



**Cambridge Human Rights Commission  
Thursday, September 8, 2022  
In-Person Public Meeting**

**Present:** Chair Joshua Stadlan, Commissioners Katie Stack, Stefanie Haug, Stephen Curran, Mercedes Evans, and Judith Laguerre.

City Staff: Executive Director Jennifer Mathews, Attorney Investigator Carolina Almonte, and Deputy Superintendent Fredrick Cabral

**Absent:** Commissioners Bonita Cox, Yasmin Padamsee Forbes, Sabrina Selk, Olinda Marshall, and Kaileigh Callender, and Language Access Manager Crystal Rosa

**Documents Used:**

- May 5, 2022 Minutes
- Redlined CHRC Rules of Procedure

**1. Call to Order**

Chair Stadlan called the meeting to order at 6:41 p.m. Chair Stadlan started off the meeting by inviting members of the Commission to introduce themselves and share a memorable moment from the summer or what draws them to the City of Cambridge.

**2. Public Comment**

No one was recording the meeting and Nick Prunier was present as a member of the public.

**3. Review and approval of May 2022 Minutes**

The Commission reviewed the minutes from the meeting on May 5, 2022. Commissioner Evans moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Curran. Minutes were approved by majority; Commissioner Stack abstained due to her absence.

**4. Staff Reports**

*ED & Attorney Investigator informational updates listed on the meeting agenda were provided to Commissioners prior to a quorum being present.*

**Rules of Procedure Amendments**

ED Mathews reviewed the proposed changes to the CHRC's Rules of Procedure. Changes were based on staff and Commissioner input at previous meetings, and included:

- Allowing for electronic filing/signing
- Specifying complaint (and related filings') format and maximum length
- Explicitly allowing Complainant opportunity for rebuttal of response/position statement, which is standard practice

- Adding a maximum limit on complaint amendments and clarifying the amendment process (for consistency with other rules)
- Expanding settlement agreement approval process to allow all Commissioners to review/sign

The Commission discussed all changes, asking clarifying questions when needed. Commissioner Curran also recommended replacing singular he/she pronouns with singular they/them/their. Commissioner Curran moved to submit the amendments to the City Solicitor and City Manager for review and amendment before any final Commission vote to approve. Commissioner Haug seconded. Commission unanimously approved referring the draft amendments, with the pronoun changes.

Commissioners also recommended reviewing the Rules every three (3) years for potential updates. Commissioner terms are three (3) years, so should be good timing.

### **Guidance for PDSA Reviews**

ED Mathews shared a selection of HUD guidance on conciliation agreements. Commissioners had previously expressed interest in guidance around reviewing CHRC settlement agreements (e.g., what are Commissioners looking for?). HUD guidance provides helpful background on the nature of these agreements and potential content. Not a direct overlap for CHRC, since HUD jurisdiction is limited to housing complaints. But helpful context. ED Mathews will share the electronic version.

## **5. Old Business**

### **Commission Working Groups & Connecting with Other Commissions**

Chair Stadlan referred to the [list of the City's other Boards and Commissions](#), which staff put together for the May Commission meeting. The Commissioners selected areas of interest from the list, to assume responsibility for learning about those commissions' work and/or connecting more directly.

- Liaison selections
  - Commissioner Evans – Environmental Justice
  - Commissioner Haug – Race/Equity/Inclusion
  - Commissioner Stack – Domestic Violence/Women's Rights
  - Commissioner Curran – Refugee & Immigrant Rights
  - Commissioner Laguerre – Health
  - Chair Stadlan – Homelessness & Housing
- The initial step for the volunteers include: Familiarizing themselves with the committee/topic and perhaps attending a meeting, if relevant. Commissioners are also encouraged to ask CHRC staff to make an introduction.

### **Chair Election Procedure and Dates**

The Commission discussed establishing a 2-year chair term, with a co-chair encouraged but not required. Staff and Commissioner did not have the Human Rights ordinance at hand but will check that possibility against ordinance requirements. To revisit and vote on at the next Commission meeting.

## **6. New Business**

### **Increased Connection with CPD**

ED Mathews discussed a potential referral-based partnership with CPD regarding hate crimes in Cambridge, with a focus on the Commission's involvement when complaints are outside of CPD's jurisdiction. Deputy Superintendent Cabral noted a shortage of good referral resources for individuals who have been victims of potential hate crimes. DS Cabral will send the most recent crimes report for staff to review and consider how many cases annually CHRC might have jurisdiction over. To discuss referral possibility further at next Commission meeting.

Commissioner Curran moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:58 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Haug.

**The next Commission meeting will be on Thursday, October 6, 2022, virtually on Zoom.**