

991374

**BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITY
AFFIRMATIVE ACTION/CHARTER OFFICER**

May 4, 2000

To: Members of The Blue Ribbon Commission

From: Rodney J. Long, Chairman, Blue Ribbon Commission

RE: Report to City Commission on May 8, 2000, 3:00 p.m.

Enclosed, please find a copy of the report to be presented to the City Commission at their next meeting. I encourage each of you to attend the meeting in support of the recommendations. If for some reason you are unable to attend, please contact me at 374-2245.

Looking forward to seeing you at the May 8, 2000, City Commission meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rodney J. Long", written over a circular scribble.

*Rodney J. Long, Chairman, Blue Ribbon Commission
cc. Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Commission
Charter Officers*

**BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITY
AFFIRMATIVE ACTION/CHARTER OFFICER**

May 8, 2000

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of The City Commission

From: Rodney J. Long, Chairman of The Blue Ribbon Commission

REF: Recommendations on EEO/Affirmative Action/Charter Officer

At your April 24, 2000, City Commission meeting, you requested that the Blue Ribbon Commission reconvene in order to provide you with a final report to be presented at the May 8, 2000, Commission meeting (see attached).

As you may recall, the City Commission on January 24, 2000, adopted the Blue Ribbon Commission revised proposed Charter Amendment Bill and referred the same to our Legislative Delegation for implementation. On March 6, 2000, the City Commission adopted a resolution in support of the proposed bill (see attached). Representative Cynthia Chestnut, to her credit, filed House Bill 1839 on March 9, 2000, and withdrew it on March 29, 2000, because no companion bill was filed in the Senate before the deadline for filing local bills (see attached legislative history). As chairman of the Committee, I took for granted that members of our delegation would carry out the wishes of their constituents without involving their personal views, personality conflicts and politics. I was wrong. Because of a short timeline, I take full responsibility for not developing a strategy involving the members of the Blue Ribbon Commission, the City Commission and staff for success of the bill.

Since the bill's failure, a great deal of finger pointing has occurred. It is not our intent to list the reasons given by members of the delegation or others for the bill's failure, but, to recommend a course of action to accomplish the objective of the City Commission and the Blue Ribbon Commission. Even though I and other members of the Commission are disappointed, we are not discouraged. As a matter of fact, we are encouraged by the fact that we will have a NEW Legislative Delegation after the elections this fall.

The Blue Ribbon Commission reconvened on May 2, 2000, to consider your referral. The following are unanimous recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission:

Recommendations

1. The City Commission resubmit the proposed Charter Amendment Bill along with a resolution of support to our new Legislative Delegation upon their swearing in this fall and to make the Bill a City priority in the 2000-2001 session. This will give us a longer timeline and a better opportunity to work closely with members of the new delegation and solidify our sponsors.

**BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITY
AFFIRMATIVE ACTION/CHARTER OFFICER**

page.....2

2. Even though there would be no fiscal impact in the fiscal year 2001 budget for the proposed Charter Officer of Equal Opportunity, if it is approved in next year's session there will be an impact in the fiscal year 2002 budget. Since the City plans budgets in two year cycles, we recommend the City Commission direct the City Manager to begin planning now for the fiscal impact of the new proposed Charter Officer of Equal Opportunity, including one Executive Assistant, one Equal Opportunity Officer (for internal investigations), one Support Staff position and start up costs so that funding over a four- year, two budget cycle may begin in fiscal 2002.

3. As an interim measure, we recommend the City Commission direct the City Attorney to prepare an ordinance, to be reviewed by the Blue Ribbon Commission prior to submission to the City Commission, which incorporates those provisions of the Bill consistent with placing the direct appointment and supervision of the Office of Equal Opportunity, as proposed by the Blue Ribbon Commission, under of the authority of the City Auditor.

4. Pending adoption of the proposed ordinance, the Blue Ribbon Commission recommends that the City Commission direct the City Attorney, City Auditor and Equal Opportunity Director to prepare a resolution to be adopted at the May 15, 2000, City Commission meeting which accomplishes this change.

The following are recommendations previously submitted to the City Commission for consideration at the January 24, 2000, meeting and which require action:

1. Regardless of the outcome of the Charter Amendment Bill, the City Commission direct the City Manager to adopt the fiscal and organizational change necessary to implement the reclassification of the MBE Coordinator position to a department head position to be effective as of October 1, 2000.

2. The City Commission direct the City Auditor to include in the scope of his duties compliance audits on all human relations programs.

3. The City Commission appoint members to the Equal Opportunity Diversity Council, as approved by the City Commission several years ago.

4. The City Commission direct the City Attorney to draft an ordinance adopting the internal investigative process for complaints of discrimination, retaliation, harassment, and other related matters as described in the current Equal Opportunity Handbook.

5. The City Commission should adopt measurable performance-based goals for all city supervisory administrators in order to achieve affirmative action and equal opportunity objectives..

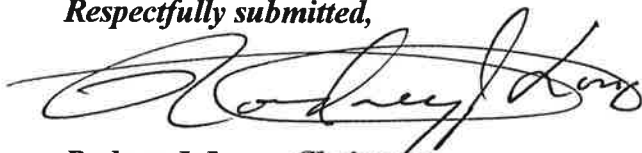
**BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITY
AFFIRMATIVE ACTION/CHARTER OFFICER**

page...3

- 6 ♦ *The City Commission authorize the Blue Ribbon Commission to continue in existence until the completion of the transition of the proposed Charter Office of Equal Opportunity to the City Auditor.*

In closing, the members of the Blue Ribbon Commission would like to once again thank the City Commission for the opportunity to serve. For nearly a year, we have worked to provide recommendations and solutions to some of the problems of race relations in our city. We are confident that the Charter Amendment Bill once approved, would address the structural problems that currently exist pertaining to the investigation of discrimination complaints filed by city employees. This interim change will give needed autonomy to the Equal Opportunity function and provide useful experience by which Citizens and the City Commission could measure the efficacy of the proposed new office. It is our hope that the City Commission will take immediate action on each of the above recommendations.

Respectfully submitted,



*Rodney J. Long, Chairman
Blue Ribbon Commission on Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action/Charter Officer*

*cc. Charter Officers
Blue Ribbon Commission Members*