

DOVER HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

The Dover Human Relations Commission (DHRC) met on January 21, 2026, at 6:26 p.m., with Chairman Mishoe Sudler presiding. Members present were Ms. Brinkley, Ms. White, Ms. Mullen, and Mr. Lott. Mr. Fleming and Mr. Faust were present.

Staff members present were Ms. Wheeler.

OPEN FORUM

The Open Forum was held at 6:02 p.m., prior to commencement of the Dover Human Relations Meeting.

Mr. Omari Muhammad, a Coalition of Dover member, stated that he came to try to gain a better understanding the purpose and mission of the Dover Human Relations Commission. From his understanding, the commission may have been formed following the killing of Reggie Hanna by police in the early 2000s, and if that was the case, he did not see how the current agenda reflected that history or addressed those types of issues. As he reviewed the agenda, he was unclear how items such as school programs, community programs, finance, and bylaws aligned with that original purpose. He asked for clarification on the commission's aim, what it was founded on, and how it planned to better engage the community and address serious concerns related to human relations.

Responding to Mr. Muhammad, Dr. Mishoe Sudler explained that the Dover Human Relations Commission, established in the early 2000s, worked to promote inclusion, fairness, and cultural competency in the city. The nine (9) member volunteer commission reviews policies, addresses discriminatory practices, and serves as a liaison between the community and city council. He noted that recent efforts included engaging residents at Barrister's Place to implement safety measures and maintain ongoing dialogue while advocating for community concerns.

Mr. Muhammad urged the Human Relations Commission to focus on its origins related to the killing of Reggie Hanna and address police misconduct, accountability, and community safety. He emphasized the need for the commission to engage with residents, advocate for justice, and prioritize unresolved cases affecting Black residents in Dover.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Ms. Brinkley moved for approval of the agenda, seconded by Mr. Faust, and unanimously carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS/UPDATES

Assessment

As it relates to their assessment, during their last meeting, Dr. Mishoe Sudler stated that he provided the assessment layout format, and he hoped that the board had a chance to review it along with their mission and vision statement, which needed to be incorporated into the assessment. He noted that they needed to ensure that the mission and vision being used were the correct versions. He also mentioned that he shared the strategic plan and the bylaws, which were available online. He asked the board to review those documents in their entirety and that he was only asking for their feedback on the mission and their vision. He also added to send any corrections they may have or send their approval if no changes need to be made.

Responding to Mr. Faust, Dr. Mishoe Sudler clarified that he would like the feedback before the next meeting.

Community Programs

Mr. Faust reported that he reached out to United Way to receive more 211 cards. He noted that it was difficult to contact them due to the holiday season. He mentioned that any board member needed any more cards to let him know.

Dr. Mishoe Sudler stated that Councilman Suler, along with Councilman Lewis, was planning a project with local business owners at the Forest Avenue and Salisbury Road intersection to address panhandling in the median. The effort would include outreach and assessment, with support from mental health crisis units through the Division of Health and Social Services, and was expected to last about four (4) hours. He noted that scheduled times would be shared once available. He also added that the city had begun engagement with Commissioner Brinkley, First District, to discuss ordinances and upcoming initiatives focused on mental health and addressing homelessness. Further details would be shared through the City Clerk's Office as plans are finalized.

School Programs

Bishop Lott stated that there was no report.

Dr. Mishoe Sudler stated that Chandra Jackson, President of the Capital School District School Board, was involved in upcoming efforts connected to the City of Dover's Opioid Task Force. He explained that there was a collaboration between the City and the Capital School District to support services for students, particularly given the district's large foster care population. Many of these students age out of foster care at 18 and have the opportunity to attend Delaware State University, where they were able to remain on campus year-round and continue their education, with the cost ultimately supported by taxpayers.

Responding to Bishop Lott, Dr. Mishoe Sudler stated that none of the commissioners were part of the Opioid Task Force.

Bishop Lott stated that she would like to be part of the Opioid Task Force and that he did foster care for 20 years, so he was familiar with everything that was mentioned by Dr. Mishoe Sudler.

Responding to Bishop Lott, Dr. Mishoe Sudler stated that he would discuss that with someone to get him on the task force.

Ms. Brinkley read the summary from the Ordinance #2025-21 – District 1(**Attachment #1**). She noted that the conversation ended with discussions about funding distributions, particularly regarding opioid related funds and the importance of forming partnerships and coalitions to address ongoing social and economic challenges in Dover. She added that they had individuals from the ACLU, which was Ms. Smack, community members, some from Housing Alliance Delaware, a few individuals from a not-for-profit, as well as Councilman Rocha.

Responding to Dr. Mishoe Sudler, Ms. Brinkley clarified that she would be joining the Assessment Committee.

Dr. Mishoe Sudler referred to the Proposed Ordinance #2025-21. He stated that there was some verbiage in the ordinance that needed to be changed and that, as a commission, they were tasked to make a stand and comment on whether it was fair or not. That was why they had been asked, both among themselves, to speak with residents to gather their feedback. He noted that the input would help them determine how the ordinance could be rewritten because, in its current form, he did not believe it was a good ordinance.

By-laws

Dr. Mishoe Sudler announced that there was no report to present at this time.

Finance

Responding to Dr. Mishoe Sudler, Ms. Wheeler stated a purchase was made for a polo shirt for the amount of \$25.10 for Ms. Brinkley. She stated that no other purchases have been made for the Human Relations Commission.

NEW BUSINESS

Dr. Mishoe Sudler had no new business.

Ms. White asked if they could extend an invitation to Kathy Jennings, Attorney General.

Dr. Mishoe Sudler recommended that Ms. Jennings come to the Human Relations Commission meeting as well.

Open Discussion

Mr. George King stated that he was a lifelong resident of Dover and that he was a member of the Coalition of Dover, located at 329 West Loockerman Street, on the corner of Queen and Loockerman. He noted that they would be holding a meeting on February 19th from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., sometimes extending to about 7:30 p.m. He also added that anyone was welcome to attend.

ADJOURNMENT BY 7:00 P.M.

Chairman Mishoe Sudler moved for adjournment of the Dover Human Relations Commission (DHRC) meeting, hearing no objection, the meeting adjourned at 7:03 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 7:03 p.m.

Travis Mishoe Sudler, I
Chair

TMS/cw

Attachments

Attachment #1 – Ordinance #2025-21 – District 1

Ordinance #2025-21 – District 1**January 14, 2026****7:00 pm via zoom****Summary**

The meeting focused on addressing safety concerns in Dover, particularly regarding pedestrian behavior and median usage, with discussions centered on potential solutions like installing fences and exploring state funding options. The group explored various approaches to address homelessness and economic challenges in the city, including community outreach efforts, coalition building, and the potential expansion of services and resources. The conversation ended with discussions about funding distributions, particularly regarding opioid-related funds, and the importance of forming partnerships and coalitions to address ongoing social and economic challenges in Dover.

Dover Pedestrian Safety Ordinance Discussion

The meeting focused on discussing a proposed ordinance in Dover that restricts pedestrians from approaching moving vehicles and standing in road medians for extended periods. Justina, the First District Commissioner, led the discussion and emphasized the need for practical solutions to address safety concerns. Bill Faust suggested installing fences or gates on medians to prevent people from standing there, which Shannon Saunders supported. Gerald Rocha noted that many roads in Dover are owned by the state, which could complicate efforts to implement such solutions. The group agreed to further explore the feasibility of these ideas and consider advocating for state funding if necessary.

Safety Improvements for High-Traffic Areas

The meeting focused on addressing safety concerns in high-traffic areas, particularly Forest Avenue and Salisbury Road in District 1. Councilman Rocha emphasized the urgency of the situation, citing instances of individuals attempting to use the median for wheelchair access despite safety risks. The group discussed potential solutions, including exploring state funding options and collecting accident statistics, though Rocha stressed that immediate action is needed regardless of available data. Travis proposed holding town hall meetings to gather input from constituents and suggested developing a comprehensive treatment center for affected individuals, combining mental health, financial, and educational support services.

Addressing Median Safety Concerns

Vonda expressed concerns about individuals on city medians and proposed solutions, including creating a job position for community outreach, connecting with nonprofits for services, and rewording the ordinance to avoid constitutional issues. She emphasized the need for more resources, treatment centers, and housing solutions in Dover. Travis suggested forming a task force similar to Atlanta's Warrant Police to address safety concerns on medians and streets. Both Vonda and Travis highlighted the importance of community involvement and collaboration with stakeholders to address these issues effectively.

Homelessness Solutions and Resource Coordination

The meeting focused on addressing issues related to homelessness and the use of hotels for housing through voucher programs. Travis emphasized the need for accountability from hotels receiving funding, suggesting measures like fencing, surveillance, and monitoring for illegal activities. The group discussed the importance of forming a coalition of non-profit organizations to better manage resources and write grants collectively. Justina highlighted the availability of funding from the Delaware State Housing Authority and FHL Bank for organizations working in this area. The participants agreed on the need to educate the community about available resources and to revive a dormant city grant-writing initiative, with volunteers offering to assist. Vonda shared positive outcomes from recent efforts to address median-related issues and emphasized the importance of continued community engagement and police involvement.

Nonprofit Funding and Economic Solutions

The meeting focused on the impact of federal funding cuts on local nonprofits, particularly those addressing mental health, addiction, and homelessness. Vonda highlighted the layoffs at a 100-year-old nonprofit and emphasized the need for solutions, including state legislative involvement and the potential expansion of the Hope Center to Kent and Sussex counties. Travis suggested bringing a major industry, such as hemp agriculture, to Dover to create jobs and stimulate the local economy, with potential partnerships with Delaware Tech for education and training.

Dover Economic and Social Development

The meeting focused on addressing economic and social challenges in Dover, with Travis highlighting the city's ranking of 45th in education and the need for economic development. Gerald discussed the recently signed 50-year joint use agreement with Dover Air Force Base, which he believes will attract industries to the area over the next 3-5 years. The group also discussed potential solutions for homelessness and panhandling, including the idea

of providing vouchers for food and shelter, though concerns about labor laws were raised. Vonda suggested that non-profits need to be more proactive in outreach efforts, and the group discussed the possibility of acquiring properties for non-profit use, though Gerald explained that the city lacks suitable land for such purposes.

Opioid Funding and Community Support

The meeting focused on funding discussions, particularly regarding opioid-related funds and their distribution. Gerald emphasized the need for direct support for affected communities, noting Dover's involvement in the original lawsuit and subsequent partnership with the state. Travis and Vonda discussed the misinformation about the amount of funding available, with Gerald clarifying that it was more than hundreds of thousands. The group also touched on coalition building strategies, with Gerald recommending the "Communities That Care" framework as a potential guide. Justina expressed interest in bringing together various entities to discuss these topics further.