportunity to attend her first meeting. The County Executive’s office has been notified and it is hoped that her position on the CFW will be filled soon.

C. FY 13 Meeting Schedule

Monthly CFW meetings are scheduled for the second Thursday of every month at 7 p.m.. The next meetings is scheduled for 6 pm on September 12th. That meeting begins early to permit ample time for the annual planning session. The remaining meeting dates are: October 10th, and November 14th. The Executive Committee meetings will be held via conference call on the 1st Tuesday of every month at 9:30am.: September 3rd, October 1st, November 12th (because the Executive Director will be out of the country during the first week of this month), and December 3rd.

III. STAFF REPORT.....Executive Director Vaughan-Prather

A. Counseling Services Development

All three social workers are now on staff in temporary part time positions. One works two days (16 hours) per week and the other two work three days (24 hours) per week. The background of the counseling center was described for the new commissioners. The counselors will attend the October CFW meeting to present on their progress. Counseling services are available in five languages on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. The initial 65-person waiting list has been reduced to 24, and the counselors all have very full schedules. The response from the public and from our clients has been very positive. It is important to note that our licensed professionals are in demand, as are our services and requests have already been received from community organizations for expansion of services.

The Commissioners discussed their intent to meet with the County Council and the County Executive this fall to talk about the CFW’s work and the counseling services. The Commissioners felt strongly the need to make the social work positions permanent. President Walker Holloway will ask to meet with the County Executive in September. If that is not possible, the CFW will send a letter.

B. Update on CFW Publications

The first draft of the updated Divorce Guidebook in English has been received. The previously published book on surviving the process of separation and divorce, as well as our other brochures, is out of date. Published in as many as six languages, it is a complicated process to make all the changes accurately. The contract with the MCPS graphics department to update the files is going well but the process is slow. The English version of the divorce guides should be completed fairly soon.

C. Annual Report

The annual report is almost complete and will be published by the next meeting.

D. Travel Schedule

Executive Director Vaughan-Prather will travel to China as part of the Montgomery County Sister City project September 15 - 23. In addition, she will be visiting Bornova, Turkey November 3 - 10, by invitation of the American Councils for International Education, to exchange strategies and best practices on how local governments can address women’s issues in their communities.

IV. Committee Reports

A. Program Planning Leadership Committee.....Mintz/Morales

Divorce Law seminars in English have been scheduled for every month through December coupled with a Spanish-language seminar offered every other month. There will also be a special seminar on mediation and dispute resolution in October. A new attorney from the Family Law Division of the Montgomery County Bar Association, Heather Swearn, will be coordinating the attorneys who serve as speakers for these seminars. Executive Director Vaughan Prather was asked to create a flyer announcing the dates of all the seminars.

B. Policy and Legislation Committee.....Smith

Commissioner Smith described a new bill to be introduced in the Maryland General Assembly in the upcoming session by Del. Ariana Kelly. It will provide unpaid family and medical leave for six weeks for workers in companies with 15 – 49 employees. (The federal Family and Medical Leave Act only covers employers with 50 or more employees but provides 12 weeks of unpaid leave.) At Del. Kelly’s request, the CFW hosted a meeting on July 30 of other advocates interested in supporting this bill. At the federal level, two new bills are being considered. Commissioner Smith recommended that the CFW add these to its legislative agenda. The Rape Survivor Child Custody Act (HR 2772) is similar to state legislation the CFW supported last year and provides that children born as a result of rape may be protected for custody, visitation and other claims from their biological father. Another bill is being considered that will provide at least some paid medical leave for employees in some companies. Commissioner Morales moved that the commission support the two new federal bills and Commissioner Qadri seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

C. 2014 Women’s Legislative Briefing.....Bright Harris

The Legislative Briefing will take place on Sunday, January 26th from 11am to 6pm. At the Universities at Shady Grove. The planning committee meets the 1st Thursday of most months at the White Oak Community Recreational Center. The first meeting is September 5th at 7pm at 1700 April Lane in Silver Spring, Maryland. Seven organizations have already submitted their sponsorship forms and fees. Executive Director Vaughan-Prather will be circulating the sponsorship letters and forms. The November meeting of the WLB Planning Committee has been rescheduled to Wednesday, November 13th. All Commissioners are encouraged to email Commissioner Bright Harris and Executive Director Vaughan-Prather with speaker

suggestions. After discussion, Commissioner Bright Harris moved that WLB exhibit space for the community co-sponsors be allocated based on the order in which the exhibitor forms and fees are received. Commissioner Ilias seconded the motion which carried unanimously. Commissioner Bright Harris then moved that the exhibitor fee be increased from \$75 to \$85 and include one free admission, and that the ‘Friends of the WLB’ fee be increased from \$50 to \$65 and also include the registration fee for one individual. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mintz and carried unanimously.

The CFW then discussed adding a track for teens and pre-teens at the WLB. A number of options were identified for speakers, supervision, topics, crowd control, etc. It was decided that the two workshop track for teens should include a session on leadership skills development and a session on the legislative process. All minors attending the WLB will have to be accompanied by a responsible adult.

V. Unfinished Business

A. Elections

Commissioner Debra Bright Harris submitted her intent to run for the office of First Vice President. There being no other candidates, President Walker Holloway called for a vote and Commissioner Bright Harris was unanimously elected. Commissioner Maliha Ilias submitted her intent to run for the office of Second Vice President. There being no other candidates, President Walker Holloway called for a vote and Commissioner Ilias was unanimously elected.

B. Fredrick County CFW’s Maryland Women’s Conference

The Fredrick County CFW is organizing a Maryland Women’s Conference on October 26th. The theme of the conference is “Jobs, Health, Money: Helping Women Have It All.” Sessions include such topics as “10 legal steps every woman should take.” The MC CFW was asked to help publicize the event. It was decided to respond positively to that request and to send Commissioner Smith to the event.

C. MD Power Conference

Executive Director Vaughan-Prather and President Walker Holloway will be attend the August 29 Women’s Power Conference, representing the CFW as a “power partner” in the planning of this conference. Each “power partner” was also provided one free admission to the conference to give to a member. A drawing was held to choose which other commissioner would attend and Commissioner Smith was selected.

D. NACW Conference

Executive Director Vaughan-Prather attended the four-day conference of the National Association of Commission for Women in San Jose, California July 22 – 25. She was re-elected to the NACW Board of Directors and will serve as co-chair of NACW’s policy and legislation committee again this year.

VI. New Business

A. Rockville Historic Society

The first woman attorney in Maryland, Vivian Simpson, had her office in a building at the corner of Beall and North Washington Street in Rockville, where the CFW also had offices for several years. The current of the building plans to demolish it to make way for new development. The Rockville Historic Society asked for support in advocating for the preservation of the building due to its historic value. Because they had no information on this issue other than the letter from Peerless Rockville, the Commissioners moved to table the issue until September. The motion carried unanimously.

VII. Liaison Reports

A. MLAW.....Smith

The annual Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women conference is scheduled for October 19th in Baltimore. The theme will be “Women Make the Difference”. Commissioner Smith is a member of the MLAW Board of Directors and will attend the conference.

B. Teen Dating Violence Task Force/ Choose Respect Conference.....Alvarado

The planning meetings for this conference are the second Thursday of every month. Commissioner Alvarado will forward the meeting information to Commissioner Forde. The Conference will be held Sunday, February 23rd, 2014. Commissioner Alvarado will contact Commissioner Forde who was not in attendance this evening to coordinate the CFW’s participation in these committees.

C. FJC Annual Benefit.....Vaughan-Prather

The Family Justice Center’s annual benefit is scheduled for October 13 and invitations for commissioners to attend have arrived. Commissioner Mintz offered to represent the CFW at this event.

VIII. Adjournment.....President Walker Holloway

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Minutes Submitted by
Montserrat Alvarado, Commissioner