

Sen. John J. Walsh, Chair
Sen. Brian G. Pettyjohn
Sen. Bryant L. Richardson
Sen. David P. Sokola
Sen. Bryan J. Townsend



Rep. Stephanie T. Bolden, Vice-Chair
Rep. Andria L. Bennett
Rep. Gerald L. Brady
Rep. Timothy D. Dukes
Rep. Jeffrey N. Spiegelman

STATE OF DELAWARE

JOINT LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT AND SUNSET COMMITTEE

Human Relations Commission Recommendations Minutes 3.28.17

Chair Walsh called the meeting to order at 12:13 pm. Members present included Vice Chair Bolden; Senators Pettyjohn, Richardson, Sokola; and Representatives Bennett, Dukes, and Spiegelman. Julie Fedele, JLOSC Analyst, and Julia Dumas Wilks, Administrative Specialist II, were also present. Chair Walsh called for introductions and stated the purpose of the meeting.

Senator Pettyjohn motioned to approve the March 21, 2017 minutes, and was seconded by Representative Spiegelman. The motion carried 9 (Senators Walsh, Hansen, Pettyjohn, Richardson, Sokola; Representatives Bolden, Bennett, Dukes, and Spiegelman)-0, 1 absent (Representative Brady).

Chair Walsh invited the commissioners of the Human Relations Commission to introduce themselves. The Human Relations Commission (“the Commission”), was represented by Calvin H. Christopher, Commission Chair; Romona S. Fullman, Director of the Division of Human Relations; and their legal counsel, Zoe Plerhoples, Deputy Attorney General.

Chair Walsh read Recommendation One, and asked committee members for questions and comments. Senator Pettyjohn motioned to adopt Option One of Recommendation One, and was seconded by Representative Spiegelman. The motion carried 9 (Senators Walsh, Hansen, Pettyjohn, Richardson, Sokola; Representatives Bolden, Bennett, Dukes, and Spiegelman)-0, 1 absent (Representative Brady).

Chair Walsh read Recommendation Two, and asked the Commission and Committee members for questions and comments. The Commission Chair Christopher recommended the Commission reduce its numbers from 7 to 5 commissioners in each county, and perhaps 3 at-large representatives. Chair Christopher wanted to ensure that as the state becomes more diverse that the Commission is able to do its job thoroughly. However, they agreed with the recommendation to reduce the overall size of the Commission. Sen. Sokola asked how the Commission would reduce its numbers. Chair Christopher advised the reduction could be done over the next several months. Sen. Sokola was concerned the Committee would be forcing someone to leave before their term was up. Chair Walsh asked for the appropriate size of the Commission. Chair Christopher clarified that the Commission felt that 18 members would be an appropriate size. Representative Bennett asked if any Commissioners have requested to resign. Representative Spiegelman suggested that reducing the Commission members by more than 10 to the suggested 18 may be too disruptive to the Commission and their process. Representative Spiegelman motioned to adopt Recommendation Two, accepting the recommended number from the

Commission of 18, and was seconded by Representative Bennett. The motion carried 9 (Senators Walsh, Hansen, Pettyjohn, Richardson, Sokola; Representatives Bolden, Bennett, Dukes, and Spiegelman)-0, 1 absent (Representative Brady).

Chair Walsh read Recommendation Three, and asked committee members for questions and comments. Senator Pettyjohn motioned to adopt Recommendation Three, and was seconded by Representative Bennett. The motion carried 9 (Senators Walsh, Hansen, Pettyjohn, Richardson, Sokola; Representatives Bolden, Bennett, Dukes, and Spiegelman)-0, 1 absent (Representative Brady).

Chair Walsh read Recommendation Four, and asked committee members for questions and comments. Senator Pettyjohn motioned to adopt Recommendation Four, and was seconded by Representative Bennett. The motion carried 9 (Senators Walsh, Hansen, Pettyjohn, Richardson, Sokola; Representatives Bolden, Bennett, Dukes, and Spiegelman)-0, 1 absent (Representative Brady).

Chair Walsh read Recommendation Five, and asked committee members for questions and comments. The Commission expressed that it planned to collaborate with other state agencies to fulfill this recommendation. Senator Richardson suggested utilizing technology to increase access to meetings without altering the physical location of the meetings. Chair Walsh agreed. Senator Pettyjohn expressed concern that meetings are held in New Castle and Kent County, and Sussex County residents may have a difficult time traveling to those locations. Senator Richardson asked if the location would be in Georgetown. Chair Christopher expressed concern that the Commission's current location does not have video capability (Adams State Service Center). Ms. Plerhopes clarified that the Committee does meet after business hours, so this will be a consideration. Representative Bennett asked to take into consideration the residents and where they live. Senator Pettyjohn expressed interest in making meetings more accessible to the public and stated that Georgetown is the county seat, and could serve as a convenient location for Sussex County commissioners and citizens to congregate. Representative Bolden motioned to adopt Recommendation Five, and was seconded by Representative Bennett. The motion carried 9 (Senators Walsh, Hansen, Pettyjohn, Richardson, Sokola; Representatives Bolden, Bennett, Dukes, and Spiegelman)-0, 1 absent (Representative Brady).

Chair Walsh read Recommendation Six, and asked Committee members for questions and comments. Representative Spiegelman some concerns regarding education and public record, which can negatively impact small businesses. Representative Spiegelman asked the Commission to clarify their responsibilities, especially in terms of its interactions with small businesses. Ms. Plerhopes clarified that the Commission does provide fair housing training for landlords. Representative Spiegelman expressed concern that a state agency can be perceived as threatening, and would like the Commission to have procedures in place to educate small businesses. Ms. Plerhopes clarified that the Commission frequently reviews regulations to

assure fairness to all parties involved. Senator Hansen asked if a complaint can remain anonymous. Representative Spiegelman clarified that he was concerned that a small business could feel intimidated by the complaint process. Senator Hansen asked if the act of filing the complaint with the Commission would be admitted to the public record. Chair Christopher clarified that complaints did become public record once filed. Representative Spiegelman and Senator Hansen both expressed concern that individuals could take advantage of the complaint process. Ms. Plerhoples clarified that many complaints are dismissed at the division level because they are not substantiated. Senator Sokola motioned to adopt Recommendation Six, and was seconded. The motion carried 9 (Senators Walsh, Hansen, Pettyjohn, Richardson, Sokola; Representatives Bolden, Bennett, Dukes, and Spiegelman)-0, 1 absent (Representative Brady).

Chair Walsh read Recommendation Seven, and asked Committee members for questions and comments. Representative Spiegelman asked for time to substantiate concerns that a constituent had regarding the process. Senator Sokola expressed interest in clarifying the language of the recommendation, to ensure that the Commission will be released upon review of any legislation. Representative Spiegelman expressed interest in gathering additional information in the event that the Committee would like to make another recommendation prior to the conclusion of the review process. Chair Walsh clarified that the Commission work with the Committee to receive all requested information. Senator Sokola motioned to table Recommendation Seven, and was seconded by Representative Spiegelman. The motion carried 9 (Senators Hansen, Pettyjohn, Richardson, Sokola; Representatives Bolden, Bennett, Dukes, and Spiegelman)-Senator Walsh-1, 1 absent (Representative Brady).

Chair Walsh announced that the next JLOSC meeting would take place on April 5, 2017, at 12:00pm to review recommendations for the Delaware Agricultural Farmland Preservation Foundation and the Delaware Information and Analysis Center.

Representative Spiegelman motioned to adjourn the meeting at 1:00pm, which was seconded by Vice Chair Bolden and carried 9 (Senators Walsh, Hansen, Pettyjohn, Richardson, Sokola; Representatives Bolden, Bennett, Dukes, and Spiegelman)-0, 1 absent (Representative Brady).

Respectfully prepared by:

Julie Fedele, Research Analyst-Joint Legislative Oversight and Sunset Committee.

Access to the audio recording of this proceeding is available upon request.