

Boston Human Rights Commission Public Meeting Minutes

May 19th, 2022 at 5PM via Zoom due to COVID-19

Present: **Commissioners:** Chairwoman Margaret McKenna, Reyes Coll-Tellechea, Anne Rousseau, Robert MacEachern (Commissioner Leonard Lee was absent)
Interns: Thalia Viveros Uehara and Wael (Lilo) Altali
Others: Approximately 10 individuals from the public attended this meeting.

A. Introductions

1. Chairwoman Margaret McKenna called the Meeting to order at 5PM with the majority of Commissioners present.

B. Chairwoman's Report

1. Chairwoman McKenna announced her resignation from the Human Rights Commission. Her resignation is effective at the conclusion of the Commission Meeting.

C. Intern Presentations

1. Wael (Lilo) Altali - " Public Safety and Civil Service"

- a. This semester Lilo was tasked with conducting research into the cities and police departments that dropped the civil service exam and what happened after the requirement was dropped or modified.
- b. As of 2009, 35 Police Departments in the United States have left the Civil Service. 34% of these municipalities serve 10,000 to 20,000 individuals. These municipalities also have a small staff of 10-40 police officers, compared to that of 2,144 Sworn uniformed Police Officers in BPD.
- c. Some reasons for leaving the Civil Service included an outdated system and an inflexible hiring process. Some outcomes are better management of overtime and greater flexibility in determining hiring criteria.
- d. Lilo has recommended that the Commission start a coalition that involves community engagement to determine whether BPD should leave the Civil Service.

2. Thalia Viveros Uehara

- a. This semester, Thalia was tasked with conducting research on how other local and state governments are spending the federal infrastructure money

that is being disbursed for the purpose of improving digital literacy and bridging the digital divide.

- b.** Thalia's research methods included the attendance of 8 webinars such as FCC on grant programs for digital inclusion and equity and the analysis of academic and gray literature. She also conducted 3 expert interviews with the Benton Institute, Pew Charitable Trusts and the National Digital Inclusion Alliance.
- c.** In her research, Thalia has found that investing in networks and digital skill support help address digital redlining. Additionally, the existence of an official mandate for developing a Digital Equity Plan has proven to be successful in eliminating digital inequities.

D. Updates on Initiatives

1. OPAT Collaboration

- a.** Interim Director Helmy informed the Commission of a collaboration with the Office of Police Accountability and Transparency (OPAT).
- b.** HRC will be part of a team that will also include the City Analytics, BPD, and the Equity and Inclusion Cabinet Office to draft a Request for Proposal (RFP). This RFP will include the creation of equity assessments tools to evaluate BPD policies and procedures and semi-annually report on BIPOC hiring, promotion and retention within BPD.

2. BPD Civil Rights Unit Collaboration

- a.** Interim Director Helmy informed the Commission of a Pilot Referral Partnership with the BPD Civil Rights Unit.
- b.** Referrals from BPD to HRC will be of any complaints of discrimination that do not amount to that of a crime or complaints in which the individual does not want to pursue the matter in court. These complaints must be as a result of a constituents' membership in a protected category such as race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religious creed, disability, national origin, age, ex-offender status, prior psychiatric treatment, source of income, military status, marital status and parental status. The discrimination must be in one of the five (5) key areas: employment, education, public accommodations and services, labor organizations, credit transactions, bonding and insurance.

- c. Commissioner Rousseau and Coll-Tellechea spoke of potentially expanding this sort of partnership into BPS Schools.

3. Anti- Hate Crimes

- a. The Commissioners engaged in a conversation of a potential Anti-Hate Crimes Campaign or Anti- Hate coalition. This campaign or coalition should include BPD and BPS among others.

4. Discussion of Bylaws and Ordinance

- a. The Commissioners voted to create a sub-committee with Interim Director Helmy, Commissioner Coll-Tellechea and Commissioner MacEachern as members. This subcommittee will meet and work with the legal team to create bylaws.

E. Public Comments

1. There were no public comments made during the meeting.

F. Votes

1. Three votes were taken during this meeting.
 - a. Unanimous vote of approval of the 2.17.2022 Commission Meeting Minutes.
 - b. Unanimous vote to create a Subcommittee that will work on Bylaws.
 - c. Unanimous vote to adjourn at 6:30pm.