



# METROPOLITAN HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

**January 19, 2017**  
**4:30 PM**  
**METRO CONFERENCE ROOM**  
**2310 PARNELL AVENUE**  
**FORT WAYNE, IN 46805**

**Meeting called by:** STATUTORY MONTHLY MEETING  
**Type of meeting:** FIRST MONDAY OF EACH MONTH  
**Note taker:** SAMANTHA CHENERY, ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT IV

**Metro Commissioners:** Dorian Maples, Chair; Rick Trevino, Vice Chair; Larry Wardlaw, Michelle Chambers, Kody Tinnel, Lana Keesling and Frances Ganaway

## **Agenda**

Call to Order  
Roll Call of Commissioners  
Reading of Minutes  
Office Report  
Old Business  
New Business  
Concerns/Comments from the Public  
Adjournment

Call to Order and Roll Call at 4:36 p.m.

Commissioners Maples, Trevino, Wardlaw, Keesling and Tinnel Present.

**Other Staff Persons Present:** Dawn Cummings, Executive Director  
Nikki Quintana, Staff Attorney  
Samantha Chenery, Admin IV  
Mark Burks, Investigator

**OLD BUSINESS:**

A. Review of the memo to the Commission drafted by Director Cummings discussing the document sent to City Council on December 6, 2016 concerning the Chronic Problem Property Ordinance “CPP” (approved by the Commission at the November 2016 meeting) and the events leading to its dissemination to City Council, the Northeast Apartment Association, and Upstar Alliance. Director Cummings expressed that her main concern was the derogatory comments made at the table of City Council about Metro. She stated the staff at Metro did not deserve to be treated in that manner.

Commissioner Wardlaw asked why the memo was sent. Commissioner Keesling then stated she did not ask for the letter, she stated that she was just looking for clarification from Director Cummings. Director Cummings states her interpretation was that Commissioner Keesling wanted the document sent to Council.

Further discussion ensued and Commissioner Keesling said that Pone from the Realtors Association had a copy of the letter in her hand when they met. Director Cummings stated for the record that she never gave it to her or anyone else until after she had released it to the City Council via Commissioner Keesling. When asked, Commissioner Keesling confirmed she did not have a copy of the document in the possession of Pone. Keesling said she could only verify it was on white paper and said “draft” across it and that it was not on city letter head. She also verified that Pone and members of the Apartment Association had various meetings with Councilman and discussion about the memo was going around so that is how the Councilman new of it. Keesling also stated that Councilman Crawford told her that he didn’t know the memo existed prior to December 6<sup>th</sup> and Commissioner Trevino confirmed that is what he had heard as well.

Director Cummings verified that what was written in the memo is what was conveyed to the City Attorney’s office when they had their brief meeting with Director Cummings; Commissioner Trevino also verified that is what he had heard as well. Commissioner Trevino also went on to say that the City Attorney’s office can’t really say they were shocked by the information in the memo since that same information had already been shared with them during that meeting.

Commissioner Keesling stated that she didn’t feel like Metro should be taking sides. She also expressed concern about the fact that we only had one meeting with the city attorney’s office. Director Cummings pointed out that she was more than willing to meet with them again. She only had the one meeting because that was all they requested. During that meeting with the City Attorney’s office, Director Cummings voiced her concerns and explained their possible liabilities and did let them know she would be available should they have any other questions. Director Cummings met several times with the Apartment Association and the Realtors Association always at their request. Director Cummings went on to point out that her issue isn’t whether or not someone agrees with her legal position in the memo, her issues is the fact that she is being accused of lying about the dissemination of the document.

Commissioner Keesling stated she and Director Cummings had a lengthy conversation. She claims that Councilman Crawford told her that he was going to call on her during the Council meeting that evening (December 6, 2016) to speak on behalf of Metro if she didn’t produce something to give to Council. This statement provoked some concern about potential conflict for Commissioner Keesling since she is not only a Metro Commissioner but also the City Clerk. Director Cummings clarified that she would not have approached City Council without that phone call from Commissioner

Keesling.

Commissioner Tinnel then asked Commissioner Keesling what the standard operating procedure was for how City Council gets information from departments. Commissioner Keesling explained they just hired a City Council Administrator and she is who would normally handle that sort of thing; however, for the past year or so they did not have anyone in that position so Commissioner Keesling, as City Clerk, was filling that void.

The conversation shifted back to the City Attorney's office and the fact that Malak Heiny from the City Attorney's office was telling everyone that Metro's stance was that everything was fine with the ordinance. Commissioner Keesling asked Director Cummings why when she sent the document to the Apartment Association and the Realtors on December 6<sup>th</sup> after sending it to Commissioner Keesling for Council, why she didn't then send a copy to the city legal department as well. Director Cummings admitted she did not think to send them a copy. They never asked for a copy and she never sent it. She re-iterated that everything in that memo was what she had already told them verbally in their meeting plus some scenarios. She sent it to the associations because they had been repeatedly asking for it.

B. At this point the conversation turned to the quotes made by Councilman Hines during the discussion about the CPP document at the December 6, 2016 City Council meeting. Dawn read several direct quotes (same quotes that were read at the January 9<sup>th</sup> Metro meeting) and discussed her frustration with his disparaging comments about the Commission. Commissioner Tinnel highlighted that what Director Cummings was trying to accomplish with the memo was to educate; however, it appears that Council and others took it as a position statement, which was not its intention. Commissioner Wardlaw indicated he felt like Metro needed to make a statement and clarify the intentions of the Commission. He suggested we need to defend Metro and our staff and educate Council as to what Metro is and what we do. Commissioner Trevino asked both Commissioner Keesling and Director Cummings if either of them was asked by City Council about the document to which they both responded "no".

Commissioner Keesling expressed concern about her involvement with both the City Council and the Commission, and admitted that she needs to stay out of any request from them. She also indicated that she has never heard Councilman Hines speak negatively of Director Cummings or Metro prior to or since the December 6<sup>th</sup> meeting. She believes it was directed at City Council to point out the timing seemed peculiar. There was discussion about how Metro should handle issues with City Council in the future. It was decided that the new administrator for the Council should contact Director Cummings or the Commission Chair directly regarding any questions or requests. As far as how to move forward with City Council, it was determined that the Commission Chair and Director Cummings and any other Commissioners that were available (limited to know more than 3 total at one time) would request to meet with each Councilman and have a brief meeting to discuss Metro, and clear up any confusion

D. Personnel Committee – Commission Chair Trevino, Vice-Chair Tinnel, and Commissioner Keesling will serve as the Personnel Committee

E. Continuation of investigating complaints against the City of Fort Wayne – Commissioner Keesling expressed that Councilman Didier expressed his desire to not have Metro investigate city complaints and feels these complaints should be transferred to Indy. Upon review of the ordinance, it was determined by Commissioner Trevino that we should in fact continue to investigate complaints made against the City of Fort Wayne. Commissioner Trevino did however suggest that

we create a waiver of release making sure employees understand they are choosing to file here and that we are in fact a City of Fort Wayne department just so that there is no issue brought up down the road.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- Election of Officers – Commissioner Trevino was nominated and approved and accepted the position of Chair, and Commissioner Tinnel was nominated, approved and accepted the position as Vice Chair.
- Pitney Bowes Contract – new three year lease agreement, same price as before, \$81.00 quarterly, voted and approved
- Mark re-introduced himself since some of the Commissioners were absent at the last meeting
- Commissioner Wardlaw made final comments complimenting Commissioner Maples on her work as the Commissioner Chair for the past two years and thanked her for her service, Director Cummings did as well.

**CONCERNS FROM THE PUBLIC:**

**MEETING ADJOURNED at 5:42 PM**