



## **Cambridge Human Rights Commission**

### **Meeting**

**Thursday, May 2, 2019 6:00 P.M.**

**51 Inman Street, Large Conference Room**

**Mercedes Evans and Joshua Stadlan, Co-Chairs**

### **Agenda**

City Staff Present: Executive Director (ED) Nancy Schlacter, Attorney Investigator (A/I) Sabrina Acloque, CPD Supt. Steven DeMarco

Commissioners: Joshua Stadlan, Mercedes Evans, Bonita Cox, Katie Stack, Brandon Morgan, Michael Kourabas, Olinda Marshall, Sabrina Selk, Yasmin Padamsee Forbes

Absent: Commissioners Kuong Ly and Chanta Bhan, Program Coordinator (PC) Crystal Rosa

### **Documents Used**

- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of General Counsel Guidance on Application of Fair Housing Act Standards to the Use of Criminal Records by Providers of Housing and Real Estate-Related Transactions (April 4, 2016)
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of General Counsel Guidance on Application of Fair Housing Act Standards to the Enforcement of Local Nuisance and Crime-Free Housing Ordinances Against Victims of Domestic Violence, Other Crime Victims, and Others Who Require Police or Emergency Services (September 13, 2016)
- Human Rights Ordinance
- February Minutes

#### **1. Call to order**

- 6:02 p.m. by Co-Chair Joshua Stadlan

#### **2. Public comment**

- None

### **3. Introduction of new Commissioner Brandon Morgan**

### **4. Review and approval of February 2019 minutes [March & April mtgs – no quorum]**

- Minutes approved w/edits suggested by AI Acloque on p. 1. New text should read: “Attorney Investigator Acloque supervised an intern’s three-week clinical internship in January. The intern researched case law under the Federal Fair Housing Act and Americans with Disabilities Act and assisted with a housing discrimination case that included issues intertwined with an employment discrimination case that Complainant had filed at the MCAD. The intern also researched the use of comparator evidence in discrimination cases and analyzed a court opinion regarding discrimination in a place of public accommodation.”
- Commissioner Cox suggested extended day on page 4 of Feb. Minutes
- P. 3 - Under Tenants Rights Organizations, Co-Chair Stadlan should be added to those who expressed interest in working group
- Co-Chair Stadlan moved to approve minutes; Co-Chair Evans seconded
  - i. Approved by Co-Chair Evans and Commissioners Cox, Marshall, Selk and Kourabas
  - ii. Commissioners Stack and Morgan abstained

### **5. Executive Director’s Report**

- ED Schlacter updated the Commission on cases. Since the February meeting, two cases have opened, two have closed, and four cases are pending. ED Schlacter updated the Commission on staff training and activities. Attorney Investigator Acloque co-led a discrimination-prevention training with Rachel Tanenhaus, Executive Director of the Commission for Persons with Disabilities, as a follow up to a post-cause conciliation agreement that was entered.

### **6. Follow-up on CRLS anti-bias/racial equity efforts**

- Discussion of CPSD Deputy Superintendent Carolyn Turk’s presentation in April – from Co-Chair Stadlan’s personal notes: CPS is engaged in a number of task forces and activities; students provided info on staff they can talk to regarding issues; student involvement in hiring teams, CPS has Equity Dashboard to track progress of CPS process
- Commissioners present during Carolyn Turk’s presentation in April: Stadlan, Stack, Cox and Selk
- Discussion about inviting CPSD Dep. Supt. Turk again in a year

## **7. Follow up on Fair Housing Event**

- Fair Housing Event (Saturday 4/27/19) at Community Art Center (119 Windsor St – Gym and classrooms)
  - 33 feedback forms completed
  - 88% (29 respondents) reported high level of satisfaction (4 or 5 rating)
  - PC Rosa’s suggestions – paying for FB ad in future, making the panel presentations longer
  - Commissioner Selk proposed having a person at the Welcome Table who can direct visitors to the right table, so they can get the help they need
  - Move CHRC table closer to entrance
  - Commissioner Marshall suggested the panelists should have microphones
  - Put signs outside panel room
  - More signs outside of building
  - Future location – Foundry building when finished?

## **8. February meeting follow up:**

- Contacts with local organizations that provide tenant rights info – is CHRC enforcement included in their info? Status efforts/Next steps
  - Commissioner Kourabas said that half of the organizations on his list had CHRC materials; half did not
  - Commissioners Kourabas and Evans connected w/ Alliance of Cambridge Tenants & YWCA – the orgs. took CHRC materials
  - Co-Chair Stadlan spoke to Consumer’s Council and now it has CHRC materials (they already knew about CHRC)
  - Additional orgs: ISD, CDSC, Just A Start Mediation- any Commissioner can contact these orgs to drop off flyers, if interested
    - Next year: Commissioners will do a walk-around of orgs at the FHE event to give them CHRC materials
- “Race: The Power of an Illusion” at the CPL? in collaboration/Civic Unity?
  - Commissioner Bhan’s idea, but she was absent from meeting; Commission is unsure about status of this idea
  - Brian Corr (ED of Peace Commission) interested in showing video w/ CHRC and/or Civic Unity Committee
  - Co-Chair Evans suggested putting this idea in the parking lot to address at next meeting; Commissioner Bhan can discuss in the future

## 9. New Business:

- ED Schlacter suggested inviting City Equity & Inclusion Office Executive Director Betsy Allen to a future CHRC meeting
- Invitation to ED Betsy Allen to speak at CHRC mtg about City's diversity hiring & retention; hiring of City residents? Which mtg? Questions for her:
  - Co-Chair Evans' – wants to know what City is doing regarding equity in hiring and promotion
  - What plan is ED Allen working with?
  - What are goals/targets of the plan?
  - Longevity of plan?
  - What does ED Allen's work entail?
  - What initiatives is ED Allen undertaking?
  - How do civil service requirements impact her work?
  - Is there a goal for hiring City residents?
  - Check City's Equity & Inclusion dashboard [Equity & Inclusion Dashboard](#)
- Conciliation training for fall 2019 – available date: Saturday 9/21 [9:30 AM – 4:30 PM – 7 hours] – who has not done training?
  - Commissioners Morgan, Kourabas and Padamsee Forbes –said they're available to attend; Co-Chair Evans will take it again
  - Commissioner Ly – still has not confirmed
  - ED Schlacter said anyone can take it again
  - ED Schlacter said we need 10 ppl min. (She has asked Boston Fair Housing Commission employees to come)
  - Date will be held, in the meantime ED Schlacter will update Commissioners on status of training
- Racial/ethnic discrimination based on natural hair: NYT article about NYC/HRC guidelines that provide legal recourse to persons harassed, punished or fired because of style of hair
  - In NY, firing ppl based on natural hair can be considered form of employment discrimination
  - Commissioner Selk – said she knew of court case that supported firing someone w/dreadlocks
  - CPD Supt. DeMarco said that Cambridge Police Dept. is looking at their policies to see if their standards fall in line w/ national standards (but they do have standards regulating hair, etc.); Cambridge provides more rights to police officers (i.e. police in Cambridge/MA can have tattoos, other places can't)

- Co-Chair Evans wants to find out results of CPD’s review of its internal policies
  - Commissioner Kourabas: What are police best practices around this topic?
- Use of CORI records in tenant screening: 2016 HUD Guidance on (a) [disparate impact due to racial/ethnic disparities in criminal justice system](#); and (b) [disparate impact on DV survivors when considering nuisance reports/domestic incidents](#)
  - Co-Chair Stadlan’s idea
  - Association of Cambridge Tenants (ACT) (808 Memorial Drive) would like Fair Housing Training – **Crystal will reach out to ACT?**
- Discussion about potential impacts of CPS proposed Elementary extended day on People of Color
  - Commissioner Cox’s suggestion –she doesn’t know what’s currently happening with this issue; thinks there were hearings happening around the city – she will find out what happened
  - What is the impact on people who work multiple jobs?
- CHRC co-sponsorship (w/Peace Cmsn) of Cambridge Public Library Exhibition about Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo – [outreach, use of CHRC logo, attendance of ED at Opening Reception on Tuesday, 9/17/19 at 5:00 PM]
  - Commission wants to have more info before deciding whether to support this
  - ED Schlacter will forward email with info to Commissioners
- Follow-up from Commissioner’s attendance at recent conferences, workshops or fora about civil rights topics
  - Commissioner Padamsee Forbes will be presenting at the Community Learning Center next week (CHRC presentation)
  - Co-Chair Stadlan attended White Nationalism & Rule of Law event held this week
  - Commissioner Morgan attended Science Education Conference sponsored by National Institutes of Health re: health inequities, social determinants of health and how it affects ppl, etc.
  - Commissioner Morgan will forward slides to ED Schlacter; she’ll forward to Commission

- Commissioner Stack said that WBUR/City Space has video on Ending Chronic Homelessness (people can visit website to see livestream <https://www.wbur.org/events/451125/tackling-homelessness-in-boston>)
- DHCD Analysis of Impediments – description/comment submission?
  - ED Schlacter forwarded the report to Commissioners
  - ED Schlacter submitted 69 pages of edits to DHCD
  - Cambridge/CDD has to do its own analysis of impediments – Co-Chair Stadlan asked ED Schlacter to share CDD’s report when ready

## 10. Outreach:

- Riverfest 2019 on Saturday 6/1/19 in Central Square – 2019 Community Tables Agreement: requires that table must be staffed entire time (11:00 AM – 6:00 PM + set-up/breakdown), or org will be ineligible to participate for 2 years – **volunteers needed**
  - ED Schlacter passed out sign-up sheet → all filled!
- Danehy Park Family Day, Saturday, September 14, 2019. 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM – volunteers needed
  - PC Rosa will bring sign-up sheet to June meeting
- CHRC/LGBTQ+ Cmsn Collaboration: Public Accommodations Law Training for Licensed Businesses– Working with License Cmsn to reach out to licensees – SCHEDULED: Thursday, June 13<sup>th</sup> at CPL Lecture Hall at 11:00 AM – 12:00 noon
  - Commissioners welcome to attend
- Outreach to CRLS Guidance Counselors – they may know about students’ family housing issues? (Commissioner Kourabas)
  - Commissioner Kourabas followed up w/ Guidance Counselor, Greta Hardina, but he hasn’t heard back from her; he’ll follow up when he has more info
  - Commissioner Selk suggested that people reach out to family liaisons
  - ED Schlacter said that Commissioners should take this on

- Commissioner Morgan suggested reaching out to out of school programs – ED Schlacter said there are a lot of organizations
- Commissioner Padamsee Forbes suggested reaching out to MSYEP (Mayor’s Summer Youth Employment Program) re: speaking to them about CHRC – she can reach out to them
- Commissioner Selk will share CHRC materials w/ CPS Teachers Union

**11. Future Planning**

- Potential new sites for CHRC presentations: Cambridge Hospital, Cambridge Libraries, Vet’s Services, CRLS

**12. On the bench**

- Baby U – Lead Law/Family Status discrimination – Possible outreach to spring Saturday classes? Volunteers? [dates/times?]

Commissioner Cox motioned to adjourn; Commissioner Selk seconded

Mtg adjourned at 7:56 PM

Next Commission meeting on Thursday, June 6, 2019 in Large Conference Room on 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor at 6:00 p.m.