

Minutes of the Maryland Stem Cell Research Commission

Tuesday, February 17, 2009
UMB BioPark, Baltimore, MD

Action Items from February 17, 2009

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- 1. The Commission created an RFI Subcommittee (Murray Sachs, Ira Schwartz, and Bowen Weisheit) to conduct an extensive analysis of the submitted RFI responses and report by email to the full Commission before the April meeting.**
 - 2. The Commission created a Bio Ethics Subcommittee (Karen Rothenberg, Joseph Capizzi, Jeremy Sugarman, and Joel Zaiman) to consider effective mechanisms regarding ethical oversight issues and report to the full Commission at a future meeting.**
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Members in attendance:

Joseph Capizzi
Brenda Crabbs, Vice Chair
Diane Griffin
Margaret Conn Himelfarb
Linda Powers
Suzanne Ostrand-Rosenberg
Karen Rothenberg, Chair
Murray Sachs
Steven Salzberg
Ira Schwartz
Jeremy Sugarman
Bowen Weisheit

Others in attendance:

Dan Gincel (TEDCO)
Renee Winsky (TEDCO)

The Commission meeting was called to order at 2:15 p.m.

Dr. Gincel announced the resignation of Commission member Gloria Marrow (an appointee of House of Delegates Speaker Busch). The Commission currently has an opening for a prospective candidate who is a Maryland resident and has biotechnology experience. Staff will work with Speaker Busch on the appointment.

I. Approval of Minutes

The Commission considered the minutes of November 18, 2008. A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.

II. Administrative Report

Dr. Gincel provided an update on administrative activities.

A. Maryland Stem Cell Research Symposium / 2009 World Stem Cell Summit

The 1st Annual Maryland Stem Cell Symposium, held on December 3, 2008, was a huge success that attracted great media coverage and over 300 attendees, of which 200 were stem cell researchers. The 2009 Stem Cell Symposium will be incorporated into the World Stem Cell Summit, which will be held at the Baltimore Convention Center September 21-23, 2009. The Genetics Policy Institute is the primary organizer for the event. They are currently collaborating with five additional organizing partners in Maryland, including TEDCO and the MSCRF. In particular, the MSCRF will organize and support the scientific poster session.

B. Events & Future Meetings

- The ~~%~~Accidental Advocate+movie screening was held in Baltimore in January; several Commission Members attended.
- The Interstate Alliance on Stem Cell Research (IASCR) will meet in Washington, D.C., May 5-6, 2009.
- Dr. Gincel will participate at the International BIO Conference, May 18-21, 2009, in Atlanta, GA.

C. MSCRF Scientific Peer Review Study Section

The FY 2009 Scientific Peer Review Process is currently underway. The Peer Review Committee has been established and each reviewer has been assigned applications for review. The initial review process will be a closed session and take place in March 2009. The Peer Review Committee's scientific rankings and critiques of the FY 2009 applications will be presented to the Commission for review and recommendation during a closed session meeting, which will be held at the TEDCO Office on April 23 and 28 (if needed). The Commission's recommendations will be considered by the TEDCO Board of Directors on May.

D. 2009 General Assembly Session

The 2009 General Assembly session began in January. The budget hearing for TEDCO and the MSCRF is scheduled for February 26 before the House Subcommittee and February 27 before the Senate Subcommittee. Commission Chair Karen Rothenberg and TEDCO President Renee Winsky were asked to brief the Health Government and Operations Committee (HGO) on the MSCRF Program on January 21.

Delegate Brian Feldman and several other legislators introduced House Bill 1159 which would revise the 2006 Maryland Stem Cell Research Act. Some of the revisions would result in revisions to current policies and procedures, and would alter the initial purpose of the fund to support biotechnology, as well as stem cell research.

Commission members expressed several concerns surrounding policy issues defined in the proposed Bill. There was consensus that an extensive discussion

regarding the policy concerns will be addressed in accordance to the meeting agenda.

III. Maryland Science Center Request for Funding

The Maryland Science Center submitted a request to the Commission to support the new Stem Cell Exhibit opening in March. The funds would be used provide updates to the interactive videos and interviews of MSCRF awardees that are featured in the exhibit. The exhibition would emphasize the nature and successes of the performed research enabled by the MSCRF. Although the Commission expressed great regard towards the concept of commemorating the successes of stem cell research enabled by the MSCRF, the Commission concluded that the MSCRF is not an appropriate source for funding an educational exhibition. There was a consensus to decline the Maryland Science Center's request for funding.

IV. Shared Facility RFI Answers

Dr. Gincel presented a total five RFI responses which the Commission was provided in advance of the meeting. During the discussion, the Commission decided to establish a subcommittee of interested commission members and qualified scientists who will conduct an extensive analysis of the submitted RFI responses, which may include follow-up interviews with the individuals and organizations who submitted responses. The subcommittee may also determine the necessities that could make stem cell research more efficient in Maryland. In addition, the subcommittee will generate a draft RFA should they deem it necessary to present to the Commission for review.

Commission members Murray Sachs, Ira Schwartz, and Bowen Weisheit agreed to participate on the subcommittee. The subcommittee will report via e-mail before the next Commission meeting on April 23, 2009.

V. Strategic Discussion on Overarching Policy Questions

Dr. Gincel presented a list of categorized policy questions for the Commission to review. Questions were generated from prior Commission meetings and additional staff input. The Commission conducted an extensive discussion regarding the policies and the need to define parameters for future RFA evaluations.

The interest to foster collaborations stimulated a discussion on collaborative policies. There was a consensus that encouraging collaborative research between academia and private companies may resolve many of the overarching policy issues, including the potential issues defined in Delegate Feldman's proposed legislation.

The recognition of ethical oversight issues generated extensive discussion. There were a few suggestions regarding effective mechanisms to resolve the underlying issues. During the discussion, the Commission decided that a subcommittee made up of the four members with ethics expertise (Karen Rothenberg, Joseph Capizzi, Jeremy Sugarman, and Joel Zaiman) should meet with Dr. Gincel and Ms. Winsky for further discussion and to develop a resolution to the ethical oversight and to present the recommendation(s) to the Commission for review at a future meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.