



**Cambridge Human Rights Commission
Thursday, May 5, 2022
Zoom Virtual Public Meeting**

Present: Chair Joshua Stadlan, Commissioners Kaileigh Callender, Stephen Curran, Mercedes Evans, Judith Laguerre, and Olinda Marshall

City Staff: Executive Director Jennifer Mathews, Attorney Investigator Carolina Almonte, Project Coordinator Crystal Rosa, Deputy Superintendent Fredrick Cabral

Absent: Commissioners Bonita Cox, Yasmin Padamsee Forbes, Stefanie Haug, Sabrina Selk and Katie Stack

Documents Used:

- April 7, 2022 Minutes

1. Call to Order

Chair Stadlan called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

2. Public Comment

No one was recording the meeting and no public was present to comment.

3. Review and approval of April 2022 Minutes

The Commission reviewed the minutes from the meeting on April 7, 2022. Commissioner Callender moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Curran. Minutes were approved unanimously.

5. Staff Reports

Executive Director Updates

- **Language Justice Division**

Executive Director (ED) Mathews announced the new Language Justice Division and a full-time position added to the Human Rights Commission budget. The new position will support city departments in incorporating language access into their work. If the Commission's budget gets pulled for a hearing, ED Mathews will speak in front of the City Council on May 17th. In partnership with the Department of Human Services Programs, the city has set aside \$250,000 of American Rescue Plan money to fund interpretation and translations for the next couple years.

- **National Fair Housing Month**

CHRC staff worked with the Housed IN Cambridge team to create a targeted outreach campaign showcasing webinar topics available in the Housed IN Cambridge video library. CHRC worked with the Main Library to host Drop-In Hours for anyone needing more information and assistance with housing-related issues in Cambridge. Sixteen people attended the 2-hour event.

- **Rules of Procedure Amendments**

- ED Mathews reviewed list of staff-suggested changes to the Rules of Procedure. Generally:
- Allow for electronic filing/signing
 - Specify complaint (and related filings’) format and maximum length
 - Explicitly allow Complainant opportunity for rebuttal of response/position statement, which is standard practice
 - Add a maximum limit on complaint amendments and clarify amendment process (for consistency)
 - Potentially expand agreement approval process to allow all commissioners to review/sign

Discussion of staff-proposed rules and additional Commissioner ideas. ED Mathews explained that the goals for all changes would be to make the process more efficient and transparent for all parties. ED Mathews shared a redacted complaint that could be used as a template for an electronic complaint form. Commissioner Curran suggested Commission may want to retain discretion to exceed any page limits when appropriate. Commissioner Laguerre suggested adding a rule for use if a determination reviewer and investigator do not agree on the findings. Having a standard way to address bias or disclose conflict of interest would also be helpful. The Commission agreed with staff suggestions for amendment. Staff will now convert ideas to draft text for Commission review. The Commission will need to vote to submit amendments to the City Solicitor and City Manager for review before any final vote to approve.

Attorney Investigator Case Report

AI Almonte stated that three cases closed since the April meeting. There are seven open cases. One public accommodations discrimination complaint based on race was settled. The respondent will be donating \$1000 to Stop Asian Hate and will post an antidiscrimination law notice in the restaurant. An employment discrimination complaint based on sexual orientation and retaliation was settled. The respondent will pay the complainant she got one month’s salary of back pay and will train staff about antidiscrimination laws. A new case was filed – a housing discrimination complaint based on disability. The complainant was diagnosed with complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and was refused a requested reasonable accommodation to be provided a designated parking spot outside of the subject property.

6. New Business

Countering AAPI discrimination in Greater Boston

Chair Stadlan informed the Commission of the [UMass Boston Report](#) on Asian Americans and the COVID 19 Pandemic. The study was conducted in multiple languages and was designed to address gaps in data from a previous survey.

Community Outreach

- **Shared Calendar**

Project Coordinator Rosa explained if anyone has experienced issues opening the shared Google calendar, it may be defaulting to the member's Gmail address. Notifications will automate when a new entry is added.

- **Memorial Day Commemoration**

Commission will be represented at the City's Memorial Day Commemoration along with other commissions staff support (CHRC, LGBTQ+, CIRC). Staff will coordinate with the Commission on tabling time frames needed and other logistics closer to the date.

7. June Meeting/Commission Teambuilding Retreat

Weather permitting, the Commission expressed interest in having the next meeting outside in person. The meeting in June will be first Thursday of the month. Zoom invites will be sent to the Commission in case of rain. CHRC staff will coordinate logistics for meeting outside.

Commissioner Callender moved to have the Commission take the summer off in July and August, seconded by Commissioner Marshall. The summer vacation was approved unanimously. Due to Labor Day weekend, the Commission will meet on Thursday, September 8, 2022.

8. Commission Working Groups & Connecting with Other Commissions

ED Mathews reviewed the drafted list of the City's Boards and Commissions.

Commissioners will review the list for the June meeting to discuss possible collaborations.

Commissioner Evans moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:05 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Curran.

The next Commission meeting will be on Thursday, June 2, 2022, in person with location TBD; unless inclement weather, in which case will meet virtually on Zoom.