

MINUTES

**CHICAGO COMMISSION ON HUMAN RELATIONS (CCHR)
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING
July 11, 2019**

Attendance

Commissioners Present:

Mona Noriega, *Chair*
Joanna Borowiec
Ryan Dunigan
Simon Gordon

Rochelle Grimbau
Emanuel Johnson, II
Leisa Mosley

David Mussatt
Nabeela Rasheed
Julio Rodriguez
Michelle Shang

Staff Present:

Kenneth Gunn
Kelly Saulsberry

Gloria Vu
Karen Wallace

Call to Order

Mona Noriega called the meeting to order at 3:42 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.

Approval of Minutes

Mona Noriega presented to the board the minutes of the March 2019 board meeting for approval, whereupon motion was duly made by Nabeela Rasheed to adopt as written, seconded by Leisa Mosley and unanimously adopted. The minutes were approved as presented.

A motion to move to Executive Session was duly made by Nabeela Rasheed, seconded by Julio Rodriguez and unanimously adopted.

Adjudication Review Committee Report

Morales v Becovic Management Group, CCHR No 18-H-51

Matthew Lango provided a summary of this discrimination case based on source of income. He stated the Hearing Officer recommended the following relief:

- Payment to the City of Chicago of a fine of \$500;
- Payment to Complainant of emotional distress damage in the amount of \$10,000;
- Payment to Complainant of punitive damages in the amount of \$5,000;
- Payment of interest on the foregoing damage awards from the date of violation on December 27, 2017; and
- Respondent shall include on the Becovic Management website and in all advertisements for rental housing in which it is the leasing agent, the statements "EHOP" (Equal Housing Opportunity Provider) and "Section 8 recipients are welcome."

The Adjudication Review Panel accepted the Hearing Officer's recommendation with a change in the fine amount to \$1,000 to the City of Chicago, instead of \$500. Nabeela Rasheed, made a motion to accept the Adjudication Review Panel's recommendation; it was seconded by Emanuel Johnson, II and unanimously adopted.

Fair Housing Testing Project

Kenneth Gunn provided an overview of the Fair Housing Testing Project. The project is on-going and the schools involved with the testing are Roosevelt University and John Marshall Law School. Roosevelt University is taking the lead and have moved to the south side to continue with the testing. They have run into unforeseen issues that they did not anticipate. Oftentimes, testers try to make an appointment to see the landlords or management companies but a lot of the buildings on the south side are managed by management companies on the north side. Testers, oftentimes, cannot meet with landlords or management companies because they cannot make it to the south side and it has been difficult to get results when testers cannot meet with a decision maker.

CHA (Chicago Housing Authority) is also a partner in this project and has contracted for testing in Roger's Park and Albany Park, which has been completed. Additional testing will be done on the south side.

Just Housing Initiative

Cook County recently passed an ordinance to provide protection to ex-offenders. Usually people who have been incarcerated have a hard time finding housing even if they have the ability to pay rent. The ordinance was passed and the Cook County Commission is now in the rule making process. The rules should be finished by October, and the ordinance will go into effect January 1, 2020.

Cease and Desist Housing Letters

Matthew Lango explained that the CCHR is now sending out cease and desist housing letters for housing discrimination. The letters are targeting landlords who place ads stating "No Section 8" or similar language. Commissioner Mona Noriega stated that this is a new effort by the CCHR to battle discrimination in the City of Chicago.

CCHR has been able to locate some advertisements that appear to have been placed by companies that were holding themselves out as property management companies, realtors, or leasing agents. These advertisements, primarily apartment properties in Chicago, have "NO SECTION 8" listed, sometimes in all CAPS. Oftentimes, it is very difficult to figure out who has placed the advertisements online. The listing agent or realtor listed isn't always the person who placed the ad, or in some cases, the owner of the property does not have any knowledge that someone had placed the discriminatory advertisement for their property.

The CCHR's cease and desist letters include a copy of the advertisement found that violates the ordinance and a copy of the ordinance. If those who have received the letter and have not removed their discriminatory advertisements, the CCHR may initiate a complaint against them. To date, some of the ads have been removed in response to the letters.

Commissioner's Report

Mona Noriega announced that there is a new Housing Department and the Mayor's Office also hired a new Chief Equity Officer, both of whom will be coming to the CCHR to meet with staff. The Mayor's Office is also in the process of reviewing all of the department boards and the commissions in the City of Chicago.

Next Meeting

October 10, 2019, at 3:30 p.m., CCHR Boardroom

There being no further business to come before the board, a motion to adjourn was duly made by Ryan Dunigan and seconded by Michelle Shang and unanimously adopted at 4:55 p.m.