



DOMINICK PANGALLO
MAYOR

**CITY OF SALEM
RACE EQUITY COMMISSION**

98 WASHINGTON STREET
SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS 01970
978.745-9595 x. 41505

REGINA ZARAGOZA FREY, CHAIR
ALPHONSE WRIGHT, VICE CHAIR

**FINAL – Approved October 12, 2023
MINUTES OF THE RACE EQUITY COMMISSION
SEPTEMBER 7, 2023**

A meeting of the Salem Race Equity Commission (REC) was held on September 7, 2023, at 5:30 pm via ZOOM, an online video conference call system in accordance with Chapter 107 of the Act of 2022.

1. Roll Call

Present on the call were: Alphonse Wright (Vice Chair), Regina Zaragoza Frey (Chair), Shantel Alix, Rosa Alvarado, Nicole McLaughlin, Tara Dhanraj Roden, Alexandra Ramos, Lisa Cammarata, and Salem Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Stephen Zrike.

Absent were: Paola Miranda, Kenzie Chin, Chief of Police Lucas Miller, and City Council Liaison Leveille McClain.

Other meeting attendees include: Mayor Dominick Pangallo, Robert Zarnetske from HCH Enterprises, Adam from SATV, Steve Kapantais, and Dan.

2. Minute taker introduction – Samantha Giffen.

Chair Zaragoza introduced Samantha Giffen who will be serving as the minute taker for the Race Equity Commission meetings. Giffen works full time at Salem State University in their Frederick E. Berry Institute of Politics and is an active member of the League of Women Voters - Salem. Giffen shared that she is excited to learn more about the role of municipal government and the work of the Race Equity Commission. Her role will be to take minutes throughout every meeting and provide some guidance regarding parliamentary procedure.

3. Discrimination Reporting Form publication on City of Salem website. Discussion of press release.

Chair Zaragoza announced the official publication of the Discrimination Reporting Form on the City of Salem website (<https://records.salem.com/Forms/DRF>). A press release will be sent out by the city and members are encouraged to share the form broadly with friends, family, and community. Chair Zaragoza shared how to locate the form on the City's website and walked through how to fill out the form.



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The Discrimination Reporting Form can be found on the City's website here:

- City Government > Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion webpage on the left hand side (www.salemma.gov/dei)
- Boards / Committees > Race Equity Commission webpage on the left hand side (www.salemma.gov/race-equity-commission)
- Boards / Committees > Salem Human Rights Coalition webpage on the left hand side (www.salemma.gov/salem-human-rights-coalition)
- Online Services > Report Discrimination

As discussed at the previous meeting, there will be one central landing page for the form and then users can select from 5 languages. The languages selected were based on City Census data and feedback from the School District. Users have the option to fill out their personal information or submit the form anonymously. Then they are required to check the boxes acknowledging the disclaimers and provide a narrative of the situation/action that occurred.

Chair Zaragoza shared her gratitude to the REC Members and the Salem Human Rights Coalition for their participation in intentional dialogue throughout the development of the form. Through this form, the City will now be able to review the responses and collect data to guide future DEI and REC work. Chair Zaragoza opened for discussion and questions.

Vice Chair Wright questioned who the receiver of the form submissions will be. Chair Zaragoza stated that responses will go to her as the DEI Director, Vice Chair Wright as the Chair of the Salem Human Rights Coalition, and someone in the Mayor's Office. As discussed and stated on the disclaimer language, this form is for data collection purposes only so there will be no one calling and following up with submitters. Chair Zaragoza recently spoke with Chief of Staff Lisa Peterson that if there is something that requires reporting, action would have to be taken as discussed.

REC Member Nicole McLaughlin questioned if members should wait until the press release is sent by the City before sharing this form with their networks. Chair Zaragoza stated that it is fine to begin sharing as the press release is forthcoming within the next day.

Chair Zaragoza introduced Salem Mayor Dominick Pangallo. Mayor Pangallo joined to hear what the REC has been working on, introduce himself to all members, and share his gratitude for their work. Mayor Pangallo shared his thanks and gratitude to REC Members for their work on the reporting form and for volunteering to serve on the REC. Mayor Pangallo shared that this work is a priority to him and his administration.



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Lisa Cammarata notified Chair Zaragoza of other attendees on the Zoom call and provided direction to add them to an attendee list on the meeting minutes. Any attendees can be promoted to panelist if providing an update or wishing to speak at any point in the meeting.

4. Recruitment and Retention of a Diverse Workforce project update from HCH Enterprises.

Robert Zarnetske introduced HCH Enterprises as a minority owned business based in Rhode Island and does work throughout New England and the country. Some of their primary focuses are diversity, equity, health equity, and housing equity with most of their work being done in the public safety space for the recruitment and retention of police departments and fire departments.

For the Recruitment and Retention of a Diverse Workforce project in the City of Salem, HCH Enterprises is partnering with Dr. Maritsa Barros, former DEI Officer for Revere and current professor of DEI at Tufts University. At this point in the project, they are currently going through the documents that have been sent over by the City of Salem and reviewing those for biased language. Next week, there will be a project kick off meeting with Chair Zaragoza to begin developing the plan for the deliverables and the REC's involvement.

Based on what has been reviewed so far, Zarnetske shared there is a lot of work to be done on this project, though all of it is pretty typical. In terms of recruitment, the work will be about broadening the channels of outreach for possible sources of new hires. In terms of retention, it is about inclusion and making people feel like they belong in the workplace.

Chair Zaragoza reminded members that the City of Salem received a grant from the Community Compact Grant from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for this project and an equity audit which the REC will be hearing about more in future months. The focus of this Diverse Workforce project being led by HCH is to do an in depth evaluation of the City's hiring practices and how to have the City staff reflect the community being served. Lisa Cammarat, Director of Human Resources, will also be closely involved in this project. The role of the REC for this project is to receive updates and provide feedback as it works to fulfill one of the purposes of the REC.

REC Member Nicole McLaughlin questioned the role of HCH in establishing benchmarks for the city to work towards. Zarnetske stated that HCH will be sharing best practices and benchmarking with the city which will be developed based on conversations with the city.



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5. New business.

- a. Discussion of reparations for the Salem Black community. Presentation from City of Salem constituents Dr. Shields and Saskia.

This is an item being brought forward by two constituents from Councillor Varela's Ward to discuss a proposal they hope to bring to the Mayor. This will be discussed at the next REC meeting on October 5, 2023.

- b. Questions for Candidates to be submitted to the League of Women Voters - Salem.

Chair Zaragoza acknowledged that she forgot to include this in the agenda which makes it so the REC is not able to have a discussion about it. Based on advice from the City Solicitor, Chair Zaragoza requested members to individually email her their ideas for questions by 9 am on Friday, September 8, 2023 so she can forward them to the League of Women Voters ahead of their Candidate Forums. Lisa Cammarata added that REC Members have to be mindful to not reply all to the email and instead send questions individually to Regina so there is no Open Meeting Law violation.

- c. Public Comment

Chair Zaragoza spoke with the City Solicitor regarding Public Comment at the REC meetings. The City Solicitor shared that the REC is technically not required to allow public comment, however the REC will choose to allow public comment as long as it stays consistent in how it is done at each meeting. Moving forward, it will be an agenda item at the end of every future meeting to allow space for the public to come and share.

Chair Zaragoza recognized attendee and Salem resident Steve Kapantais. Kapantais shared that in July, the Salem City Council issued an order that created racial inequity. The order made parking free for Veterans, but made it mandatory drivers have a Veterans license plate to benefit from it. Kapantais shared that in order to get a Veterans license plate, an additional \$100 must be paid than the price of a normal license plate. Kapantais pointed out the inequity this causes and explained that, when factoring in economic inequality, Veterans of color make up the bottom third of wage earners therefore they are less likely to be able to pay the additional \$100 to have a Veterans license plate. Therefore, the Veterans who need free parking the most are currently not eligible for it. Kapantais learned that this will be addressed by changing the language at a future City Council meeting. However, Kapantais proposed the Race



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Equity Commission review ordinances, orders, and resolutions before they are voted on by City Council, except in the case of emergencies. Kapantais stated that while there were good intentions with this and other orders, there are some things being missed. Kapantais expressed his thanks to the REC and gratitude for keeping public comment.

Chair Zaragoza thanked Kapantais for his comment and stated that it will be added to the agenda and discussed at the next meeting.

6. Adjournment.

Motion to adjourn made by Lisa Cammarata, seconded by Vice Chair Wright, and the motion was carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:16 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Samantha Giffen
Race Equity Commission Minute Taker