

Cambridge Human Rights Commission

April 2, 2026

Virtual Public Meeting

Present: Chairs Mercedes Evans and Stefanie Haug, and Commissioners Sue Mapel, Judith Laguerre, Yasmin Padamsee Forbes, Caroline Palavicino Maggio, Olinda Marshall, Beverly Sealey, Stephen Curran, Superintendent Fredrick Cabral

City Staff: Executive Director Carolina Almonte

Absent: Commissioner Sam Myers, Attorney Investigator Vannessa Carr

1. Call to Order

- Chair Haug called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM.

2. Public Comments

- Fiqir Worku and Willie Gomez were present. Fiqir introduced herself to the Commission. Willie did not make any comments.

3. Review and approval of March 2026 Minutes

- The Commission reviewed the minutes from the meeting in March 2026. Commissioner Padamsee Forbes moved to approve the minutes; Commissioner Sealey seconded. All in favor.

4. Staff Reports

- ED Almonte
 - o Program Manager position has about 120 applicants now. ED Almonte is scheduling interviews in the coming weeks.
 - o The case report was tabled due to the absence of Attorney Investigator Carr.

5. Old Business

- Debrief: Building Connections: Effective Tools for Community Conversations Workshop
 - o Commissioners shared that the workshop was a positive and meaningful experience.
 - o Several Commissioners noted that the session felt engaging and went by quickly.
 - o Overall, the workshop was considered successful in fostering connection and dialogue among participants.
 - o Commissioners who did not attend were encouraged to participate in future sessions.
- Revisiting the "Sexual Orientation" Definition
 - o Current Recommendation: "Sexual orientation means an actual or

perceived enduring emotional, romantic or physical attraction, or lack of attraction, to others based on sex or gender. For example, sexual orientations may include heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, or asexual individuals.”

- Commissioners provided feedback and suggested revisions to improve clarity and inclusivity, including more examples of sexual orientations.
 - The Commission also added “may include, but are not limited to” and removed “individuals” at the end of the second sentence.
 - The item was tabled to allow time for further refinement and will be revisited for a vote at the next meeting.
- Guidance Document about Commissioner and Staff Roles
 - The item was tabled to provide additional time for review and feedback, with plans to revisit at the next meeting.
- Guidance Document about Guest Speakers
 - This item was also tabled for further review and will return at the next meeting.
- Commission Vacancy Update
 - Fiqir Worku will be our new Commissioner! Welcome!

6. New Business

- Fair Housing Month Event (Partnership with CIRC) – May 9, 2026, at King Open School and Blog Posts
 - The Commission discussed the upcoming Community Celebration.
 - The event will include community engagement, resource sharing, and collaboration with partner organizations.
 - Commissioners were encouraged to attend and support outreach efforts.
 - Commissioners who volunteered to support the event include Sue Mapel (early shift), Judith Laguerre, Stefanie Haug, Fiqir Worku, Stephen Curran, Beverly Sealey, and Mercedes Evans.
 - Staff also noted an accompanying blog series highlighting key fair housing issues.
- Commission Retreat Planning
 - Initial discussion began regarding a future Commission retreat.
 - Topics may include goal-setting, team building, and strategic planning for the upcoming year.

- o Additional details will be developed and shared at a future meeting.
- Future Training Opportunity
 - o A training with Lawyers for Civil Rights was recommended for a future meeting.

7. Adjournment

- Chair Haug moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:35 PM. Commissioner Yasmin seconded. Commissioners took a voted to adjourn and it passed.