



CITY OF REVERE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

5:00 pm Eastern Time

Location: Zoom

Monthly Meeting on June 2, 2022

Minutes DRAFT

1) **Chairperson Janine Grillo Marra calls meeting to order.**

- She then states that this meeting is all remote due to the Chambers not being available.

2) **Roll Call of Commissioners**

- Rev Tim Bogertman, Dr Lourenco Garcia, Vice Chair Chaimaa Hossaini, Molly McGee, Rachid Moukhabir, Kourou Pich, Kathi Reinstein, and Chair Janine Grillo Marra are present remotely.
- Lynn Alexis, Chief Chris Bright, and Chief Dave Callahan are absent.
- Quorum in attendance.

3) **Land Acknowledgment**

Recognizes and respects Indigenous Peoples as traditional stewards of this land. Includes moment of silence to acknowledge that Revere is the land of the Pawtucket tribe.

4) **Arrive & Settle - Brief Silence**

Chairperson Grillo Marra offers brief statements about the tragic shootings at Robb Elementary School, TX on May 24th and the hideous racially motivated hate crime at a supermarket in Buffalo, NY on May 14th (full statement from HRC and Mayor Arrigo on HRC webpage). Vice Chair Hossaini adds that there was another tragic shooting yesterday, June 1st at a Tulsa, OK medical center.

Chairperson Grillo Marra the shares her screen and reads an anonymous poem MY POEM – *Author Unknown* (My Poem is a song to human rights for all, from fragile childhood to neglected old age) followed by short silence.

5) **Approval of Minutes from the May 5th Monthly Meeting**

Commissioner McGee MOTIONS to **approve the minutes** and Vice Chair Hossaini seconds; All are in favor.

6) **Director's Message and Updates - Dr. Maritsa Barros, EdD, Chief Officer of Talent & Culture**

Dr Barros begins with these updates:

- The City of Revere is part of the Massachusetts Municipal Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Coalition, with its Chief Officer of Talent and Culture serving as Co-Chair.
 - This is a group of professional DEI practitioners in the local MA government space that share experiences, compares best practices, and supports each other through common challenges.
 - Dr Barros excited to share a new DEI Guide written by and for municipal DEI practitioners. This guide will be uploaded to the HRC webpage.
- Student connections: Dr Barros has been at Revere and Seacoast High Schools engaging in great conversations to build pathways for connections. More to follow on specific ideas.
- The Revere Beach Partnership is seeking any cultural groups to perform at this year's International Sand Sculpting Festival on July 22-24 with its 'world' theme this year.



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- These would not be paid performances but would give exposure to the group. They are looking for singing or dancing groups.
- If anyone has something to offer, contact Dr Barros through the HRC webpage or directly at mbarros@revere.org

a. Cultural Misappropriation

Dr Barros has reflected on the recent tragedies in the country as well as the environment in the Council Chambers at our HRC meetings. People of Color won't join us due to fear. And Dr Barros would be remiss to ignore and not address the disrespect and mockery to Mexican people and culture displayed by guests at the May 5th HRC meeting. Education is key: "When you know better, you can do better." – Maya Angelou

i. Statement from Commissioner Molly McGee

Commissioner McGee states that the HRC must acknowledge the inappropriate and disrespectful behavior during the open forum of the May 5th meeting. It wasn't cultural appropriation; it wasn't an attempt to celebrate Mexicans. It was a mockery and a display of racism which degraded an entire culture. Mexican people are native to the land that is comprised within the continental United States. Commissioner McGee felt compelled to respond to hate speech and highlights the words distasteful and disgraceful, even for those of us who are not Mexicans. Please treat people better. Education is key.

b. June events (report by Dr Barros)

- Happy Pride Month!
 - Pride Flag Raising was yesterday, June 1. Acknowledges work of Councilor Morabito and Charlie Giuffrida.
 - Tea Dance Party scheduled for Sunday, June 26, 2:00-7:00pm at Waterfront Square, 400 Ocean Ave.
- Juneteenth Freedom Day Celebration on Saturday June 18 at 11:30-2:00, Veterans Memorial Park, 249 Broadway. Flag raising, speaking, music, BBQ.
- Happy Caribbean Heritage Month – nothing planned but community members can offer suggestions
- Happy Black Music Month
- Fliers for Tea Dance Party, Juneteenth Celebration, and Moroccan Festival to be posted on HRC webpage

Vice Chair Hossaini inquires about translation for fliers. Dr Barros will check on this.

Commissioner Pich adds that June is Immigrant Heritage Month.

Commissioner Moukhabir invites HRC and all to attend the Moroccan Festival on June 25 at 1:00-8:00pm at Whelan Elementary School, 107 Newhall St.



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7) Topics for Discussion

a. Updates from HRC Working Groups

Chairperson Grillo Marra reports that since a few HRC members volunteered to serve on more than one group, the working groups were adjusted slightly for more equitable time and Chief Callahan will serve as a consultant when needed:

Cultural Events and Celebrations

- Chaimaa Hossaini, Chief Bright, Rachid Moukhabir

Education and Outreach

- Lynn Alexis, Kourou Pich, and Kathi Reinstein

Evaluation

- Dr Garcia, Rev Bogertman, Molly McGee

Special Task Force for Public Mediations

- Lynn Alexis and Molly McGee, Janine Grillo Marra

Update from Cultural Events and Celebrations

- They are using a template/ideas from the Moroccan Festival event to help other groups organize.
- City-wide Events Task Force is very helpful to assist groups with licensing, coordinating with various departments, and other needs.
- Once complete, they will share both an 'internal events planning' working document as well as a resource document for the community.
- Will work on a HRC banner to display at different events.
- Dr Barros mentions creating a HRC logo.
- Dr Barros asks, how can the community members get involved?
- Chairperson Grillo Marra states that eventually each working group will have their own webpage with contact info, updates etc., however for now we can put a link on the HRC webpage to contact this group.

Update from Education and Outreach

- This group has not been able to meet due to scheduling issues. Will inform HRC leadership once meeting is scheduled.

Update from Evaluation

- Group discussed what tools to create for measuring the quality of HRC work – what is best/where to start?
- Need to increase trust and credibility so first project is to create a 'post-meeting survey.'
- Will be translated and could also be used at HRC events.
- Dr Garcia shared his screen with a draft of the survey.
- After the meeting, he will follow up with a 'bcc' email to all members for more considerable review and feedback.



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Update from Special Task Force for Public Mediations

- After receiving direction and clarification from Dr Barros, this will be a short-lived task force to set up a public mediation and then reconvene in the future if necessary.
- Considerations for Public Mediations are defining the purpose and what qualifies, determining location, creating an application process, and deciding on the specific format, i.e., Restorative Justice Circle vs. Traditional Mediation (similar to the legal system).
- Chairperson Grillo Marra to follow up with 'bcc' email with a summary document for HRC members to further review, consider and give input.

8) Appearance requested by Anthony S. Cogliandro, Ward 3 City Councillor

- Chairperson Grillo Marra recognized Anthony Cogliandro, who had requested the opportunity of Dr Barros to address the Commission.
- Mr Cogliandro, who is the Ward 3 City Councillor, acknowledged that he was speaking on his own (not a representative of the City Council) and to address comments made by a Commission member, Vice Chair Hossaini, during the HRC December 2, 2021, meeting.
- Mr Cogliandro expressed empathy for HRC members considering the disruptive and disrespectful behavior happening at public body meetings, including the City Council.
- Chairperson Grillo Marra and Mr Cogliandro concurred that the specific remarks at the December 2, 2021, meeting were in reaction to inflammatory comments made by audience members directed at the Commission, and also agreed that Commission members must strive to maintain a higher standard of conduct in view of their appointed position to a government body.
- Both acknowledged that conduct by HRC members on December 2, 2021, was not skillful.
- The Commission member, Vice Chair Hossaini, who made the remarks accepted accountability and responsibility for her remarks and expressed that she reacted as she did to racial and Islamophobic motivated comments by audience members.
- Mr Cogliandro expressed appreciation to Vice Chair Hossaini's response, his overall support for the HRC, and all parties agreed that the goal is to work together among residents, the Commission, and the City Council, aware of respectful commentary and the standards that the Commission strives to achieve.
- Dr Barros closed with remarks and concerns about the accountability of guests who attend our meetings and continue to make racial comments.

9) Other Business – NONE



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10) Open Forum (opportunity for the public to address HRC)

Lisa Johnson: Wants to know why the meeting is remote because there are people at the Council Chambers and the room is currently empty. Feels HRC is trying to hide from the public.

Chairperson Grillo Marra responds that the HRC wants to meet in person. However, last month the City Clerk emailed all Board and Commission Chairs that the Chambers would not be available in June due to budget hearings and to make other plans. See the City Clerk for more information.

Michael Sparks: Several accusations were made about being called Islamophobics but there is no videotape of this. Also, Dr Barros was not approved by the Council.

HRC Chair responds that Dr Barros is not a HRC member so does not undergo the same process as other Commissioners. We do not have video of the Islamophobic comments because they happened during suspension of the December 2, 2021, meeting when RevereTV pauses coverage. Dr Barros encourages Mr Sparks and guests to listen when we speak to hear the facts. Vice Chair Hossaini did not state at this meeting that she was called Islamophobic.

Joe Rizoli: Feels Vice Chair should resign. Sees embarrassment of HRC. Starts yelling and using profanity.

Commissioner Reinstein calls Point of Order. Chairperson Grillo Marra asks Mr Rizoli to proceed cautiously and respectfully. She reiterates that the community can give input, but it is not the community's place to tell HRC members how we feel.

Ralph DeCicco: Is also the Chair of the Disability Commission. Grateful for HRC. Reaching out to HRC for support and recommendation that all public meetings should have a hybrid component for greater accessibility. Would appreciate any assistance from HRC.

HRC Chair will add to next agenda and happy to provide support. Dr Barros mentions need to also consider ASL (American Sign Language) interpretation and standardization at all public meetings.

11) Adjournment

Commissioner Pich MOTIONS to adjourn. Commissioner McGee seconds. All in favor. Meeting adjourned.