

# Boston Human Rights Commission Public Meeting Minutes

February 16th, 2023 at 5PM via Zoom

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**Present:**      **Commissioners:** Chairwoman Reyes Coll-Tellechea and Commissioners Robert MacEachern, Mario Paredes, Elijah Evans, Leonard Lee and Anne Rousseau (Commissioner Tre'Andre Carmel Valentine was absent)  
**Others:** Approximately 15 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. The Boston Human Rights Commission currently has an Instagram, Twitter and Newsletter. All social media and the newsletter sign up can be found on our website: <https://www.boston.gov/departments/boston-human-rights-commission>
  - a. After working with the City Analytics team and DoIT, our dashboard has been updated. The updated dashboard is not only more visually appealing but contains items such as protected classes, case status, police involvement and incidents by neighborhood.
  - b. In the new week or so, our Resource Guide and Respond to Hate Toolkit will also be available on our website. We are looking to get these translated.
2. Several City of Boston departments are looking to form a cross-departmental coalition in regards to public art related vandalism. The Boston Human Rights Commission will join this Coalition.
3. Education and Outreach Manager, Denise DosSantos will be attending the Creating Change 2023 Conference in San Francisco, California. This conference is hosted by the National LGBTQ Task Force and will contain workshops addressing the barriers that millions of LGBTQ people face in every aspect of their lives: in housing, employment, healthcare, retirement, and basic human rights.
4. Interim Director Helmy asked for recommendations from the Commissioners on organizations that have or can create a generic Know Your Rights Training for the workshops the office is looking to host.
5. The Boston Human Rights Commission now has a referral partnership with U.S Attorney's Rachael Rollins' office. This partnership will be similar to that of the one with the Boston Police Civil Rights Unit.
6. Last but not least, the office will be working in collaboration with the Arts Department to put out a call to artists around "What does Human Rights mean to you?"

7. It is to note that Commissioner Rousseau inquired as to when the Commission Meetings would be in person and emphasized the importance of meeting Boston communities where they are.

### **C. Chair's Report**

1. Chairwoman Coll-Tellechea provided an introduction to our guest speakers and some background information on hate crimes in Boston.

### **D. Guest Speakers from the Conflict Early Warning Analytics Program (CEWAP) at Center for Peace, Democracy and Development (CPDD) at the McCormack Graduate School for Policy and Global Studies (MGS), UMass Boston**

1. Please see [here](#) for a copy of the presentation.
2. Some Key Takeaways:
  - a. The rise of hate crime incidents (including cyber hate speech) – despite considerable efforts of FBI Boston to increase public awareness of hate crimes continues to rapidly increase in Massachusetts – a jump of 31 % in 2022.
  - b. Some of the reasons behind this is as follows: Lack of trust in law enforcement agencies; Lack of coordination among the law enforcement agencies and Lack of utilization of prevention mechanism in community policing
  - c. CEWAP recommends that the Boston Human Rights Commission monitors and strategy builds in regards to hate crimes as the response to hate crimes is primarily law enforcement.

### **E. Public Comments**

1. There was one public comment made during this meeting.
  - a. This comment was made by Catherine Vitale. She inquired as to when the Human Rights Commission might have their meetings in person. Interim Director Helmy informed her that this is a topic for the Commissioners to discuss in the next Commission meeting and all upcoming meetings with be announced on the Commission's socials and website.

### **F. Votes**

1. Two votes were taken during this meeting.
  - a. Majority vote to approve 12.15.22 Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Anne Rousseau abstained due to absence.

**b.** Unanimous vote to adjourn at 6:17pm.