



**Cambridge Human Rights Commission
Thursday, June 6, 2019**

Present: Co-Chair Mercedes Evans, Co-Chair Joshua Stadlan, Commissioners Chanta Bhan, Bonita Cox, Sabrina Selk, Kuong Ly, and Michael Kourabas. City Staff: Police Superintendent Steven DeMarco, CHRC Staff: Executive Director Nancy Schlacter and Attorney Investigator Sabrina Acloque, and CHRC Project Coordinator Crystal Rosa

Absent: Commissioners. Olinda Marshall, Yasmin Padamsee Forbes, Brandon Morgan, and Katie Stack

Documents Used:

- May Minutes

1. Call to Order

Co-Chair Mercedes Evans called the meeting to order at 6:20 p.m. No public were present and no one was recording the meeting.

2. Review and approval of May Minutes

The Commission reviewed the minutes from the May 2nd meeting. Commissioner Ly moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Co-Chair Stadlan. Commissioner Bhan abstained due to her absence.

3. Executive Director's Report

ED Schlacter updated the members of the Commission on cases. Since the May meeting, there have been 2 new cases opened, and four cases are pending. Two cases have closed. The pending cases involve allegations of discrimination based on the person's disability in places of public accommodation and housing. Additionally, the cases that were closed concerned allegations of discrimination based on the person's disability and national origin in public accommodation. ED Schlacter updated the Commission on staff training and activities. Co-Chair Stadlan attended the Community Development Department's Housing Information Event to do outreach about the Commission. Attorney Investigator Acloque presented at the Community Learning Center about the discrimination and the Commission. Attorney Investigator Acloque also met with Kimm Topping from the LGBTQ+ Commission to plan for a training about Gender Identity and Public Accommodations. ED Schlacter attended the Cambridge Health Department's CHIP Action Planning Summit at Lesley University. Lastly, Commissioners Evans, Ly, Cox, and Morgan helped with outreach at RiverFest.

4. May meeting follow up:

- **Office of Equity & Inclusion** - Director Betsy Allen is scheduled for October 3rd Commission meeting. The Commission created questions for Director Allen at the May meeting and will revisit those items at the September meeting.
- **Mothers of the Plaza De Mayo** - The Commission agreed to co-sponsor a photographic exhibition called Mothers of the Plaza De Mayo at Cambridge Public Library in September. The opening event is scheduled on Tuesday, September 17, 2019 starting at 5:00 PM in the Main Cambridge Public Library Main Lecture Hall on Lower Level.
- **Danehy Park Day** - CHRC staff passed out a sign-up sheet for shifts at Danehy Park Day. Volunteers would help with outreach on Saturday, September 14, 2019 from 11:00 – 4:00 pm.
- **CDSC Mediation training** - The CDSC Mediation training is scheduled for Saturday, September 21, 2019. We need more Commissioners to sign up to be able to hold the training due to CDSC's minimum requirements for a group training. ED Schlacter is working with BOFHE to see if they can fill up the roster.
- **Riverfest feedback** – The event was located near the Jazz Stage this year. Members of the Commission complained that it made it hard to hear and it may have contributed to low foot traffic in the area because people were there for the music. Commissioner Cox expressed that outreach at the event is important even if the Commission only reaches one person. The Commission will revisit the issue of participation for next year in February.
- **Cambridge Public School Department** - Co-Chair Evans suggested inviting CPSD Dep. Supt. Carolyn Turk to present again in/around April 2020 regarding the progress on CPSD/CRLS equity and inclusion efforts.

5. New Business:

- **Public Comments on Small-Area Fair Market Rent and HUD-funded shelters and gender** – Co-Chair Stadlan explained there is a public comment period for Boston Housing Authority transition to Small-Area Fair Market Rent. Co-Chair Stadlan asked what would the potential impact be on BHA voucher holders who may rent in Cambridge and if the Commission should submit a comment? ED Schlacter stated that CHA may be the entity that could answer that question. Co-Chair Stadlan also explained that HUD proposed a rule change to no longer requires HUD-funded shelter gender policies to be consistent with one's gender identity. ED Schlacter stated that she could ask Liz Mengers of the Continuum of Care what the impact of this change would be in Cambridge. Commissioner Kourabas suggested that the Commission research what is being advocated by organizations in the field for both public comment periods. Co-Chair Evans asked for clarification from the Law Department on how the Commission or members of the Commission should submit comments. Co-Chair Evans reminded the Commission of a survey previously done that may help with more background information.

- **Discrimination in Museums** – Co-Chair Evans described a recent incident of racism that took place at the MFA. Co-Chair Evans asked the Commission to invite local Cambridge museums to an open discussion on related issues their staff may have encountered. Additionally, Co-Chair Evans asked the Commission to consider displaying the City CHRC antidiscrimination policy in Cambridge museums. No vote was taken on this suggestion.
- **Recent arson at houses of worship in Greater Boston** – Superintendent Steve DeMarco explained that CPD has responded to the recent attacks with having patrol officers at local houses of worship. Superintendent DeMarco stated that the Mosque has indicated interest in additional police presence.
- **MA House bill (HB 150)**– Currently the bill is in committee, but without a hearing scheduled. The amendment is to add homelessness (housing status) as a protected class, this would extend further than federal law.

6. Outreach:

- **CHRC/LGBTQ+ Cmsn Collaboration: Public Accommodations Law Training for Licensed Businesses**– The training is scheduled for Thursday, June 13th at Cambridge Public Library Lecture Hall at 11:00 am – 12:00 pm. Attorney Investigator Acloque will need volunteers for the outreach table and to collect feedback forms from attendees.
- **Outreach to CRLS Guidance Counselors** – Commissioner Kourabas explained that the Commission may need to figure out another way to engage CRLS. Co-Chair Evans stated the Commission was able to work collaboratively with the schools when a School Committee member became involved.

7. Future Planning

Co-Chair Evans suggested collaborating with the Commission for Persons with Disabilities for an item to discuss on a future agenda in the fall.

8. On the bench - The Commission agreed to remove the items left on the bench.

Commissioner Ly moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Bhan.

Next Commission meeting will be on Thursday, September 5, 2019, in the Large Conference Room on the 2nd Floor at 6:00 p.m.

The Commission would like to thank Superintendent DeMarco for his years of service.