



Cambridge Human Rights Commission
Thursday, November 3, 2022
Virtual Public Meeting

Present: Chair Joshua Stadlan, and Commissioners Katie Stack, Stefanie Haug, Yasmin Padamsee Forbes, Kaileigh Callender, Mercedes Evans, Olinda Marshall, and Judith Laguerre.

City Staff: Executive Director Jennifer Mathews and Attorney Investigator Carolina Almonte.

Absent: Commissioners Sabrina Selk, Stephen Curran, Bonita Cox, and Deputy Superintendent Fredrick Cabral.

Documents Used:

- October 6, 2022 Minutes
- Board & Commission Spreadsheet
- CHRC Chair Guidance Document

1. Call to Order

Chair Stadlan called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

2. Public Comment

No one was recording the meeting and no members of the public were present.

3. Review and approval of October 2022 Minutes

The Commission reviewed the minutes from the meeting on October 6, 2022. Commissioner Stadlan noted that the October minutes incorrectly stated that the meeting was in-person, rather than virtual. Besides that correction, Commissioner Callender moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Evans. Minutes were approved unanimously.

4. Staff Reports

ED Report

- [New Board & Commission Appointment/Reappointment Process](#)
ED Mathews informed the Commission about the new appointment processes that will be implemented so that Commission appointments are made in a more equitable and transparent manner and that the membership of these groups represents the diversity of the Cambridge community. Some proposed changes will include keeping postings open for a minimum of 30 days and submitting applications to the City's Director of Equity and Inclusion for review.
- **Update on referral process from CPD.**

ED Mathews and AI Almonte met with CPD officers to discuss a plan of action for CPD to refer relevant complaints to the Commission for investigation. Moving forward, alleged hate crimes that do not proceed to prosecution, and over which CHRC may have jurisdiction, will be referred to CHRC. After receiving any referrals, Commission staff will determine if the allegations meet the Commission's jurisdictional requirements.

- **Miscellaneous updates.** The Commission will virtually present on local anti-discrimination laws that apply to the housing search process and housing providers on Wednesday, November 16, 2022, from 3:30pm-4:30pm. This training will cover antidiscrimination protections, practices that can be considered discriminatory, and recommendations for handling common housing search scenarios. Commissioners encouraged to share widely with their networks.
- **Attorney-Investigator Case Report.** AI Almonte provided case updates. There are 8 cases currently pending. Four cases have closed since October – a housing discrimination case based on disability and source of income, which resolved through a PDSA; a public accommodations discrimination complaint based on race, which was resolved through a causal determination; an employment discrimination complaint based on age and gender, which was withdrawn; and a housing discrimination complaint based on race, national origin, and gender identity, which was administratively closed. Two new complaints are in the process of being filed – a public accommodations discrimination case based on disability, against a Cambridge fitness studio; and a housing discrimination complaint based on disability, against a Cambridge landlord and property management company.

5. Old Business

- **Commissioner Reports on Connecting with Other Commissions.** Chair Stadlan referenced the [list of the City's other Boards and Commissions](#), originally shared during the September meeting. Commissioners have reached out to relevant boards and commissions in their designated areas with varying results. Commissioner Evans has not yet begun meeting with the Cycling Safety Ordinance (CSO) Advisory Group but will keep us updated. Commissioner Laguerre has connected with CPHD staff to begin discussions around health inequities and will update the Commission again.

6. New Business

- **Chair Elections**
Chair Stadlan and Commissioner Padamsee Forbes shared a guidance document for future CHRC chairs to review. Commissioners are encouraged to nominate themselves or others. Will put out the call for nominations in December, with elections in January 2023.
- **CHRC Town Hall**
ED Mathews discussed the potential Human Rights Commission Town Hall, which Commissioner Padamsee Forbes raised at the October meeting. ED Mathews & Chair Stadlan separately discussed incorporating as a panel/open forum discussion during the

April 2023 Fair Housing Month Event. Event has not been held since 2019 due to Covid. Staff hope to resume the event in 2023 and will begin planning discussions. Commission should plan what the CHRC-specific panel/forum will cover. Chair Stadlan suggested narrowing to a specific topic before planning. Commissioner Callender suggested reviewing common case-related topics. Commissioner Laguerre suggested focusing on the legal definition of discrimination, including an analysis of where our laws may fall short. Commissioner Haug suggested considering our intended audience and what they may be seeking at a Town Hall. In terms of more detailed planning, ED Mathews suggested 2023 at the earliest, given staff demands and capacity.

- **Bathroom Access Map & City Open Data Portal**

Chair Stadlan shared recent news article and link to a map developed by Cambridge student. Map was presented to City Council and there is discussion whether it will be included as a City map on Open Data Portal. ED Mathews noted that even if private map not incorporated, in the future, City staff could develop own GIS-based map and City data set on bathrooms, with details about their accessibility. Commissioner Evans recommended also including information about bathroom features such as changing tables. ED Mathews suggested this may also be a project the LGBTQ+ Commission is interested in as they've worked to expand all-gender bathrooms in the city. However, this would be a very involved project. Can reach out to LGBTQ+ and Disabilities Commissions to see if we can combine resources.

7. Adjournment

Commissioner Evans moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Padamsee Forbes seconded. Approved unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:00pm.

The next Commission meeting will be on Thursday, December 1, 2022, virtually on Zoom.