



**Cambridge Human Rights Commission
Thursday, September 3, 2020
Zoom Virtual Public Meeting
Yasmin Padamsee Forbes: Co-Chair**

Present: Co-Chairs Michael Kourabas and Yasmin Padamsee Forbes, Commissioners Joshua Stadlan, Katie Stack, Olinda Marshall, Kaileigh Callender, Brandon Morgan, and Sabrina Selk, CHRC Staff: Executive Director Nancy Schlacter, Attorney Investigator Carolina Almonte and Project Coordinator Crystal Rosa

Absent: Commissioners Mercedes Evans and Bonita Cox

Documents Used:

- July 2, 2020 Minutes

1. Call to Order

Co-Chair Padamsee Forbes called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

2. Public Comment

No public was participating in the live virtual meeting. No one was recording the meeting.

3. Introduction of Carolina Almonte, new Attorney Investigator

The members of the commission and staff introduced themselves to Carolina Almonte, who started as the new Attorney Investigator on August 10, 2020.

4. Review and approval of July 2020 Minutes

The Commission reviewed the minutes from the July 2nd meeting and Commissioner Callender 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 July meeting, no new cases have opened, though there is one inquiry that may lead to a new case. AI Almonte has resumed work on the three cases that were pending due to the vacancy. One of the cases involves a claim of discrimination in housing based on the person's disability. The other two 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 virtually attended a webinar by HUD/NFHA on Investigating Sexual Harassment in Housing. ED Schlacter also attended the presentation by The Boston Foundation and Suffolk University Law School on the study on Racial Equity in Housing in the COVID-19 era. ED Schlacter participated in the Equity & Inclusion workshop organized by the City of Cambridge. ED

Schlacter has also continued with the monthly Suffolk University Law School Fair Housing brown bag. With the CET/NEPT, ED Schlacter has contributed to the planning of the next Community Engagement Team training on language access. ED Schlacter announced that Commissioner Kuong Ly has left Cambridge to pursue a Federal Clerkship in Nevada. The vacancy was posted in August and will be posted until September 25.

6. July Meeting Follow up:

Follow-up from any virtual conferences, workshops or forums about civil rights topics

Commissioner Morgan participated in the Massachusetts Association of Human Rights Commissions (MAHRC) meeting in the summer. Commissioner Morgan explained that some of the commissions in the state are holding listening sessions regarding COVID housing. According to the organizations, their residents expressed relief to have a forum where they could voice their concerns. There were about 20-25 people in attendance from different municipalities.

Discussion on the death of George Floyd and public response

Chair Padamsee Forbes expressed her apologies for not being able to follow up on this working group during the summer months. Chair Kourabas stated there were local organizations that have emerged since the last meeting, called Reimagining CPD and The Black Response, that are working on addressing local concerns on policing.

Community Development Department – Cliff Cook

Cliff Cook is scheduled to present to the Commission at the Oct 1 meeting. CHRC staff will send out links to his previous presentations and the questions drafted at a prior meeting. The Commission was encouraged to submit their questions to ED Schlacter. Chair Kourabas asked about broad band and computers at home and how that relates to the circumstances that students find themselves now. ED Schlacter said she would pass that question along.

7. New Business

ED Schlacter encouraged the Commission to review the Greater Boston Housing Report Card: Racial Equity in Housing in the COVID-19 Era. No one had questions about the information during the meeting.

8. Outreach

HUD Partnership Grant

Project Coordinator Rosa provided the Commission with updates on the HUD partnership grant and story journal version of the Fair Housing event. Two of the three parts of the partnership grant are completed. Currently waiting for the IT department to input the discrimination intake forms online with the 6 new languages. The story journal of the Fair Housing Event is in process. All participating organizations were excited to hear about the idea.

9. Future Planning

- ED Schlacter has not been able to reschedule CPD Dep. Supt. Turk and Director of Diversity & Development Ramon DeJesus. ED Schlacter stated that they may have more availability in the winter after schools reopen this fall.

10. On the bench

Commission Stadlan's research into case files on recurrent issues/locations for housing complaints is still in progress. Commissioner Stadlan asked to present in the coming months. Likely in November.

Commissioner Selk moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:51 p.m., seconded by Chair Kourabas.

The next Commission meeting will be on Thursday, October 1, 2020, in the Large Conference Room on the 2nd Floor of 51 Inman at 6:00 p.m., or Virtually on Zoom, depending on the status of the City's pandemic reopening policy.