



**Cambridge Human Rights Commission
Thursday, March 4, 2021
Zoom Virtual Public Meeting
Yasmin Padamsee Forbes: Chair**

Present: Chair Yasmin Padamsee Forbes, Commissioners Michael Kourabas, Mercedes Evans, Katie Stack, Joshua Stadlan, and Stefanie Haug

CHRC Staff: Attorney Investigator Carolina Almonte, and Project Coordinator Crystal Rosa

Absent: Commissioners Kaileigh Callender, Bonita Cox, Olinda Marshall, and Sabrina Selk

Documents Used:

- February 4, 2021 Minutes

1. Call to Order

Co-Chair Yasmin Padamsee Forbes called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

2. Public Comment

No one was recording the meeting and members of the public were not present.

3. Introduction to Interim Executive Director

The members of the commission introduced themselves to Vali Buland, the Interim Executive Director appointed after the retirement of Nancy Schlacter. IED Buland has worked for the City of Cambridge for several decades. IED Buland served as the General Counsel of the Rent Control Board and when Rent Control ended, she became an attorney in the City's Law Department. IED Buland served as Interim Executive Director of the Cambridge Human Rights Commission twice in the past years. IED Buland retired in 2018 but continued to work part time for the Law Department and volunteered with the Immigration Unit of Greater Boston Legal Services.

4. Review and approval of February 2021 Minutes

The Commission reviewed the minutes from the meeting on February 4, 2021. Commissioner Stack moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Haug.

5. Executive Director's Report

Attorney Investigator (AI) Carolina Almonte updated the members of the Commission on the latest cases. Since the February meeting, one new case has opened and one case has closed. The new case involves a claim of discrimination in housing based on the person's source of income and disability. Currently, there are three pending cases, two of the cases involve a

claim of discrimination in employment and the other claim of discrimination is in housing. In the employment complaints, the claims are based on national origin, age, and gender identity. In the housing complaint, the claim is based on the person's source of income. The closed case involved claims of discrimination in housing based on the person's national origin and family status. AI Almonte updated the Commission on her participation in the monthly brown bag luncheon with the Suffolk University Housing Discrimination Testing Program.

6. February 2021 meeting follow up

Commissioner Haug informed the Commission that she participated in a forum on COVID Vaccine Hesitancy organized by the Mayor's Office with Cambridge Public Health Department. Project Coordinator (PC) Rosa explained that the webinar was the English forum developed for addressing vaccine hesitancy and misinformation, which is being developed for different language communities that live in Cambridge. PC Rosa and her counterpart in CIRC, Tagesech Wabeto, are collaborating with the Public Health Department to identify local champions who want to use their language to outreach to their communities on why they have chosen to take the vaccine. The collaboration for the different forums is in progress.

7. New Business

Presentation: Fair and Affordable Housing Open House – Story Map

PC Rosa presented a draft of the story map that she developed as a digital platform for the Fair and Affordable Housing Open House. PC Rosa guided the Commission through a history of the event and its current online iteration to comply with social distance limits. PC Rosa is working with CDD and the Housing Liaison to coordinate and plan the launch of the story map for Fair Housing Month in April. They will be scheduling the original panels from the in-person event and creating a long-term campaign of informational panels/trainings.

Family Policy Council Working Committee on Language Justice

PC Rosa shared with the Commission her work with the Language Justice working committee in partnership with the Family Policy Council. PC Rosa has consulted on the development of a survey regarding the city's current practices regarding language access. The goal of the survey is to develop recommendations to improve language justice policies, practices, supports, and resources needed to ensure equitable access within Cambridge.

Commissioner Stack moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:00 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Haug.

The next Commission meeting will be on Thursday, April 1, 2021, in the Large Conference Room on the 2nd Floor of 51 Inman at 6:00 p.m., or Virtually on Zoom, depending on the status of the City's pandemic reopening policy.