

MINUTES

CHICAGO COMMISSION ON HUMAN RELATIONS (CCHR) BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING March 11, 2021

Attendance

Commissioners Present:

Nancy Andrade
Naderh Elrabadi
Kim Fountain
Simon Gordon

Ray Koenig, III
Leisa Mosley
Esther Nieves
Nabeela Rasheed

Michelle Shang
Butch Trusty

Staff Present:

Iris Archilla
Kenneth Gunn
Wessie Johnson

Kristen Lee
JoAnn Newsome
Peter Oakley

Albert Robinson
Connie Simonelli
Gloria Vu

Call to Order

Commissioner Nancy Andrade called the meeting to order at 3:53 p.m. and Gloria Vu recorded the minutes. A quorum of board of commissioners was present, and the meeting, having been duly convened, was ready to proceed with business. Commissioner Andrade had CCHR's Adjudication staff and the Board of Commissioners introduce themselves to get to know each other since the CCHR and the Board has not been able to meet in person during the pandemic.

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Andrade presented the minutes of the February 2021 Board meeting to the Board for approval, where upon motion was duly made by Ray Koenig, III to adopt as written, seconded by Esther Nieves and unanimously adopted. The minutes were approved as presented.

Commissioner's Report

Commissioner Andrade has been strategizing with board member Ray Koenig, III for an educational CLE program for attorneys, on the topic of representing parties before the CCHR. The CLE would give an overview of the CCHR's complaint filing, investigative and Hearing processes. The CLE is aimed at encouraging attorneys to represent those in need of legal representation. Ray has connected with the CBA Human Rights Committee to sponsor this program and to assist with MCLE accreditation. This event will be publicized throughout the CBA which has about 18,000 members. Updates are to follow.

Commissioner Andrade stated that a goal for the CCHR is to pivot to a virtual platform. The CCHR has embraced a digital platform during the pandemic, networking with multiple groups rather than meeting with only one or two groups physically. The virtual platform is enabling the Commission to expand its outreach and remain cost effective. When conditions will permit the CCHR to fully open and conduct in person meetings, it will continue using a virtual component in conjunction with in-person meetings. Embracing this mixed virtual and in-person format will raise the visibility of the Commission in the community.

On April 7th, the CCHR will launch the first of its webinar series. April is Fair Housing Month and to raise awareness of the Chicago Fair Housing Ordinance, the CCHR is sponsoring a free webinar on April 7 on said Ordinance. The webinar will educate the community on housing discrimination and how the Commission is here to assist. The same webinar will be presented live, in Spanish on April 14.

Another goal for the CCHR is to create a virtual library for the public. The webinar series will comprise a large portion of this library as all webinars will be recorded and housed on the CCHR website. The CCHR has additional webinars planned with the LGBTQ+ Advisory Council on issues affecting the LGBTQ+ community. One suggestion was to educate people on the significance of using pronouns, anti-LGBTQ+ discrimination, and how to identify and report a hate crime. Updates are to follow.

Commissioner Andrade also stated that the CCHR has been proactively working on establishing a presence in the Asian communities and has been actively meeting with Asian community leaders. The CCHR has been invited to speak at the Coalition for a Better Chinese American Community (CABC) and will provide a presentation on hate crimes. Board member, Michelle Shang has also stated that the Chinese American Association of Greater Chicago (CAAGC) also want to reach out to the CCHR regarding the uptick of Asian hate crimes nationwide. Board member, Nabeela Rasheed wanted to clarify the term "Asian" as a "pan-Asian" definition and recommended the Commission reach out to the community groups that usually coordinates the Lunar New Year Celebrations every year to further the Commission's network efforts.

New Business

Board Member, Kim Fountain stated that as a part of Women's History Month, the Mayor's Office would like to introduce Commissioner Andrade to the Women's Advisory Council. Kim has also asked the Board if they had any input for the Women's Council on how discrimination affects women, trans-women, women of color, etc. differently.

Board member, Esther Nieves stated that the unemployment rate among women of color and immigrants has been devastating during the pandemic since they usually tend to be essential workers and work in lower wage jobs. Many have lost their jobs and have been forced to rely on government resources.

Esther also suggested that each advisory council provide a brief update at the Commission meetings to discuss their plans for awareness, to identify resources, and to support each other's work. Esther represents the Advisory Council on Equity which received an update on the various forms of activities planned for the "Together We Heal" initiative. The Equity Council has several ideas for future projects it is planning to implement. First, the council wants to develop an equity statement of principles for the City of Chicago to encourage and affirm that Chicago is a place of equity. Secondly, the council wants to work with the CCHR to enhance resources and the presence of the Commission for residents. Third, the council has discussed developing a virtual platform for residents to educate themselves on anti-Semitism and white supremacy and what the council can do to counter those sentiments. Finally, the council wants to address hate against the pan-Asian community and what the council can do to help promote healing and dialogue.

Board member, Butch Trusty who represents the LGBTQ+ Advisory Council has stated that the City has released the "Violence Reduction Plan" and it is off to a good start. The Council is exploring ways to help identify additional reduction strategies especially around elevating and centering the violence against trans-women of color with a goal to have a set of recommendations in place in the following months. He added, although, Covid has been a big issue, there are other health disparities in the LGBTQ+ community that still need to be addressed. Updates to follow.

Next Meeting

April 8, 2021 at 3:30 p.m., via Zoom

There being no further business to come before the board, a motion to adjourn was duly made by Ray Koenig, III and was seconded by Esther Nieves and was unanimously adopted at 4:09 p.m.