

Boston Human Rights Commission Public Meeting Minutes

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

Present: **Commissioners:** Chairwoman Margaret McKenna, Reyes Coll-Tellechea, Anne Rousseau and Robert MacEachern. (Commissioner Leonard Lee was absent).
Guest Speakers: Will Onuoha, Executive Director of the Office of Fair Housing and Equity and Danielson Tavares, Chief Diversity Officer of the Mayor's Office of Diversity
Others: Approximately 5 individuals from the public attended this meeting.

A. Introductions

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

B. Chairwoman and Executive Director's Report

1. Director Carvalho began his report by announcing that the Equity and Inclusion Cabinet has a new Chief, her name is Mariangely Solis Cervera.
2. Regarding the Beyond Pride Presentation, Director Carvalho is working with the current administration and staff on next steps. It is important to note that the recommendation of an LGBTQ+ Office will not be an official HRC recommendation.
3. Director Carvalho also informed the Commission that he had a meeting with Director Stephanie Everett of the Office of Police Accountability and Transparency (OPAT). They currently have a staff of 9 individuals and have been taking complaints since October. OPAT also has regular meetings with BPD on updating policies.

C. Updates on Initiatives

1. **Danielson Tavares, Chief Diversity Officer of the Mayor's Office of Diversity**
 - a. The mission and purpose of the Mayor's Office of Diversity is to diversify employment opportunities for City of Boston jobs. This includes but is not limited to jobs within City Hall, Boston Police Department and the Boston Fire Department.
 - b. Chief Tavares then spoke to the Boston Police Cadet Program. This program is dedicated to Boston residents between the ages of 18 and 24. It is equivalent to veteran preference helping these individuals gain

acceptance into the Police Academy. The current class of cadets is 50% women and 60% people of color.

- a. This cadet program has received legislative approval to be replicated for the Boston Fire department. It is just a matter of implementation.
- c. Additionally, the Language Certification Process, once a need is demonstrated, serves as another diversification tool. This is where public safety agencies can petition the state in regards to hiring officers that speak a second language.

2. Will Onuoha, Executive Director of the Office of Fair Housing and Equity

- a. Over the past year and a half, Suffolk University in collaboration with the Office of Fair Housing and Equity have conducted over 100 housing discrimination test. The focus of these tests have been in the Seaport and Charlestown areas. The Office of Fair Housing and Equity has partnered with the Greater Boston Real Estate Board.
- b. When it comes to sanctions, there have been fines of \$10,000 or more and 2-4 hours of Fair Housing training for all brokers' license renewals.
- c. Director Onuoha asked that the Human Rights Commission join his office in sanctions, as HRC sees fit. This will help deter agencies for committed acts of discrimination.
 - a. Commissioner Rousseau spoke to her experience at Metro Housing and offered her assistance where it is deemed fit.

3. Digital Divide Initiative

- a. Chairwoman McKenna spoke to the abandonment of the words “underserved” and “undeserving” in the rulemaking phase of the 50 billion dollars that was earmarked from the Federal government to states on digital inequities. These words were abandoned on January 7th, 2022 and broadened to “a proven need.”
- b. Additionally, Chairwoman McKenna asked Thalia Viveros Uehara and Roy Wada together with HRC, Tech Goes Home along with others to think about what the City of Boston can do right now, under Executive Order or any other means, that would impact the digital divide.

4. Marginalization of Black Boys and Men

- a. The City has created a Commission that is dedicated to this exact Initiative. This Commission will also sit in the Equity and Inclusion Cabinet. A Director was appointed to lead this Commission. Director Carvalho will follow up with this new Director once the new Commission is more settled in.

5. Asian American Hate Initiative

- a. Last year, HRC hosted a listening session with former Mayor Kim Janey for employees that wanted to speak to their experiences and thoughts. HRC will continue to work on this Initiative in conjunction with working alongside the Commission on Black Boys and Men.

D. FY23 Budget Proposal

1. The FY23 fiscal budget year starts July 1st. HRC has made a request of upwards of \$700,000. Some information in regards to this request is as follows. 75% of this budget is dedicated to personnel, fortunately HRC has a team of 5 full time employees. The Executive Assistant role is still available but put on the back burner for now. \$30,000 was requested for interns as they are essential to HRC's mission and priorities. \$5,000 was also requested for a Case Management system as HRC continues to accumulate complaints.
 - a. It was suggested that the Budget Proposal be discussed at the next Commission Meeting.

E. Public Comments

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

F. Votes

1. Two votes were taken during this meeting.
 - a. Unanimous vote to send the drafted letter to the State Judiciary Committee.
 - b. Unanimous vote to adjourn at 6:29PM.