



**Cambridge Human Rights Commission
Thursday, April 1, 2021
Zoom Virtual Public Meeting
Yasmin Padamsee Forbes: Chair**

Present: Chair Yasmin Padamsee Forbes, Commissioners Kaileigh Callender, Michael Kourabas, Mercedes Evans, Katie Stack, Joshua Stadlan, and Stefanie Haug

City Staff: Interim Executive Director Vali Buland, Assistant to the City Manager Jennifer Mathews, Attorney Investigator Carolina Almonte, Project Coordinator Crystal Rosa, and Deputy Superintendent Robert Lowe

Absent: Commissioners Bonita Cox, Olinda Marshall, and Sabrina Selk

Documents Used:

- March 4, 2021 Minutes

1. Public Comment

No one was recording the meeting and members of the public were not present.

2. Introduction to new Interim Executive Director

Interim ED Buland announced that she will be phasing herself out of the role and phasing in Jennifer Mathews who is an Assistant to the City Manager (ACM). ACM Mathews is a lawyer and has worked in the City Manager's Office for two years. Previously, ACM Mathews worked in MA State government for eight years. ACM Mathews explained the vacancy for the Executive Director position has not been posted yet but is a priority to be filled.

3. Review and approval of March 2021 Minutes

The Commission reviewed the minutes from the meeting on March 4, 2021. Commissioner Haug moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Stadlan.

4. Executive Director's Report

Attorney Investigator (AI) Carolina Almonte updated the members of the Commission on the latest cases. Since the March meeting, three new cases have opened, and two cases have closed. Two of the new cases involve claims of discrimination in housing based on the person's source of income and family status, respectively. The third discrimination complaint is an employment case based on the person's family status. Currently, there are two pending cases, one of the cases involves a claim of discrimination in employment and the other claim of discrimination is in housing. In the employment complaint, the claims are based on age

and gender identity. In the housing complaint, the claims are based on the person's source of income and disability. The closed cases involved claims of discrimination in housing and employment. The closed housing discrimination complaint was based on the person's source of income. The closed employment discrimination case was based on the person's national origin. AI Almonte also updated the Commission on her participation in HUD NFHTA training on Litigating Fair Housing cases.

5. **March 2021 meeting follow up**

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PC Rosa announced the dates for the upcoming webinar panels in April and May. PC Rosa will email the Commission links to zoom registrations with the descriptions of each panel. Members of the Commission are encouraged to participate as attendees and to share the information with their networks.

Language Justice Family Policy Council working group

PC Rosa continues to work with the Family Policy Council's working group on Language Justice. At the previous meeting, Commissioner Kourabas asked PC Rosa to share any resources regarding information about Language Justice. PC Rosa explained that she attended the training hosted by the Community Engagement Team in October 2020 and forwarded those resources to the Commission by email.

6. **New Business**

Discussion of responding to anti-Asian/Pacific Islander discrimination

Chair Padamsee Forbes informed the Commission that she had been appointed as Executive Director at the Asian American Commission at the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and seeks suggestions on how the two Commissions can collaborate. Commissioner Stadlan informed the Commission of a website called I Am Not a Virus managed by students at Harvard University. This website was created at the start of the pandemic by people of Asian descent who did not go to the police to report their experiences of harassment on the street. During the conversation, a member of the Commission mentioned having concerns about what school-age students may be experiencing. Deputy Superintendent Lowe explained how the Safety Net Collaborative works in the schools. Deputy Superintendent Lowe described the collaboration as a partnership between police officers assigned to the schools, teachers, and coaches with the shared goal to detect, divert and intervene when appropriate or necessary.

Commissioner Callender moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:30 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Stadlan.

The next Commission meeting will be on Thursday, May 6, 2021, in the Large Conference Room on the 2nd Floor of 51 Inman at 6:00 p.m., or Virtually on Zoom, depending on the status of the City's pandemic reopening policy.