



Cambridge Human Rights Commission
Thursday, October 6, 2022
Virtual Public Meeting

Present: Chair Joshua Stadlan, and Commissioners Katie Stack, Stefanie Haug, Yasmin Padamsee Forbes, Kaileigh Callender, Sabrina Selk, Stephen Curran, and Judith Laguerre.

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

Absent: Commissioners Bonita Cox and Olinda Marshall.

Documents Used:

- September 8, 2022 Minutes
- Board & Commission Spreadsheet

1. Call to Order

Chair Stadlan called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

2. Public Comment

No one was recording the meeting and Ella Hamilton, a Northeastern journalism student, was present as a member of the public.

3. Review and approval of September 2022 Minutes

The Commission reviewed the minutes from the meeting on September 8, 2022. Commissioner Callender moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Curran. Minutes were approved by the majority, with Commissioners absent in September abstaining.

4. Staff Reports

- **Rules of Procedure Amendments.** ED Mathews confirmed that the draft Rules amendments have been submitted to the City Manager and Law Department for review. ED Mathews anticipates the CHRC will have feedback to review soon and hopes for a vote to confirm amendments by the December meeting.
- **Changes to Administrative Closure Process.** ED Mathews notes there was one additional change to the draft Rules between the version voted on by the Commission in September and the version submitted to the CM & Law Dept. Change was to administrative closure process – and other similar processes that contemplate an action by the Investigating Officer but a separate notice from the Commission. Added language that such Commission notices must be signed by the Chair.
- **Update on City events.** ED Mathews shared info about upcoming LGBTQ+ Commission Town Hall. Commissioner Padamsee Forbes asked about possibility of a

similar CHRC Town Hall. Chair Stadlan suggested narrowing call to a specific topic before planning. To put on the agenda for future consideration. ED Mathews suggested 2023 at the earliest given staff demands and capacity.

- **Attorney-Investigator Case Report.** (Provided later in meeting when AI Almonte became available.)

5. Old Business

- **Chair Election Procedure and Dates.** Human Rights Ordinance does not allow for the election of a Chair for 2 years, which was discussed as a possibility at the September meeting. Ordinance requires election at first meeting of each year. Do have flexibility to elect Co-Chairs if desired.

Will put out the call for nominations in December, with elections in January. Commissioner Padamsee Forbes suggested coming up with guidance document/material for CHRC chairs. Chair Stadlan and Commissioner Forbes will work on together.

- **Increased Connection with CPD.** AI Almonte & ED Mathews have reviewed CPD's hate crimes data for 2021. Approximately 7 cases appeared appropriate for referral to CHRC based on CHRC jurisdiction and nature of allegations. Staff are setting up a meeting with CPD to talk more about referral process; will update at November meeting.

6. New Business

- **Commissioner Reports on Connecting with Other Commissions.** Chair Stadlan referred to the [list of the City's other Boards and Commissions](#), and Commissioners' selections of topic areas at September meeting. Commissioner Stadlan has connected with the Cambridge Continuum of Care on their housing-related work. Will meet with them and report back further.

Commissioners who had not yet selected topic areas did so: Commissioner Callender volunteered for Education/Family. Commissioner Padamsee Forbes volunteered for DEI.

Staff Reports (cont.) – Attorney-Investigator Report. AI Almonte joined meeting and provided case updates. There are 12 cases pending. One case has closed since September – a public accommodations discrimination case based on race, which resolved through a PDSA. Three new complaints are in the process of being filed – a public accommodations discrimination case based on race, against a Cambridge daycare provider; a public accommodations case based on disability, against the owner/operator of a youth sporting business; and two employment discrimination cases of harassment based on race, color, gender identity, and ancestry, by the same complainant against two different Cambridge food service establishments.

- **Recent CPS Report on Racial Disparities in Discipline.** Chair Stadlan shared recent CPS report, summarized in Cambridge Day article, that black, multiracial, and Hispanic kids are more often disciplined at CPS than white or Asian students. Not clear what CPS' next steps will be. Commission is generally interested in connecting with CPS to

learn more and understand root causes. ED Mathews noted that the relationship between CHRC as a City dept/enforcement agency and CPS as a distinct City dept with its own elected governing body is unique. But doesn't mean we cannot seek to connect. Commissioner Selk informed commission of recent CPS policy change on security staff-based discipline; as parent of a child in CPS, she received notice. Commissioner Laguerre spoke about systemic racism in education and other institutions based on her studies and personal experience, and concern about the preschool to prison pipeline.

- Council Policy Orders re [Task Force on Cambridge's African American/Black Residents & Commission on the Status of Black Men and Boys](#). Chair Stadlan saw information about these groups. ED Mathews noted that these policy orders have not yet been adopted by the Council. They were recently discussed at a Civic Unity Committee meeting. Will be the topic of another Committee meeting soon. ED Mathews will keep Commissioners updated as policies and groups develop.

7. Adjournment. Commissioner Stack moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Callender seconded. Approved unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:10pm.

The next Commission meeting will be on Thursday, November 3, 2022, virtually on Zoom.