



**Cambridge Human Rights Commission
Thursday, March 5, 2020**

Present: Co-Chairs Michael Kourabas and Yasmin Padamsee Forbes, Commissioners Joshua Stadlan, Mercedes Evans, Kaileigh Callender, Bonita Cox, Olinda Marshall, Kuong Ly, Sabrina Selk, Police Deputy Superintendent Robert Lowe, CHRC Staff: Executive Director Nancy Schlacter, Attorney Investigator Sabrina Acloque, and Project Coordinator Crystal Rosa

Absent: Katie Stack and Brandon Morgan

Documents Used:

- January Minutes

1. Call to Order

Co-Chair Kourabas called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

2. Public Comment

No one was present and no one was recording the meeting.

3. “What’s on your mind?”

Co-Chair Kourabas asked the members of the Commission to share how they are feeling. Members shared their thoughts about the current political climate and their concerns about coronavirus.

4. Review and approval of January 2020 Minutes

The Commission reviewed the minutes from the January 9th meeting. Commissioner Stadlan moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Ly. There was no meeting in February due to a lack of quorum.

5. Executive Director’s Report

ED Schlacter updated the members of the Commission on cases. Since the January meeting, two new cases have opened, resulting in four cases pending. Two cases involve a claim of discrimination in a place of public accommodation based on race. One of the cases involves a claim of discrimination in housing based on race and national origin and the last case involves a claim of discrimination in housing based on the person’s disability. Three cases closed since the January meeting. One of the closed cases involved a claim of discrimination in a place of public accommodation based on national origin and gender identity, and the other two closed cases involve claims of discrimination in a place of public accommodation based on race. ED Schlacter updated the Commission on staff training and activities. ED Schlacter participated in a meeting with LGBTQ+ Commission and the City Manager’s

Office regarding the Gender-Neutral Restroom re-signage. The signs will be replaced soon. ED Schlacter presented at Biogen to the Cambridge Police Department stakeholder's meeting. ROCA also presented at the meeting. ED Schlacter and Commissioner Stadlan attended a meeting with Maura Pensak, the City's Housing Information Coordinator, about housing trends in the city. ED Schlacter attended the Department Human Services Programs NEPT event on Math Matters and Financial Literacy. Attorney Investigator Acloque attended a presentation on cultural competency at Harvard Law School which focused on Gauging Your Cultural Competencies and Developing Tools for Effective Advocacy. ED Schlacter attended a docent-led tour of the African Meeting House in Boston for Black History Month. ED Schlacter remarked on their use of person-first language such as "enslaved" and "enslaver" vs. "slave" and "master." Both Attorney Investigator Acloque and ED Schlacter are participating in leadership expectation workshops by DEI.

6. January Meeting Follow up:

- **Follow up questions sent to DEI Director Allen – No update yet. Director Allen has not responded to the information below:**

At January 13, 2020 CHRC meeting, a question was posed about Asian American /Pacific Islander efforts by the City's Dept. of Equity and Inclusion (DEI). Commissioner Ly wanted to know why there is a disparity between the percentage of Asian residents who work for the City as compared to the percentage of those who live in Cambridge, and whether the City was undertaking any efforts to overcome this disparity. ED Schlacter followed up with DEI Director Betsy Allen, and shared Director Allen's email response to the Commission, in which Director Allen stated that she will contact Cliff Cook from the Community Development Department to find out if he has any data on the characteristics and employment profile for the Asian American/Pacific Islander (AA/PI) community to help determine whether there needs to be more targeted efforts to recruit more members of the AA/PI community. Commissioner Ly suggested a survey for members of the AA/PI community to find out if they have an interest in working for the City. Commissioner Ly also suggested that the Commission should look into the percentages of the AA/PI community who live in and work for the City of Boston to see if there are similar disparities between residents and AA/PI members of their workforce.

At a previous meeting, Commissioner Stack suggested following up with Director Allen to find out more about the City's outreach efforts to the AA/PI community. Co-Chair Stadlan suggested that Commissioners could find out if organizations are serving the AA/PI community and to note what trends these organizations are observing regarding servicing the AA/PI community. Commissioner Ly suggested reaching out to Bethany Lee at GBLS about the work she is involved with regarding the AA/PI community. The Commission would like to find out

Cliff Cook's response to Director Allen's email before his April 2, 2020 presentation at the Commission meeting. Follow up regarding this matter will be discussed at the next Commission meeting.

- **Cambridge Public School Department (CPSD) Dep. Supt. Turk in conjunction w/CPSD Dir. of Diversity & Development Ramon DeJesus – scheduled on May 7, 2020**

Speakers will discuss the efforts made by Cambridge Rindge and Latin School on equity and inclusion and the efforts by CPSD on recruitment, hiring and promotions. The Commission provided the following questions to be addressed by speakers:

- What is the number of students who take AP Exams? How are those students tracked?
- How does the Family Policy Council work with CPSD? Is the Math Equity programed through the school?

- **Cliff Cook scheduled for Demographics Presentation on April 2, 2020**

- What is the plan regarding the changes to the census which prevent being able to see race and ethnicity data?
- How many students are getting free lunch in each school and how has it changed over time?
- What are the different occupations of Asian Americans in Cambridge and how does that compare with city employment?
- Does the city track change to the housing of multigenerational residents?

7. New Business

- **Presentations at Community Learning Center on March 12**

Commissioner Morgan will be presenting to CLC students about the work of the Human Rights Commission.

- **Outreach at CDD/ Housing event on March 10**

Commissioner Kourabas will be tabling at the information session presented by the Housing Division of the Community Development Department on the City's Affordable Rental and Home Ownership Programs.

- **“Imagine Your Story” Summer Reading Program**

Attorney Investigator Acloque followed up with Clara Hendricks at the Cambridge Public Library on what the Youth Services Department needed for the collaboration. This collaboration will be put on hold for the following Summer due to programming commitment limitations.

- **Asian American/Pacifica Islander (AA/PI) Outreach**

Commissioner Stadlan conducted a preliminary search of local organizations that focused on the demographic. Commissioner Stadlan listed MA Asian American

Commission, and the Boston offices of National Association of Asian American Professionals (NAAAP), and Asian American Civic Association (AACA). Commission Stadlan volunteered to follow up with the organizations regarding outreach materials.

- **AA/PI Discrimination in Coronavirus Responses:**

Considering the international and local reports about xenophobia and racism mixed in with precautions related to Coronavirus, Commissioners requested to have the messages that the City has sent out regarding COVID19. Commissioners were interested in knowing the large economic impacts and local impacts on restaurants.

- **MA Association of Human Rights and Relations Commission (MAHRC)**

In reference to an interest in reaching out to other commissions around the state, ED Schlacter informed the Commission that MAHRC meets at Medford City Hall monthly. Information on meeting time and location will be sent to the Commission.

8. Outreach

- Project Coordinator Rosa will send the final design of the new general CHRC brochure to the Commission.
- Brainstorm for HUD outreach project due April 3rd:
 - Video ASL- a collaboration with the Commission for Persons with Disabilities
 - Facebook advertisements
 - Pamphlet regarding navigating difficult conversations between landlord and tenants
 - Translating online intake forms
 - Training program “Preventing Housing Discrimination” for Property Owners & Managers

9. Future Planning

- The April Fair Housing Event is scheduled for Saturday, April 25, 2020, open to the public from 11 am to 2 pm at the Cambridge Rindge & Latin School (CRLS) Main Cafeteria.
- Cambridge Arts River Fest is scheduled for June 6, 2020, from 11 am to 6 pm. The outreach table must be attended for the entire event. Volunteers for outreach are needed. The location will be along the Charles between JFK Street and Western Avenue.

Commissioner Ly moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Padamsee Forbes.

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