



**Cambridge Human Rights Commission  
Thursday, September 15, 2016**

Present: Commissioners, Chanta Bhan, Mercedes Evans, Zainab Lakhani, Nadia Davila, Robert Slate, Olinda Marshall, Chara Itoka, Cynthia Orellana, and CHRC Staff Nancy Schlacter, Sabrina Acloque and Crystal Rosa.

Absent: Commissioners Nicholas Leydon, Bonita Cox, and Sabrina Selk,

Documents Used:

- June Minutes
- September Agenda
- Chapter 2.76 Human Rights Commission Ordinance – With Proposed Revisions
- Chapter 14.04 Fair Housing Ordinance – With Proposed Revisions

**1. Call to order**

Chair Bhan called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. No one was recording the meeting.

**2. Public Comment**

No public comment.

**3. Review and approval of June Minutes**

The Commission reviewed the minutes from the June meeting and approved them unanimously on a motion from Commissioner Slate, seconded by Commissioner Lakhani, with edits addressed.

**4. Commissioner and staff introductions to guest speaker and newest member**

Commissioners introduced themselves to newest Commissioner, Cynthia Orellana. ED Schlacter provided Commissioner Orellana with a training packet with CHRC ordinances and regulations, the Open Meeting Law guide, state ethics summary, and a determination review training.

**5. Executive Director's Report**

ED Schlacter updated the Commission on cases, staff activities, and outreach. Since the June meeting, 0 new cases opened, 1 case is pending, and 3 have closed. The pending case involves a public accommodation complaint, for which Probable Cause was found, conciliation efforts were unsuccessful and will be scheduled for a Public Hearing with Commissioners Evans and Cox as Hearing Commissioners. ED Schlacter continues to work with the GLBT Commission supervising projects regarding LGBTQ inclusiveness in afterschool programs and elder housing. HRC staff has been working on the final revisions of the Fair Housing Discrimination and Lead Paint Brochures, and meeting with Cambridge Public Health Department and Inspectional Services Department staff about the Lead Paint Story Journal. ED Schlacter met with representatives from MIT and Harvard about their institutions' efforts, policies and procedures regarding Title IX complaints.

**6. Presentation by Nicole Horton-Stimpson, Manager of Inclusion Services**

Ms. Horton-Stimpson provided an overview of the inclusionary program structure and support available for families with children with special needs, regarding their inclusion in City after-school programs. There are 30 year-round afterschool programs and 15 fulltime programs in the summer for students ranging from kindergarten to 8th grade. For children with disabilities to participate, they must enroll with an IEP release form for a needs assessment to be completed. The Inclusionary Specialist develops a plan based on the child's level of need and ability to transition in and out of programs safely, and interact safely in the environment independently or with reasonable accommodations. Due to licensing limitations, if a child needs physical management, they will be unable to participate in the program. Ms. Horton-Stimpson ensured that those children are connected with therapeutic specialists. There are some IEPs that include reading support or specialists, 1 to 1 support, nursing support for children living with diabetes, and an inclusionary facilitator to assist children with nonverbal forms of autism. The Inclusionary Advisory Committee performs as a supervisory role over program services.

## **7. June meeting follow-up:**

- **Introductions and discussion of areas of interest for remainder of 2016**

Commissioner Orellana inquired about the city's actions in response to displacement of residents and businesses caused by gentrification. Commissioners Lakhani, Bhan, Davila and Evans noted their shared interest in this topic. Commissioner Evans noted her understanding that Cambridge Housing Authority is not replacing properties that were once low-income housing, but instead is creating mixed-income housing, which changes the demographics of those neighborhoods. Chair Bhan stated that she would reach out to Ken Reeves for more information.

- **Title IX Coordinators – Cambridge Universities and Cambridge Rindge and Latin School**  
ED Schlacter reached out to representatives of local campuses, inviting their Title IX Coordinators to speak in a panel to inform the Commission of their work and policies regarding allegations of sexual assault/harassment on their campuses. Representatives from Harvard and MIT responded and consulted with ED Schlacter about the best method to provide the Commission information. Rather than convening a panel, Harvard and MIT agreed to provide the Commission with information packets regarding their policies, procedures and efforts to address sexual assault and sexual harassment on campus. Each Commissioner received information packets from both universities, for review and consideration at a later meeting. ED Schlacter noted that the Title IX Coordinator from Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, was interested in addressing the Commission in person. The CRLS coordinator will be scheduled for a future meeting. Commissioner Orellana inquired about how local universities maintain their community partnerships with the City of Cambridge. ED Schlacter explained that the universities all provide Town & Gown Annual Reports and meet with the City Council at an annual public meeting. She agreed to provide additional information about this.

- **Final revisions to HRO & FHO for a vote**

ED Schlacter reviewed all proposed edits made to Cambridge's Human Rights and Fair Housing Ordinances with the Commission. The Fair Housing Ordinance will need to be reviewed by HUD, to consider its substantial equivalence to the Fair Housing Act as edited, then forwarded to the City Law Department for preparation of a Home Rule petition to the State Legislature, which must first be voted on by the City Council, and finally sent to the State House for approval by the Legislature. The edits made to the Human Rights Ordinance reflect the practice of the Commission regarding the hiring of an Executive Director, representation by the Law

Department in Court, addressing the appearance of conflict of interest when investigating claims against City agencies, and an increase in assessment of fines, consistent with State law. The edits to the Fair Housing Ordinance were approved on a unanimous vote, following a motion by Commissioner Evans, seconded by Commissioner Orellana. The edits to the Human Rights Ordinance were approved on a unanimous vote, by motion of Commissioner Evans, seconded by Commissioner Slate.

- **Collaboration with local efforts about Islamophobia/Xenophobia in Cambridge**

Commissioner Lakhani stated that she has had some discussions with members of her community regarding Islamophobia, noting that there is a growing perception that it is now acceptable to voice intolerance against Muslims. Commissioner Lakhani gave personal examples of incidents where members of her community received negative and hostile attention because of their appearance wearing head coverings or beards. According to Commissioner Lakhani, the local mosques are under pressure because of certain people who have worshiped there. Commissioner Lakhani explained that a mosque has no membership per se, and that generally, people do not know one another. Commissioner Orellana inquired about the demographics of the Muslim community in Cambridge. ED Schlacter will contact the city demographer for that information.

- **HUD funding for updated outreach materials**

HUD has agreed to fund the redesign of CHRC's Fair Housing discrimination brochure and development of an interdepartmental brochure about the City's services addressing lead paint. The HUD grant will also fund the creation of an online story journal, with more details about lead paint laws and services available to address it. These updated outreach materials will be custom designed and professionally translated into a number of predominant foreign languages used by residents of Cambridge.

## **8. New Business**

The Commissioners agreed for the following subjects to be addressed at the October meeting.

- Postpone invitation to co-founder of Y2Y shelter to speak about creating a welcoming gender-neutral environment from December 2016 to a later mtg.
- Confirm date of invitation to CRLS Title IX Coordinator to speak to Commission
- Confirm date of invitation to representative of US Atty's Office for presentation about Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Program.
- January 2016 mtg - Commissioner topics raised for further consideration:
  - a. Debt-bondage in Cambridge immigrant community – more info needed
  - b. How to navigate Cambridge Housing programs with Section 8 Vouchers

Commissioner Evans motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m. Seconded by Commissioner Orellana.

**Next Commission meeting will be Thursday, October 6, 2016 at 6:00 p.m.**