



**Cambridge Human Rights Commission
Thursday, December 5, 2019**

Present: Co-Chair Mercedes Evans, Co-Chair Joshua Stadlan, Commissioners Olinda Marshall, Katie Stack, Bonita Cox, Kuong Ly, Sabrina Selk, Brandon Morgan, and Michael Kourabas.
City Staff: CHRC Staff: Executive Director Nancy Schlacter and Attorney Investigator Sabrina Acloque, and CHRC Project Coordinator Crystal Rosa

Absent: Commissioners Yasmin Padamsee Forbes and Attorney/Investigator Acloque

Documents Used:

- November Minutes

1. Call to Order

Co-chair Stadlan called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. No member of the public was present, and no one was recording the meeting.

2. Introduction of New Member

The members of the Commission introduced themselves to the newest member, Kaleigh Callender, who provided a brief summary of her professional and personal interests in human rights.

3. Presentation by Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD)

Kate Thurman, Project Coordinator for the CCPD, explained that the commission works to provide referrals and connect resources. CCPD works with residents, businesses, city departments and local places where people work, play and eat. CCPD provides technical assistance, trainings, ensures ADA compliance, and conducts site visits. CCPD works with other city departments, such as CDD and TPT, that work on projects and programs that improve and encourage prioritizing accessibility for all. Kate Thurman described some ongoing issues with support animals, limited access to closed captioning, and the undue burden of costs for reasonable accommodations. Kate Thurman explained how the city supports the needs of children with disabilities through the DHSP's Inclusionary Program, which serves families outside of school time.

4. Review and approval of November Minutes

The Commission reviewed the minutes from the November 7th meeting. Commissioner Ly moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Stadlan.

5. Executive Director's Report

ED Schlacter updated the members of the Commission on cases. Since the November meeting, two new cases were opened, resulting in four cases pending. Three of the four pending cases involve allegations of disability discrimination in housing. The other case involves allegations of discrimination based on the person's national origin and gender identity in public accommodations. ED Schlacter updated the Commission on staff training and activities. ED Schlacter announced that the City Manager approved the appointment of Kaileigh Callender, and City Council was given notice of the appointment on November 18, 2019. ED Schlacter also announced that the State Senate had approved the Home Rule Petition to amend the Fair Housing Ordinance and the Governor signed it on November 13, 2019. The amendments addressed updating language to reflect people-first references to "persons with disabilities" and added gender-identity to its protected classes. ED Schlacter attended a meeting with the City Manager, Law Department, Inspectional Services Department and the LGBTQ+ Commission on the city's efforts to move forward with gender-neutral restrooms in city-owned buildings. ED Schlacter explained that Investigator Attorney Acloque was absent because she was attending a HUD training on outreach.

6. Chair/Co-Chair Nomination for 2020

ED Schlacter encouraged members of the Commission to consider nominations for a co-chair model. The election will be in January and interested members are eligible after 1 year of service. Commissioners were instructed to email ED Schlacter their nominations.

7. November meeting follow up:

- **Follow-up Questions from Presentation by Director Betsy Allen, Office of the Equity and Inclusion**

The Commission wanted to address the disparity between the representation of Asian-Americans in Cambridge and the limited representation of Asian American/Pacific Islanders in the City's workforce. They asked if any particular steps are being taken to address this disparity. – **This question is not yet answered.**

- **Cambridge Public School Department**

CPSD Dep. Supt. Turk has accepted the Commission's invitation to return and present on the progress on CPSD/CRLS equity and inclusion efforts at the meeting on May 7, 2020. CPSD Director of Diversity Ramon DeJesus will also present on recruitment, hiring and promotions within CPSD. ED Schlacter encouraged the Commission to submit their questions early to help CPSD prepare for the update.

- **Hate Crimes Presentation**

CPD Dept. Supt. Lowe will update the Commission on the latest information regarding hate crimes in Cambridge at the January 9, 2020 meeting. Commissioner Selk and Co-Chair Evans asked if Dept. Supt. Lowe could provide information on the CPD's Office of Procedural Justice. Specifically, what is the vision, process, and how do they collect data?

- **Demographics Presentation**

Cliff Cook is available for a demographics presentation at the meeting in April 2020.

- **Listening Session feedback**

The Listening Session was an effort by CDD to gather information for their AoI Report, which is a 5-year analysis on the impediments to housing. Co-Chair Stadlan participated

in the Listening Session and stated there was a small attendance of residents. Most of the attendees were city employees. There were approximately 20 people present.

- **Follow up Commissioners' activities**

None to report.

8. New Business

- Co-Chair Stadlan is going through the case files on the spreadsheet provided by Attorney Investigator Acloque. Co-Chair Stadlan's research into case files on recurrent issues/locations for housing complaints also includes identifying frequent respondents and self-identified protected classes. A member of the Commission stated that it would be interesting to note how long the issues continued before the person filed a complaint.

9. Outreach

- **Materials Updates**

Project Coordinator Rosa is working with the PIO Intern to design a general discrimination brochure/flyer that describes the work of the Commission. The new format is an update to the office postcard with the definition of discrimination.

- **CPD Stakeholder's Meeting**

The stakeholder's meeting happens quarterly on a Thursday from 10 am-12 pm. The presentations are usually 15-20 minutes long. CHRC staff will decide which date works best for the presentation. ED Schlacter will follow up with Dept. Supt. Lowe.

Commissioner Ly moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 p.m., seconded by Co-Chair Stadlan.

Next Commission meeting will be on Thursday, January 9, 2020, in the Large Conference Room on the 2nd Floor at 6:00 p.m.