

Another Constitutional Milestone Reached

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To facilitate the constitutional progress, a permanent, non-partisan Constitutional Commission was established after the Appointed Day. This followed the dissolution of the Constitutional Review Secretariat, which guided the implementation of the 2009 Constitution. The main roles of the independent Constitutional Commission are providing oversight, public education and awareness. Its functions are to advise government on questions concerning constitutional development and to publish reports and discussion papers.

This Commission is required to have a chairman and two other members, with at least one being a lawyer. The Governor's appointment of these members involves input from the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition. The Commission also seeks to promote an understanding and awareness of the Constitution and its values; while also overseeing the implementation of the 2009 document, and its continued development and evolution.

The Cayman Islands' three Constitutional Commissioners were formally introduced, and their immediate priorities explained, during a press conference in March this year. The Commission is chaired by Pastor Al Ebanks and includes Attorney Mrs. Julene Banks and Chamber of Commerce CEO Mr. Wil Pineau.

This trio will work both independently from and in conjunction with the two other recently-established commissions: the Human Rights Commission and the Commission for Standards in Public Life to ensure their mandates under the constitution are met. Appointments are still to be made to the fourth Constitutional body – the Judicial and Legal Services Commission.

The Commissioners are now developing a plan of action that clearly defines their roles and responsibilities which will be followed by an organizational phase, a public education phase, a public consultation phase; as well as research and expert consultation. The work to be undertaken for each of these phases will often take place concurrently. Also to follow will be the production of reports and advisory documents, aimed at assisting government on matters of national importance, especially as they relate to the Constitution. These initiatives can be undertaken either at government's request, or may be initiated by the Commission.

The Commission receives administrative support from the Constitutional Secretariat. The recently appointed Manager Deborah Bodden currently leads a team of two analysts – Miss. Laura Jackson and Mr. Jason Webster. Also on staff is Office Administrator Doralyn Stewart.

Contact with any of the commissions can be made through The Secretariat which is located on the second floor of the Professional Centre on Smith Road (the same location as Elections Office), call (345)244-3685, or email Deborah.bodden@gov.ky for more information or to make enquiries. The Constitutional Commission, as well as the other newly formed Commissions, are currently in the process of creating their own websites, however, for background information on the Constitution development process thus far, visit: www.constitution.gov.ky.