



**Cambridge Human Rights Commission
Thursday, June 1, 2023
Virtual Public Meeting**

Present: Chair Judith Laguerre, and Commissioners Josh Stadlan, Stephen Curran, Mercedes Evans, Stefanie Haug, Olinda Marshall, Sabrina Selk, Deputy Superintendent Fred Cabral.

City Staff: Director of Operations Sarah Binney, and Derrick Neal, Chief Public Health Officer from Cambridge Health Alliance

Guest Presenter: Michele Scott, Community Safety Department

Absent: Commissioners Katie Stack, Kaleigh Callender, Yasmin Padamsee Forbes, and Bonita Cox. Attorney Investigator Carolina Almonte

1. Call to Order:

- Chair Laguerre called the meeting to order at 6:13pm.

2. Public Comment

- No members of the public joined.

3. Review and approval of May 2023 Minutes

- The Commission reviewed the minutes from the meeting on May 4, 2023. Commissioner Stadlan moved to approve the minutes. Commissioner Haug seconded.

4. Guest Presenter – Michele Scott, Program Coordinator of Community Safety Department

- Michele Scott introduced herself and shared about the new Community Safety Department under the City Manager’s Office. Ms. Scott discussed the task force of stakeholders, visions of what an alternative emergency response would look like, and about the steering committee that was established to create a mission and vision for the department. She discussed the hiring of four Community Assistance Resources Engagement (CARE) team responders as well as other staff, with the hope of launching in the fall of 2023, and eventually building up greater capacity. The goal is to move to be a 24/7 response. Commissioner Laguerre asked about CARE responder qualifications, and Ms. Scott explained that they are looking for individuals with lived experience, individuals who are familiar with local resources and community, and individuals who can be flexible. The Community Safety Department is hoping to find responders of diverse backgrounds. The responders would work in teams of two, with different linguistic and cultural

competencies. The Department will also use a language line contract. Ms. Scott discussed the process of training responders that would be a combination of in-house and outside training in mental health first aid, domestic violence, conflict mediation, and de-escalation. The social worker in dispatch would be part of the training. Superintendent Cabral explained that in Cambridge, police do not dispatch, civilians do. Ms. Scott explained that to start, the calls that would be diverted to the CARE team would be wellness calls and some psychological and mental health calls, with a focus on populations that are unhoused, are using substances, and/or have mental health concerns.

- Commissioner Marshall asked about follow-up responses after emergency response. Ms. Scott explained having CARE team as well as other in-house staff would follow-up. Chair Laguerre asked about the process to section individuals. Ms. Scott explained that clinical in-house staff would be on call for those situations. The CARE team will mostly respond to calls independently of the police but would call the police as backup, if needed. Commissioner Stadlan asked if callers will be able to understand if CARE is coming versus police. Ms. Scott explained that callers will have the option to request CARE team. Commissioner Stadlan asked if there were limitations on CARE staff administratively where police would have to step in. Ms. Scott confirmed that there will be limitations. The Department staff visited Durham, North Carolina to learn from their Community Safety Department. Commissioner Haug asked about capturing data. Ms. Scott discussed the search for software that could capture whole interactions, being intentional to capture people instead of just incidents. The Department is doing outreach to individuals in the community as well as local organizations. Commissioner Evans asked about outreach to marginalized communities, and Ms. Scott confirmed that those communities will be contacted. Lastly, Ms. Scott discussed connections with other city departments and local organizations, such as the Multi-Service Center, First Step, and MDOT.

5. Staff report

- **Drop-in hours library**
 - CHRC will be present at the Housed-In Drop-In hours on Monday, June 5, 2023, at the Main Library in Cambridge. Anyone with questions about housing in Cambridge will be able to meet with city staff and have a one-on-one confidential appointment with CHRC staff or a housing advocate.
- **Glam Up and Go Pride Brunch**
 - The Office of Mayor Siddiqui and the Cambridge LGBTQ+ Commission will host a revamped version of the annual Pride Brunch on June 10, 2023 at 9:30am.

6. Old Business

- **Update from Commissioners on Board/Commission Connections**
 - Commissioner Evans discussed the recent meeting of the Bicycle Safety Commission. She discussed the effect of the elimination of parking for elderly groups, equity of the location of bike lanes, bike traffic violations, and how data is collected about bike safety.

7. New Business

- **Annual Safe Streets Gun Buyback Event**
 - Deputy Superintendent Fred Cabral shared that the 8th annual Safe Streets Gun Buyback event would take place on June 10, 2023 from 10am – 12pm at Reservoir Church, and Pentecostal Tabernacle.
- **Commissioner Presentations on Topics of Interest**
 - Chair Laguerre brought up the issue of rent control in Cambridge and the statewide ban on rent control.
- Chair Laguerre motioned to disband the Commission meetings for the months of July and August. Chair Laguerre, and Commissioners Stadlan, Curran, Evans, Marshall, and Selk, voted to approve. Commissioner Haug abstained. The motion passed so the next Commission meeting will be in September.

8. Adjournment

- Chair Laguerre moved to adjourn at 7:26pm, Commissioner Curran seconded.

The next Commission meeting will be on Thursday, September 7, 2023, virtually on Zoom.