

September 17, 2018

The Plymouth Township Human Relations Commission held a public meeting at the Plymouth Township Building on Monday, September 17, 2018

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

The following were present:

Joretha Bourjolly	Human Relations Commission Member
Kathy Kempfer	Human Relations Commission Member
Amardeep Singh	Human Relations Commission Member
Maria Weidinger	Human Relations Commission Member

Karen Bramblett	Plymouth Township Council
-----------------	---------------------------

Carl Summerson, Judge for the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission (PHRC) for approximately thirty-four years, was present this evening. Judge Summerson congratulated the Township for creating the new Commission. Judge Summerson stated that it is important for the Human Relations Commission to respect the civil rights of individuals.

Judge Summerson reviewed the Township ordinance with the Human Relations Commission.

Judge Summerson outlined the requirements of the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act. He proposed a Memo of Understanding between the State and local communities. The authorization of Council to create this Commission comes from the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act.

The Township Commission has the power to seek to have an effort of mediation.

The Township ordinance states that if mediation fails, the individual can take the case to the Common Pleas Court. However, the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act dictates that a person can't take the case to the Court of Common Pleas unless a year has passed or the PHRC closes the case after the PHRC initiates State procedures. This procedure does match the wording in our ordinance however, it must be clarified with legal counsel.

The Memorandum of Understanding is important. The Township Human Relations Commission must inform an individual that comes before them that they should file with the PHRC at the same time. The person filing the appeal must do this. Most individuals are not aware that there is a State agency for this. Individuals deserve to have their rights pursued. There is a window of 180 days from the incident in which to file an appeal. The Township Human Relations Commission should encourage the complainant to file at the State level at the same time they file at the local level.

The PHRC will investigate to determine if there is discrimination. 50% of cases are dismissed with 36% settled. Administrative procedures must be followed as set forth the PA Human Relations Act.

Mr. Summerson stressed "Don't let someone lose their rights", and don't clog the courts with cases until a year has gone by. When the complainant appeals to the State level there is an investigation process, a prosecutory process and lastly is the adjudicatory process.

The Township ordinance is created under the powers of the Commonwealth. The provisions of the Township ordinance are done in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act.

The one thing that the Township ordinance does not cover is age discrimination.

Mr. Summerson and the Human Relations Commission discussed ethnic intimidation discrimination, and hate crimes.

Mr. Singh nominated Maria Weidinger to serve as Chairperson, citing that her knowledge of Township procedures would be beneficial to the Commission. The members agreed and Ms. Weidinger accepted the position of Chairwoman.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Mary Beth Jamison
Recording Secretary