



Cambridge Human Rights Commission
Thursday, April 9, 2015

Present: Commissioners Mercedes Evans, Melissa Gonzalez-Brenes, Chanta Bhan, Kerry Gough, Harry Reyes, Bonita Cox, Sabrina Selk, Nicholas Leydon, Zainab Lakhani, and CHRC staff Nancy Schlacter and Sabrina Acloque

Absent: Commissioners Kim Nghiem, Nadia Davila

Documents Used:

- February Minutes
- March Minutes
- Fact Sheet for Bill H.162 – An Act Relative to Promoting Fair Housing Practices
- Fact Sheet for Bill H.1301 – An Act to Increase Fair Housing Protections for Survivors of Domestic Violence
- Fact Sheet for Bill H.2049 – An Act Relative to Lead Abatement

1. Call to order

Chair Cox called the meeting to order at 6:12 p.m. No one was recording the meeting.

2. Public Comment

No public comment.

3. Review and Approval of February and March Minutes

Chair Cox motioned to replace the language in the March minutes regarding the health data gathering effort at Partners, to more accurately reflect Commissioner Reyes statements at March meeting, seconded by Commissioner Reyes. Commissioner Gonzalez-Brenes asked to clarify why Black Lives Matter folks were being invited again in May. Commissioner Gough stated that she motioned to invite them back at the Commission's March meeting.

Change March minutes under New Business to: – “Motion to move discussion of a CHRC Collaboration with the GLBT Commission to next month's agenda by Commissioner Gough, unanimously approved.”

Commissioner Bhan motioned to approve March minutes, seconded by Commissioner Reyes.

Change to February minutes – “Commissioner Nghiem suggested discussion of a Cambridge-based event in April commemorating the 2nd Anniversary of the Marathon bombing, perhaps in collaboration with the Peace Commission.”

Commissioner Bhan motioned to approve the February minutes, as amended, seconded by Commissioner Leydon.

4. Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Schlacter updated the Commission on cases and staff activities. New Commissioners will be trained on reviewing case determinations with more experienced Commissioners. ED Schlacter is collaborating with other City staff regarding possible support of a pending bill regarding recognizing domestic violence survivors as a protected class under C. 151B.

5. March meeting follow-up:

- Commissioner Bhan was elected by unanimous vote to become Chair. Commissioner Reyes was elected by unanimous vote to become Vice Chair. Commissioner Reyes motioned to review Commission regulations for clarification of term limits, seconded by Commissioner Selk.
- Commissioner Reyes indicated that he'd attend the May meeting of the GLBT Commission.
- Commissioner Davila attended the "Dismantling the School to Prison Pipeline" discussion at Cambridge Rindge and Latin School on March 23, 2015. ED Schlacter suggested moving the discussion of this event to the Commission's May meeting as Commissioner Davila was absent; unanimously approved by the Commissioners.

6. New Business

- ED Schlacter distributed fact sheets on 3 bills pending in the Massachusetts legislature that have impacts on Fair Housing concerning: lead abatement, recognizing survivors of domestic violence as a protected class under MGL c. 151B and requiring fair housing training for Real Estate brokers and agents. The Commissioners expressed interest in supporting the bills but want to learn more about them before determining how the Commission might support lobbying efforts. Commissioner Gonzalez-Brenes will contact the people listed on the fact sheets to get more information about the bills. Commissioner Gonzalez-Brenes will then contact the following Commissioners as a first point of contact regarding the information she obtains on each bill: Commissioner Cox regarding Bill H.162 – An Act Relative to Promoting Fair Housing Practices; Commissioner Bhan regarding Bill H.1301 – An Act to Increase Fair Housing Protections for Survivors of Domestic Violence; and Commissioner Selk regarding Bill H.2049 – An Act Relative to Lead Abatement. Commissioner Gonzalez-Brenes stated that she would contact someone from the Historical Commission to find a speaker to discuss lead paint issues.
- The following Commissioners stated they would staff CHRC's outreach table at the River Fest on Saturday, June 6, 2015 from 12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.: Commissioners Cox, Lakhani, Gough, Bhan, Selk and Leydon. CHRC will share its outreach table with the Commission for Persons with Disabilities.

7. Outreach Subcommittee for Commission's annual Fair Housing Ceremony

- Commissioner Selk stated that she talked to the Cambridge Friends School which was receptive to adding a human rights agenda to its curriculum. Commissioner Evans stated she would contact her Mass Art alumnae to find art teachers at Cambridge schools willing to participate in the Commission's Fair Housing Poster Contest in April 2016. ED Schlacter stated that she would continue outreach to the youth centers. Commissioner Reyes proposed having the Youth Programs Coordinator at the Cambridge Public Library sponsor a workshop for kids to make posters for the Fair Housing Contest. Commissioner Bhan proposed putting out flyers announcing the Commission's Fair Housing Contest at the River Fest in advance. Commissioner Cox proposed printing the Commission's current t-shirt design on paper for children to color at the River Fest. Commissioner Gough proposed the formation of a Fair Housing event subcommittee to plan and promote the Commission's Fair Housing awards ceremony in April, seconded by Commissioners Reyes and Cox.

8. Other Matters Discussed

- Commissioners Lakhani and Bhan stated that they will be doing a classroom presentation on April 13, 2015. Commissioner Reyes shared his ideas on making the classroom presentations more engaging.
- Commissioner Selk proposed bringing a speaker on helping pregnant women find housing. Commissioner Bhan proposed that this be scheduled for the fall to which everyone agreed by consensus.
- There was general consensus that a conciliation training should be scheduled for the Commissioners in October, 2015.

9. Agenda for May

- There was consensus to use part of the next Commission meeting for the subcommittees to meet
- Review the Commission's Fair Housing promotion materials
- Commissioner Leydon motioned to put/review our involvement with the Black Lives Matter group on the May agenda. It was not seconded.
- Identify the next steps to be followed up by the Outreach Subcommittee

Commissioner Cox motioned to adjourn meeting at 8:00 p.m.

Next Commission meeting will be Thursday, May 7, 2015 at 6:00 p.m.