



Cambridge Human Rights Commission
Thursday, February 4, 2016

Present: Commissioners Chanta Bhan, Harry Reyes, Kim Nghiem, Mercedes Evans, Nicholas Leydon, Sabrina Selk, Bonita Cox, Robert Slate, Police Superintendent Christopher Burke, and CHRC Staff Nancy Schlacter and Sabrina Acloque

Absent: Commissioners Nadia Davila, Zainab Lakhani and CHRC Staff Crystal Rosa

Documents Used:

- January Minutes
- CHRC Presentation dates at CLC
- CLC Listening and Reading Exercise prepared by Commissioner Reyes
- Fair Housing Ordinance
- Human Rights Ordinance
- Draft bill support letter
- Article on “Mass. Senate Passes Pay Equity Bill, State Treasurer Goldberg Support, Other Reactions”
- Article on “As Mass. Legislature Kicks Off New Year, A Look at Where Key Bills Stand”
- House Bill No. 1577 – An Act Relative to Gender Identity and Nondiscrimination
- Senate Bill No. 735 – An Act Relative to Transgender Anti-discrimination
- Senate Bill No. 557 – An Act to Protect Access to Confidential Healthcare
- Article on “PATCH Alliance Supports an Act to Protect Access to Confidential Healthcare (S.557, H.871)
- Senate Bill No. 2107 – An Act to Establish Pay Equity
- House Bill No. 1733 – An Act to Establish Pay Equity
- CHRC’s new “Discrimination happens when” cards

1. Call to order

Chair Bhan called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. No one was recording the meeting.

2. Public Comment

No public comment.

3. Review and approval of January Minutes

Commissioner Leydon motioned to accept the minutes. Commissioners Reyes and Evans seconded.

4. Executive Director’s Report

ED Schlacter updated the Commission on cases, staff activities, and outreach. There is 1 new case, 7 cases are pending, and 1 closed case since the January meeting. ED Schlacter stated that she attended a teacher development day at the Community Learning Center (CLC) and that she and Commissioners have outreached to youth centers and the Community Art Center to get more poster submissions for the Commission’s fair housing contest. She noted that the three local Cambridge banks will continue to support the Commission’s fair housing contest. ED Schlacter is currently discussing with the banks the possibility of

establishing a loan program to help property owners with lead abatement efforts. ED Schlacter also stated that she is in discussions with the Cambridge Public Health Dept. to develop a lead survey for the City, which will look at residents' understanding of lead dangers and the CHRC's role in enforcing fair housing laws pertaining to discrimination against families with young children, due to the presence of lead in older housing stock.

5. January meeting follow-up:

ED Schlacter stated that poster-making for the Commission's Fair Housing event is underway at the Youth Centers and Community Art Center. Commission staff and Commissioners have outreached to students at these places and expect to get more posters back. MCAD Commissioner Jamie Williamson is confirmed as the Keynote Speaker for the Commission's Fair Housing event in April. Commissioners agreed to attend the Fair Housing event in April in lieu of having the April Commission meeting. The Fair Housing event will be on April 13, 2016 at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall. Shelly Chevalier from the City's Continuum of Care for the Homeless will present at the March meeting.

6. New Business

- **CLC trainings in March and May – schedule of teacher sign-ups**

Commissioner Reyes agreed to present at the CLC on Tuesday morning, March 15, 2016 for teacher Teresa Brown's class, if no other Commissioners are available. Commissioners Slate and Bhan agreed to present at the CLC on Thursday evening, March 17, 2016 for teacher Patty Fiorenza's class.

Commissioner Nghiem agreed to present at the CLC on Tuesday morning, May 3, 2016, for teacher Patricia Drake's class. Commissioners Leydon and Selk agreed to present at the CLC on Monday evening, May 2, 2016 for teacher Sylvia Greene's class. Commissioner Reyes also agreed to present on Tuesday morning, March 1, 2016 at the CLC for teacher Lisa Gimbel's class.

- **Clarifying areas for CHRC focus in 2016 based on January meeting brainstorming**
Discussion postponed so that other matters on the agenda could be addressed first.

- **Updates to FHO and HRO re: gender definition**

ED Schlacter stated that The GLBT Commission had agreed to approve the state's definition of gender identity in MGL c. 151B for revision of the Commission's ordinances' definition of gender. The Commissioners discussed amending the definition of sexual orientation in both ordinances to be more inclusive of other orientations not mentioned. ED Schlacter suggested that the Commissioners take some time to think about what the definition should say. ED Schlacter explained that the City Council has to approve changes made to the HRO and the state legislature has to approve changes made to the FHO, and that the definitions should be consistent across both ordinances. Commissioner Reyes stated that he can invite a colleague, Sean Cahill, from Fenway Health Center to speak on the definition of sexual orientation in more detail. Commissioner Evans suggested that the Commission separate the definitions for gender identity and gender expression. Commissioner Reyes suggested that the Commission deliberate first as a whole on the changes they would like to make before proposing them to the Law Department. CHRC Commissioners reviewed edits made to the HRO and FHO regarding disability language.

- **Review and consider proposed state legislation for possible support letters**

Commissioner Slate introduced bill S.557 – An Act to Protect Access to Confidential Healthcare (now changed to S.2081) and asked whether the Commission would support it by submitting a letter to the State legislature. Commissioner Slate noted that the legislative session during which this bill would be considered ends in July. Commissioner Reyes stated that Commissioners should have time to think about bills before the Commission votes on whether to support them. Commissioner Reyes proposed a process in which a Commissioner can draft a letter in support of a bill, email it to the Commission prior

to the next Commission meeting, and then Commissioners can discuss the bill before finally voting on whether to support it. There was a general consensus to support this proposal. Commissioner Reyes summarized the Pay Equity bills (S.2107 and H.1733) and the Transgender Rights bills (S.735 and H.1577), and stated that he would draft letters in support of each bill, send them to ED Schlacter, who would then disseminate them to the Commissioners for discussion at the next Commission meeting.

- **Collaboration with local efforts about Islamophobia/xenophobia in Cambridge**

Chair Bhan asked the Commission whether it wanted to co-sponsor an event about Islamophobia. Commissioner Selk stated that it would be best for the Commission to have more information about the sponsoring organizations first before deciding whether the Commission would co-sponsor an event. Commissioner Selk also proposed that interested Commissioners could attend events in their individual capacities to show support if the Commission does not vote to co-sponsor. Commissioner Slate stated that a federal program is now requiring health centers to report potential Islamic recruits and wants the Commission to take a stand against the program's profiling of Muslims. Commissioner Evans stated that the Commission should see the language of the program first before the Commission can take a stance on its legitimacy. Commissioners Selk and Nghiem agreed. Commissioner Slate stated that he would send information about the federal program to ED Schlacter.

7. Outreach Subcommittee

- **Review Commissioner Reyes' DRAFT presentation scenarios and Q&A for CLC presentations**

ED Schlacter stated that Commissioners should check-in with teachers from the different CLC classes so that they can tailor their presentations to the specific needs and language levels of each class.

- **CHRC presentation materials – review and reconsider**

ED Schlacter shared the new cards featuring protected classes designed by Administrative Coordinator Crystal Rosa. Commissioners were very pleased with the new design and illustrations.

Chair Bhan motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 p.m. Seconded by Commissioner Slate.

Next Commission meeting will be Thursday, March 3, 2016 at 6:00 p.m.