

Boston Human Rights Commission Public Meeting Minutes

September 15th, 2022 at 5PM via Zoom due to COVID-19

Present: **Commissioners:** Chairwoman Reyes Coll-Tellechea and Commissioners Anne Rousseau, Robert MacEachern, Mario Paredes and Elijah Evans (Commissioner Leonard Lee and Carmel Valentin were absent)
Others: Approximately 5 individuals from the public attended this meeting.

A. Introductions

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

B. Chairwoman and Interim Director's Report

1. In regards to staff trainings, staff completed the Employment Discrimination training offered by the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD). There are 3 upcoming trainings in the next couple months, Addressing Sexual Harassment, Public Accommodation Requests and Mediation. This mediation training was offered and sponsored by the Human Rights Commission to other Equity and Inclusion Cabinet staff.
2. As for staffing, Interim Executive Director Suzie Helmy began the interviews for the Education and Outreach Position. She will conduct second round interviews next week, making an offer to the finalist by the end of the month.
3. In regards to the Coalition created by the Office of Police Accountability and Transparency (OPAT), Director Helmy reviewed the Request for Proposal (RFP) and provided her feedback. This RFP will focus on the creation of equity assessment tools to evaluate BPD policies and procedures and a semi-annual report on BIPOC, hiring, promotion and retention. This RFP will be open until the end of the month. Director Helmy will continue to be part of this Coalition to create benchmarks for the consultant that is chosen. The consultant's work will begin in November and conclude June 2023.
4. Last but not least, the Commission hosted a Town Hall on September 14th in partnership with the Mayor's Office of LGBTQ+ Advancement and City Councilor Kendra Lara's Office. There were approximately 170 individuals in attendance. Mayor Wu gave some opening remarks and U.S Attorney Rachael Rollins spoke to her "ENDH8NOW" hotline.

C. Introduction of new Commissioners and Graduate Interns

1. Chairwoman Coll-Tellechea informed the public that we have 3 new Commissioners with two Commissioners joining this meeting, Mario Paredes and Elijah Evans. She asked that everyone give some brief introductions.

2. Commissioner Robert MacEachern is a third generation Codman Square resident. He is the President of Codman Square Health Center. He has spent 25 years working with at-risk youth.
3. Commissioner Anne Rousseau is a Jamaica Plain resident, she lives there with her wife. She is the Chief Financial Officer of Metro Housing Boston. She is also one of the founders and co-chair of JP Progressives. Last but not least, she is the co-chair of Boston's Ward 11 Democratic Committee.
4. Commissioner Mario Paredes is a new Commissioner. He is a resident of West Roxbury. He works as a staff attorney at the Massachusetts Law Reform Institute and Prisoners' Legal Services. His focus is immigration, civil and human rights related issues.
5. Commissioner Elijah Evans has lived in Boston for the majority of his life. He is the Executive Director of Bikes not Bombs in Jamaica Plain. His experience is in youth development, transportation and the intersectionality of those areas. He is a UMass graduate.
6. Thalia Viveros Uehara is a Ph.D candidate intern at UMass Boston. She is a research intern for the Commission.
7. Interim Director Suzie Helmy is a resident of Jamaica Plain. She is half Greek and half Egyptian. She has worked with the Boston Police, various court systems and as a TSA Officer before working for the Human Rights Commission. She was hired two and a half years ago as the Executive Assistant and has now been serving as Interim Director for the past five months.
8. Chairwoman Reyes Coll-Tellechea is a resident of Dorchester. She has been teaching at UMass Boston for 29 years. She was born and raised in Spain. She has worked with both of the Commission's graduate research interns in the past on police reform and internet access in Boston.

D. Preliminary Discussion of 2022-2023 Objectives

1. Commissioner Rousseau spoke to her interest with the Anti-Hate Campaign and the Commission's focus on hate crimes and incidents. Her interest stems from the importance of educating residents that the Commission can serve as a resource amongst others. She also knows the Immigration is an important topic and does not want to lose sight of that.
2. Commissioner MacEachern echoed Commissioner's Rousseau's points but wants to take it a step further. After receiving more information, locating structural and systematic racism to get to the root of the problem should also be a focus of the Commission.
3. Commissioner Paredes agreed with Commissioner MacEachern but stressed the importance of intersectionality specifically with the intersectionality of immigration and structural racism.
4. Commissioner Evans spoke to police reform specifically the question of how the Boston Police handle Hate protests as opposed to Black Lives Matter protests. Additionally, after reading the UMass report Commissioner Evans is interested in the Commission doing Know your Rights trainings for residents.

E. Public Comments

1. There were two public comments made during the meeting.
 - a. One comment was that the non-English Anonymous Incident Report form was not accessible.
 - b. The second comment was made by Kaitlyn Wang. She suggested that the Commission have meetings, specifically in Chinatown with bilingual advocates to help individuals fill out intake forms and encourage residents to report.

F. Votes

1. Three votes were taken during this meeting.
 - a. Majority vote to approve 7.21.22 Meeting Minutes.
 - b. Majority vote to approve 8.18.22 Meeting Minutes.
 - c. Unanimous vote to adjourn at 6:15pm.