

MINUTES

CHICAGO COMMISSION ON HUMAN RELATIONS (CCHR) BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING May 9, 2023

Attendance

Commissioners Present:

Nancy Andrade	Ahmad Jitan
Marta Cerda	Esther Nieves
Jennifer Eleazar	Michael Takada
Daniel Goldwin	Butch Trusty
Rey Gonzalez	Kim Waller
Daniel R. Hernandez	

CCHR Staff Present:

Kenneth Gunn	Kristen Lee
JoAnn Newsome	Maria Balderas
Daniel Serrano	
Marisol Gallegos	

Call to Order

Commissioner Andrade welcomed all to the meeting. There was no quorum, so the Commissioner began with introductions.

Transition Update

The Commissioner announced that she would be staying on in the Johnson administration. First Deputy Commissioner Kenneth Gunn reminded the board members that some may have an upcoming term expiration in July. He will check and report back at the next meeting.

Hiring Update

Ken Gunn provided an update on the new hires. The new housing investigator will be starting soon. An international fellow from Peru will begin on Monday, May 15. His name is Kenji Terukina Arbildo and he's an architect by trade. Two public service interns from local colleges will also start next week. These interns will be working in the Inter-Group Relations (IGR) Unit.

Hate Crime Pilot Project Grant

The Commissioner stated there were many new projects underway. CCHR is applying for a federal grant focused on hate crimes. IGR Director Daniel Serrano provided background on how the grant came about. The Mayor's office brought the grant opportunity to CCHR. The grant is for local municipalities working with community-based organizations.

Legislative Update

Deputy Commissioner, JoAnn Newsome provided information regarding the Returning Residents Ordinance and the Bodily Autonomy Ordinance. The Criminal History Records Ordinance amendments prohibit discrimination based on criminal history and include all phases of the employment process including recruitment, hiring, promotion, renewal of employment, selection for training, discharge, discipline, different terms and conditions, and tenure.

The Bodily Autonomy Ordinance prohibits discrimination or retaliation in housing or hiring based on an applicant or tenant seeking reproductive health care or gender-affirming care. This includes the applicants' or tenants' family members.

Director of Human Rights Compliance, Employment, Marisol Gallegos, provided an overview of the immigration services at CCHR. Mayor Lightfoot released an Executive Order to expand resources to immigrant survivors of crimes, by requiring certain departments to establish protocols to sign U and T visa certifications. Within the order, CCHR is mentioned as a department that currently does sign certifications. She explained a U visa (Victim of a qualifying crime) and T visa (victim of severe form of trafficking). She also mentioned that the Commission issues "Statement of Interests" for a new process that the U.S Department of Homeland Security released in January 2023 that was created to strengthen the US labor market by increasing the ability of labor and employment agencies to investigate potential violations more fully. This will provide temporary protection from deportation in the form of Deferred Action which would allow the person to obtain work authorization. The established protocols on how a person may request a statement of interest has been uploaded to the CCHR website.

The Commissioner expressed the importance of amplifying CCHR services to Chicago communities, including the migrant community. The board discussed the lifting of Title 42 which will create a large influx of migrants to the city. All expressed the importance of collaboration in addressing this crisis.

Unity Summit

Commissioner Andrade announced the date for the Unity Summit. The event will take place on Tuesday, June 20 at Malcolm X College, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. A save-the-date will be sent out soon. IGR Director Daniel Serrano gave background on the program for the Summit. The program will feature panel sessions covering on topics: Public Safety through an LGBTQ lens; Development Without Displacement: The Many Faces of Islam; and Standing Up to Racism, Antisemitism, and Hate. He has reached out to Butch Trusty to moderate the panel session on LGBTQ issues. Ahmad Jitan has agreed to serve as the moderator of the Many Faces of Islam panel session. Ald. Carlos Rosas, Ald. Maria Hadden, and Ald. Debra Silverstein have been invited to participate in the panel sessions. The Commissioner noted Mayor-elect Brandon Johnson will be invited to provide opening remarks.

Advisory Council Reports

Advisory council representatives reported they are in a holding pattern due to the mayoral transition. Some of the advisory council members' terms are ending. Jennifer Eleazar reported on behalf of the Women's Advisory Council. The council last met on April 18th. There are a few vacancies in the council primarily due to individuals moving out of Chicago. The Women's Council will look into filling those vacancies once Mayor-elect Johnson and his team are settled in. The council is putting together a draft of recommendations for Mayor-elect Johnson and his team.

Butch Trusty reported for the LGBTQ Advisory Council: The LGBTQ Advisory Council has not met since March, as it waits for the new administration to take office. The Council has prepared some initial thoughts and recommendations for Pride Month celebrations. Council liaison, JD Van Slyke, was scheduled to meet with the transition team and share some of those ideas. There are several members whose terms are scheduled to expire this year and will wait for direction from the new administration before replacing or reappointing anyone.

Ken Gunn reported on behalf of the Veteran's Advisory Council. There is now a director of veteran's affairs in the Mayor's office. Kevin Barszcz will serve as the City of Chicago's Director of Veteran Affairs. As a Chicago native, Chicago Public Schools graduate, and a U.S. Navy Veteran, Barszcz comes with over a decade of experience working within the veteran community, building collaborative partnerships, and providing support to veterans and their family members. Kevin used to be a member of the Veterans Advisory Council.

Approval of Minutes

Quorum was established midway through the meeting and at that point, the Commissioner asked for a motion to approve the minutes from November 22, 2022. Marta Cerda moved and Mike Takada seconded the motion. All were in favor. She then asked for a motion to approve the minutes from March 9, 2023. Daniel moved and it was seconded by Esther Nieves. All were in favor.

The Commissioner reminded all that with the expiration of the Federal Emergency Order (Covid 19), all future meetings must establish in-person physical going forward. Hybrid meetings may continue but quorum cannot be established virtually, it can only be established in-person.

New Business

Commissioner Andrade took a poll from the board members to change the time of the meetings. She noted that her predecessor scheduled the meetings during lunch to make it more convenient for board members. Marta recommended that the meetings be held in the morning. The Commissioner asked the board members to think about a new meeting time.

Esther Nieves commented on the growing anti-immigrant narrative related to the new migrants. She said the migrants are being vilified even in the Latino community. Esther asked how the Commission can help change the narrative and combat the prejudice against the migrants. The Commissioner responded that CCHR will continue to work with its partners to promote awareness and will continue to do outreach to provide information and raise awareness. Kim Waller asked if there was a website, dashboard, or report that the Commission could refer to that informs on the number of migrants, where they are coming from, and why they have left their countries. The Commissioner responded that OEMC is responsible for tracking the migrant assistance efforts. Ken noted that there is information about the migrant crisis on the City of Chicago website. Ahmad Jitan added that his organization IMAN is coordinating with the City of Chicago by providing mobile services to migrants at police stations. Commissioner Andrade also noted that Mayor-elect Brandon Johnson hired Richard Guidice as his chief of staff. Richard is the former head of OEMC, where he oversaw the City's mobilization and coordination of the migrant crisis response.

Public Comment

The Commissioner asked if there were any public comments. Wesam Shahed, from the State's Attorney's Office was present via Zoom. He thanked the Commission for allowing him to be a guest.

Motion to Adjourn

The Commissioner asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. It was moved by Mike Takada and seconded by Esther Nieves. All were in favor. The Commissioner wished everyone a happy Mother's Day.