

# CITY OF REVERE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

**5:00 pm Eastern Time**

**Location: City Council Chambers or via Zoom**

**Monthly Meeting – March 7th, 2024**

## **1) Call Meeting to Order**

\*On the record, Chair Hossaini was not present at the start of the meeting, Director Morabito took role and initiated the meeting.

### **A) Introduction of the new members**

- **Herb Jean-Baptiste: Former Vice President** for the Nursing Home Division of 1199SEIU, Board member of the GBIO, Board member of the Asian Caucus in the greater Boston area, and is also Board member of the Haitian Jaspura
- **Somaya Laroussi:** Grew up in the Shirley Ave community, over 8 years of grassroots and community organization experience. Double-majored in environmental science a science and international relations.

Morabito requests a motion to take items out of order, Chief Brights motions

## **6) Recap what we have done in February**

### **A) BLM Event at Revere High School**

- **Dr. Garcia:** Welcomed Jean Baptist and Somaya. February was a successful month because there was a massive turnout for an event at the high school, co-sponsored by the City of Revere Human Rights Commission, along with the help of Revere TV to broadcast such an event. Appreciated that the commission members had provided so much support and even participated in the event. Ife was the focus of this year's Black History Month, and she rose to the occasion; not only did she act, but she brought upon political discourse and truly embraced the Narrative of Black African Americans in this country; she showed a movie of her own. Ife was the focus of this year's Black History Month, and she rose to the occasion of the event. There was a lot of good food, and it was a good way to promote local black businesses. Was impressed with how engaged people were with the event, dancing around discussing African American history and the multitudes of injustices and discrimination that past African Americans had gone through. Everyone basically came to make sure that Black History is recognized every day, and not limited to the month of February and regardless of racial-and-gender identity; for it is simply human to do so. Hopes for us to continue to do these types of events continue to support the good cause, for we have a lot of work ahead of us and by certainly working together that we can accomplish many things. Excited for what March has in store for us.

\*After this, Chair Hossaini appears on the center of the room in her place, apologizes for the inconvenience\*

## **2) Roll Call of Commissioners**

- Attorney Molly McGee
- Dr. Garcia
- Chief Bright
- Kourou Pich
- Somaya Laroussi
- Herby Jean-Baptiste
- **Father Wellington unable to join to due medical emergency**

### **3) Land Acknowledgment**

### **4) Approval of Minutes from the February 1st Monthly Meeting**

**Chief Bright motions to approve, Commissioner Pich seconds**

### **5) Monthly acknowledgements**

#### **Acknowledgements:**

- March is International Women's Month and Women's History Month
- March is also National Disability Awareness Month
- March 8th is International Women's Day
- March 11<sup>th</sup>, Ramadan starts
- March 11<sup>th</sup> is also World Day of Muslim Culture Peace Dialogue and Film
- March 17th is National Evacuation Day
- March 17th is also St Patrick's Day March 20<sup>th</sup>
- March 20<sup>th</sup> is the spring equinox
- March 21st is World Down Syndrome day
- March 21<sup>st</sup> is also International Day of the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
- March 25th is the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and Transatlantic Slave Trade
- March 31<sup>st</sup> is Easter

#### **Events:**

- **Iftar Dinner at the Beachmont VFW School on March 27<sup>th</sup>**
- **Murder Mystery Night at Casa Lucia with the Revere Public Library**

### **6) Recap what we have done in February**

#### **A) BLM Event at Revere High School**

### **7) Voting on the new Chair/Co-Chair**

- **Nominations were made by each of the commissioners for Chair first and then vice Chair**
  - **Chaimaa Hossaini is the Chair**
  - **Herby Jean-Baptiste is the Vice Chair**

**All were in favor**

#### **A) Re-introduction of the Subcommittees**

- **Chair Hossaini briefly explains the 3 subcommittees that the HRC has: Cultural Events and Celebrations, Education/Research/Evaluations, and Community Outreach and Organizations.**
- **Asks if the commissioners that are involved in each committee to go further into what their subcommittee does to provide a detailed description for if the new members would like to join any of them**

#### **B) Ask if new commissioners would like to join any subcommittees**

- None had an answer, will come back in April to re-ask if they are interested into the subcommittee
- Director Morabito states that if there is any event that is being planned, it should only be between members of the subcommittee, for he is just there for support or guidance. Additionally, for any event to take place, it must be planned at least 3 months in advance
- Pich: Wants the commission to really sit down and plan for the next fiscal year 5 total events and to aim for allowing the community to participate in said subcommittees for a more dynamic relationship between the HRC and the community.
- Hossaini: When it comes to the event that is being planned, there has been a lack of transparency mainly because if word were to go to the entire commission, then it would break open-meeting laws. The subcommittees ultimately function semi-independently from the HRC and are not monitored to the same extent as the entirety of the HRC
- Morabito: To Kourou's point, we can make the subcommittee meetings live and allow people from the public to join as a first step for community engagement.
- Garcia: Agrees with all the points made by the commissioners; suggests that we can make an online calendar that has when the subcommittees will meet and suggests for the commission to allocate time for a retreat so we can sit down and brainstorm what events we would like to see in the city for the year.
  - Hossaini follows up with how the commission can circumvent that without breaking any open meeting laws.
  - Garcia responds on having the hypothetical brainstorming surrounding a certain issue in the guise of training
- Jean-Baptiste: Agrees with Dr. Garcia and Kourou that we should have a retreat to brainstorm ideas to overcome issues in the community.
- Pich: Stated that we tried doing a circle-practice training last year, and because many people were not able at that time, we can bring that back this year since we have a full board of commissioners
- Hossaini: Acknowledges Pich's point and refers to Molly's point from last month about having a representative of a successful human rights commission to help guide us into proactively planning events and having time to plan trainings and being involved in the community
- McGee: Clarifies that mentorship from the Cambridge HRC is not only for the Revere HRC, but for the entirety of city hall, ranging from having a larger budget, paying the

commissioner, a director for only the HRC and not one that is balancing so many different things. Ultimately, a training for City Hall to help the HRC.

- Laroussi: Suggests a training or retreat for the commissioners to really sit down and see if all our values are aligned with one another and translate that into yearly objectives, rather than something broader like values and a mission statement
- Morabito: We should focus more externally and just educate the public, while city hall focuses on things internally. We cannot force elected officials to take training, but we can suggest training to elected officials. Garcia agrees with Morabito's point for suggesting elected officials to participate in such trainings
- Laroussi: I would rather have the training be optional but suggested to those who hold institutionalized positions of power. Additionally, Morabito's point about 'educating the public' disagrees that it is not to educate the public on what human rights are but spaces where we are articulating the experiences that people go through every day. Hossaini wholly agrees
- Pich: Any event that we plan should be targeting all aspects of the community (thinking 360 degrees around one's person) and having all aspects of the community be involved; 'there is no us or them'; everyone should be educated and involved
- Garcia: (In response to Laroussi) We should all sit down and define what education is and not make assumptions; for the Human Rights Commission, we need to sit down with the community and educate each other holistic practices (like storytelling) about their daily lives and struggles so that the commission can see how we can work with the system to increase access and opportunities for them, that is our duty as the HRC and that is education.
- Laroussi: (In response to Garcia) thinks that adding defining what education is to what we workshop is another thing we must do as a commission but before we do that, we need to have property protection (especially considering the events that happened in the past). Additionally, before we go off into the community, we need to take advantage of the voices we already have on the commission, whether it be for ourselves or on behalf of others.
- Garcia: (In response to Laroussi): Everyone in the commission knows what it feels like not to be safe. To clarify his point about sitting with people and listening to their stories, before doing all that, there must be a healthy foundation placed before building on top of it. Thanks Laroussi for bringing up the previous point
- Laroussi: Thanks Garcia for clarifying his point
- Pich: Reminds that despite all this, we should also focus on ourselves and our well-being, emotionally and physically. Reminding ourselves that it is not a straight path, you will not get there right away.
- Jean-Baptiste: Acknowledges that these are the types of conversations we are supposed to be having to drive change in the city and to spearhead the plan for further change in the city.

## **8) Other Business**

## **9) Open Forum**

## **10) Adjournment**

- **Commissioner Laroussi motions to adjourn, and Attorney Molly McGee seconds. All are in favor. Meeting is adjourned.**