

Boston Human Rights Commission Public Meeting Minutes

December 15th, 2022 at 5PM via Zoom

Present: **Commissioners:** Chairwoman Reyes Coll-Tellechea and Commissioners Robert MacEachern, Mario Paredes, Elijah Evans and Tre'Andre Carmel Valentine (Commissioner Leonard Lee and Anne Rousseau was absent)
Others: Approximately 10 individuals from the public attended this meeting.

A. Introductions

1. Chairwoman Coll-Tellechea called the Meeting to order at 5PM.

B. Interim Director's Report

1. Currently on the Boston Human Rights Commission's website there are two intake forms. One is extensive while the other is shorter and allows for the option of anonymity. Interim Director Helmy is looking to combine the forms for simplicity and efficiency. This new combined form will be translated into the top 10 languages for the City of Boston.
2. Denise has started drafting a Resource Guide and "How to" Guide. Both of these documents will be uploaded to the department's website and social media. They also will be translated into the top languages in Boston.
3. Last but not least, Interim Director Helmy attended an intelligence briefing hosted by the Boston Police Department, specifically the Boston Regional Intelligence Center (BRIC). This briefing was in regards to threat assessments made to the LGBTQ+ Community. They are looking to prepare a variation of this briefing to present to Boston bar and club owners.

C. City Council President Ed Flynn

1. Council President Flynn discussed the rise of hate crimes in Boston. These hate crimes have been happening all over the country and towards several communities such as the LGBTQ+ Community and Asian American and Pacific Islander community (AAPI). These hate crimes are unacceptable.
2. Council President Flynn offered his assistance and spoke to the need to strengthen hate crime laws and enforcement.

D. Chair's Report

1. The Boston Human Rights Commission was created by former Mayor Raymond Flynn in the 1980s, it focused on discrimination cases and served as a mediator in dispute settlements. It also supported legislation, in 1989 the Boston Human Rights Commission actively supported the state's gay rights bill.

2. Chairwoman Coll-Tellechea served as supervisor to BHRC's Research Assistants. One of the biggest items that stood out to her during this first half of research was that the City cannot rely on the State as hate reporting is voluntary, thus making hate crime data incomplete.
3. The presentation today will address two issues:
 - a. What would be the first step to understand and assess acts of hate in Boston?
 - b. What could be the role of the Boston Human Rights Commission?

E. Graduate Intern Presentations on Hate Crimes

1. Please see [here](#) for a copy of the presentation.
2. Some Key Takeaways and questions that came up during the discussion portion:
 - a. The data that was presented was not combined, i.e data from BPS and BPD were kept separate. The data was instead used as a "story-telling" view to show the big picture.
 - b. Memorandums of Understandings in regards to data sharing are important in order to get a better understanding of what is going on in Boston communities. It will also help better understand which communities might have stopped reporting and why city and state data differs in regards to hate crimes.
 - c. While these statistics tell us a story, underreporting is a major issue, barriers to underreporting include but are not limited to: language access, fear of retaliation or immigration status.
 - d. There are currently no laws that mandate law enforcement agencies to report their hate crime data. This is not okay and we cannot move forward if we do not know the full picture.

F. Public Comments

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

G. Votes

1. Two votes were taken during this meeting.
 - a. Unanimous vote to approve 11.17.22 Meeting Minutes.
 - b. Unanimous vote to adjourn at 6:17pm.