

REVISED 07/03/14

**Minutes of the Fair Housing Task Force
Wednesday, June 11, 2014
Village Hall - Room 101**

Present: Members Pat Cesario, Joi Cregler, Larry Fraze, Gloria Merrill, Dawn Mueller, John Murtagh, Fr. George Omwando, Bill Planek, Bob Tucker

Absent: Chair Glenn Brewer; Members Andrea Ott and Meg Herman

Also Present: Development Customer Services Director Tammie Grossman, Community Relations Director Cedric Melton, Village Attorney Paul Stephanides; Oak Park Residence Corporation Executive Director Maria Saldana

1. Call to Order

Acting Chair/Member Tucker called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

See above. It was announced that member Scott Jensen will no longer serve on the Task Force due to his moving out-of-state and that Larry Fraze will be taking his place for the purposes of this meeting.

3. Approval of Minutes

It was moved by Member Merrill and seconded by Member Cregler to approve the minutes of the meeting of May 28, 2014. A voice vote was taken and the minutes were approved as presented.

4. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

5. Work Plan Review

Acting Chair Tucker announced that the Work Plan was previously approved.

6. Information Interviews

A. Sherlynn Reid:

Ms. Reid stated that she moved to Oak Park in 1968 and her family was the first black family to get a mortgage and buy a home in Oak Park. She moved to Oak Park shortly after

the Village's Fair Housing Ordinance was passed. She worked for the Village beginning in 1973 as a Community Relations representative. She was named the Community Relations Director in 1977. She worked for the Village for 27 ½ years.

During her tenure, the Village worked on the goal that no residential rental building would be identified by its racial make-up. Ms. Reid worked to conciliate discrimination complaints with regard to fair housing at her level. Member Cregler asked Ms. Reid what happened if conciliation did not work? Ms. Reid stated that three (3) members of the Community Relations Commission would be assigned to a case. They would be given the background on the case and make a recommendation to the full Commission. The Commission would not impose monetary penalties or awards. It would impose stipulations on building owners, such as rent concessions. Cases could be taken to the federal level so that complainants could obtain monetary awards.

Ms. Reid was asked about community education efforts during her tenure. She stated that education efforts took many different forms. The most crucial element for these efforts was confidentiality so that questions could be asked freely she stated. Member Cesario asked how many cases involved people with disabilities. Ms. Reid stated 8-10%.

Ms. Reid stated that 5% or less of the cases she had during her tenure preceded to the Commission level. Conciliation was the goal, which produced results in a quicker and more efficient manner. Ms. Reid was asked by Member Murtagh whether current processes need to be updated regarding enforcement related to the Community Relations Commission pursuant to the Village Code and Ms. Reid agreed. Ms. Reid also discussed how the membership of the Commission was constituted during her tenure and the need to update the Code so that it is consistent with how the Commission is constituted.

Member Planek asked what could be improved or done differently regarding fair housing in Oak Park? She stated that more persons could be out in the community promoting fair housing and she also recommended more testing be performed.

B. Camille Wilson White:

Ms. Wilson White spoke regarding a fair housing complaint concerning herself and her fiancé at the time, and now current husband, which occurred in 1976 in Oak Park. Ms. White filed a complaint with the village regarding a landlord that showed an apartment to her. She was notified by Ms. Reid that a white tester had been approved for the apartment.

Ultimately, they did not rent the apartment that was the subject of the complaint. Member Cregler asked her to describe the processing of the complaint. Ms. White stated that the complaint went through the Community Relations Commission process and a hearing was conducted at which the landlord testified. Ms. Wilson White stated that complaint was handled very well. The ultimate outcome of the complaint was that a public apology was ordered from the landlord and the landlord was deemed to be in violation of the Village's Fair Housing Ordinance for 10 days.

7. Scheduling of Next Meeting Interviews

Community Relations Director Cedric Melton stated that he is working on setting the interviews for the June 25, 2014 Task Force meeting. Development Customer Services Director Tammie Grossman stated that July 9, 2014 is the tentative date for the HOPE Fair Housing interview.

8. Next Steps

The Task Force will hold its next meeting on June 25, 2014.

9. Adjourn

It was moved by Member Planek and seconded by Member Cregler to adjourn the meeting at 8:43 p.m. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved.