

Boston Human Rights Commission Public Meeting Minutes

February 17th, 2022 at 5PM via Zoom due to COVID-19

Present: **Commissioners:** Chairwoman Margaret McKenna, Reyes Coll-Tellechea, Anne Rousseau, Robert MacEachern and Commissioner Leonard Lee
Guest Speakers: Chief Mariangely Solis Cervera of the Equity and Inclusion Cabinet
Others: Approximately 10 individuals from the public attended this meeting.

A. Introductions

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

B. Chairwoman and Executive Director's Report

1. Director Carvalho began his report by informing the Commission that he sent out four letters on behalf of the Commission. Three of these letters included requests for information in order to further our research on specific Initiatives. These Initiatives include Police Reform and the Digital Divide. The fourth letter was a Letter of Support to the Judiciary Committee on an Act to reform the hate crime statutes, SD972 / HD1891 sponsored by Senator Adam Hinds (D-Pittsfield) and Representative Tram Nguyen (D-Andover).
2. The Commission also received a letter from Council President Ed Flynn on the neo-nazi protests outside Brigham and Women's hospital. He asked that the Commission track these hate incidents so that residents are aware. In addition to sending a letter, Councilor Flynn filed a complaint with our office on this same matter.
3. **Staff Administrative Updates**
 - a. Director Carvalho has implemented weekly 1 on 1 individual staff meetings and biweekly entire staff meetings. The staff also started trust building activities such as the Quote of the Day and cultural lunches, as the staff is diverse.
 - b. Program Manager Susan Helmy continues to provide executive and administrative support to the staff. She worked with the Emergency Management office to secure PPE for the staff. She is also working with the Budget and Purchasing department to procure desktops and printers for staff.
 - c. Education and Outreach Manager Quincey Roberts is developing an outreach strategy to promote the work of the Commission. He and Susan

are working together on further supporting the Asian American and Pacific Islander community and potentially host an event in May. Quincey is also drafting an office pamphlet.

- d. Director of Research and Policy Roy Wada is currently supervising the interns we have this semester from Umass Boston. He is also drafting a final report on the Digital Divide.
 - a. Director Carvalho informed the Commission that Roy's prior employment, Boston Public Health Commission, requested his assistance on the COVID-19 Dashboard. Several of the Commissioners would like to see a written agreement and essentially a Scope of Work of this working relationship.
- e. Investigator Amber Garcia Gonzalez continues to conduct intake on the complaints that are filed with the Commission. The Commission has received 5 intake complaints and 10 Anonymous incident complaints. Of the intake complaints, 1 were gender identity, 2 were race, 1 was previous psychiatric treatment and 1 was unspecified.

4. Chief Mariangely Solis Cervera

- a. Chief Solis Cervera was appointed as Chief of the Equity and Inclusion Cabinet last month. She spoke to trust building being an important and necessary part of working together.
- b. Chief Solis Cervera also spoke to the framework of the Equity and Inclusion Cabinet which includes capacity building, the definition of equity and constituent empowerment. Transforming city practices to better serve the residents of Boston is an important priority of the Equity and Inclusion Cabinet.

C. Discussion on Hate Speech Incidents around Boston

1. There has been an increase in hate speech incidents in Boston. These incidents and protests have been outside the Brigham and Women's hospital and even outside the Mayor's residence.
2. The Commission should make a public statement denouncing hate speech. This is not to be misconstrued with the fact that individuals should have a right to freedom of speech but if the speech creates a hostile environment, it is one that cannot be condoned.

3. The Commission will document to see if there is a pattern or practice. Also, the Commission will reach out to the San Francisco Human Rights Commission as they have developed a way to document and map these types of incidents.

D. Public Comments

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

E. Votes

1. Three votes were taken during this meeting.
 - a. Unanimous vote of approval for the 12.15.2021 and 1.19.2022 Commission Meeting Minutes.
 - b. Unanimous vote to designate a Liaison to serve as support to the Board
 - c. Unanimous vote for staff to make a monthly report to Commissioners on complaints HRC has received and any projects they are currently working on.
 - d. Unanimous vote for all final reports/summaries from interns to be posted on the website.
 - e. Unanimous vote to make a public statement on the hate speech incidents around Boston.
 - f. Unanimous vote to adjourn at 7pm.