

**City of New Bedford Human Relations Commission
Minutes of Meeting**

A meeting of the Human Relations Commission was held on May 19, 2022 at 7:00pm in person at the Ashley Room. The meeting was called to order at 7:04pm by Commissioner Joseph.

Present: Martin Bentz, Chairman (Remote)
Jeffrey Costa, Commissioner
Chad Freitas, Commissioner
Genesis Galan, Commissioner
Deloris Joseph, Commissioner
Michael Mello, Commissioner

Also Present: Geovanny Sequeira, Community Services

Absent: Sidney Murray II, Commissioner

There was a quorum; Commissioner Joseph chaired the meeting in person, while Chairman Bentz was remote. Commissioner Freitas took minutes.

April 2022 minutes accepted with correction to Commissioner Mello's name. Motion: Commissioner Joseph. Second: Commissioner Costa. Unanimous. Motion carries.

NBPD

1. No representation from NBPD again for this meeting, possibly due to the change of day and time for meeting. ED has action to notify new community police officer of meeting day and time.

Executive Director's Report – tabled to next meeting in ED's absence

Events

May 13 – MHRC Meeting (see old business)

May 17 – UIA Community Meeting on Housing (see new business)

Upcoming

June 1 – H.O.M.E. Group Community Meeting

June 4 – New Bedford Pride

Old Business

1. Chairman Bentz mentioned that Mayor and members of City Council agreed to HRC name change. Need approval from full city council, possibly through sub-committee first.
2. Chairman Bentz gave an update from MHRC meeting and said that Cara Henderson representing the US Attorney's Office will include our full commission in upcoming events, including Town Hall on respecting diversity.

3. Chairman Bentz gave an update on the Ukraine Solidarity march in Fall River held on May 1, 2022 that he attended with ED and Geo from the HRC.
4. No update on CCT Code of Conduct, but Commissioner Galan mentioned she will be attending their meetings on a regular basis.

Complaints

1. Apartment Scam complaint is tabled until June meeting.

New Business

1. United Interfaith Action community meeting on housing crisis – Commissioner Galan gave a debrief on this meeting that she attended with Geo. She mentioned that Representatives Hendricks, Markey and Cabral were in attendance as well as other community developers and organizations (Cruz Constructions, Catholic Social Services, PACE, EDC, etc.). Chairman Bentz made a motion that he write a letter to Rep. Hendricks in support of a bill he planned to file to address the crisis in New Bedford. Second: Commissioner Freitas. Unanimous. Motion carries.
2. Chairman Bentz mentioned the upcoming Housing Options for Momentum and Equity (H.O.M.E.) community meeting on June 1 and Geo distributed flyers for the event.
3. Purchase St. Family Dollar – Commissioner Galan spoke about accessibility issues at Family Dollar. Geo took the action to notify Director of Community Services for referral to Commission for Citizens with Disabilities.
4. Addressing the spread of hate – Chairman Bentz mentioned we should all be more aware of hate incidents following an uptick of incidents, including the recent mass shooting in Buffalo. Commissioner Joseph mentioned that US Atty Rollins held recent Webex meetings and reported that, in Massachusetts, some incidents have been averted by people being aware and notifying authorities. Commissioner Joseph also recited some statistics from the meeting about hate crimes committed in MA against various groups.
5. Commissioner Costa brought up an issue regarding groups of people congregating and causing trouble in open spaces downtown and the issue is getting worse now that we don't have community policing downtown. Chairman Bentz agreed to contact the NBPD Community Liaison about action the NBPD is planning to take.

Motion to adjourn by Chairman Bentz, seconded by Commissioner Joseph. Meeting ended at 8:14pm.

Next meeting currently scheduled in person for Thursday, June 16, 2022 at 7pm unless a new monthly meeting day and time is agreed upon before then.

A true record attest: _____
Chad Freitas, Commissioner