

**Minutes of the Cook County
Commission on Human Rights – Open Session
March 06, 2025 at 10:00 am**

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Location: 69 W Washington Street, Chicago, IL 60602
22nd floor, Conference Room F

Attendance:

Present: Chair Sufyan Sohel, Commissioners, Amber Smock, Pushkar Sharma, Michael Lapinski, Dr. Simone Griffin, Shobana Verma, Rev. Richard Tolliver, ASL Interpreter, DHRE Staff.

Absent: Vice Chair Orr, Commissioners Jack Block, Charles Isaacs, Hedy Ratner

Open Session

A. Call to Order

- Chair Sohel called the meeting to order at 10:01 am.

B. Statements by the General Public

- No statements by the general public.

C. Agenda Approval

- A motion to approve the agenda was made and carried out by the following vote:
 - **Ayes:** Chair Sufyan Sohel, Commissioners, Amber Smock, Pushkar Sharma, Michael Lapinski, Dr. Simone Griffin, Shobana Verma, Rev. Richard Tolliver
 - **Nays:** None
 - **Absent:** Vice Chair Orr, Commissioners Jack Block, Charles Isaacs, Hedy Ratner

D. Approval of the January 23, 2025 Regular Meeting Open Minutes

- A motion to approve the January 23, 2025, Regular Meeting Open Minutes was made and carried out by the following vote:
 - **Ayes:** Chair Sufyan Sohel, Commissioners, Amber Smock, Pushkar Sharma, Michael Lapinski, Dr. Simone Griffin, Shobana Verma, Rev. Richard Tolliver
 - **Nays:** None
 - **Absent:** Vice Chair Orr, Commissioners Jack Block, Charles Isaacs, Hedy Ratner

E. Commissioners' Updates.

- Commissioner Smock offered to connect DHRE staff with the Executive of the Illinois Reentry Council regarding the JHA impact assessment.

F. Director's Report

- Director King noted the number of cases pending all stages has increased from the last quarter. The number of inquiries has dropped off, uncertain of the cause of this change. One matter dismissed for lack of substantial evidence and one matter dismissed after administrative hearing for want of prosecutions and failure of the Complainant to cooperate.

- Policy: Discussion around the proposed change to the definition of National Origin in the Human Rights Ordinance. Proposed amendments to the Cook County Paid Leave Ordinance will be heard at the next Cook County Board of Commissioners Committee meeting. The Illinois General Assembly bill HB3531 proposes to amend the Illinois Paid Leave for All Workers Act (PLAWA), prohibiting a county or municipality from requiring a school district or park district under the District Code to provide paid leave to the employees of school and park districts. The Commission will continue to monitor this.
- Outreach: One of the Outreach and Training coordinators provided updates on events and training attended to continue departmental efforts to spread awareness of Cook County Human Rights and Ethics ordinances and protections. Provided updates on the collaborative research project with Roosevelt University on the Just Housing Amendment, with 113 survey responses and outreach efforts to distribute the survey. CCCHR launched 3 social media campaigns, one regarding the JHA Assessment, another honoring Black History Month and a Did You Know? Campaign where the Commission will share a resource once a month. March will cover the commissions online complaint form. Human Rights newsletter increased to 2,216 subscribers.

G. Investigation Extension Request – Commission Review and Vote

- A motion to approve Investigation Extension Requests 2024PA006, 2024H018, 2024H005, 2024PL004, 2023H025, 2023E024, 2024E00216, 2023H010, 2024H004 was made and carried out by a unanimous vote:
 - **Ayes**: Chair Sufyan Sohel, Commissioners, Amber Smock, Pushkar Sharma, Michael Lapinski, Dr. Simone Griffin, Shobana Verma, Rev. Richard Tolliver
 - **Nays**: None
 - **Absent**: Vice Chair Orr, Commissioners Jack Block, Charles Isaacs, Hedy Ratner

Closed Session

- A motion to move into the Executive Session for discussions as identified in the agenda was made and carried out by unanimous voice vote at 10:43 am.

Open Session

- At 10:46 am the Commission reconvened to Open Session.

I. Voting Regarding Executive Session Items, if any

a. January 23, 2025 Regular Meeting Closed Minutes – Commission Vote

- A motion to approve the January 23, 2025, Regular Meeting Closed Minutes was made and carried out by the following vote:
 - **Ayes**: Chair Sufyan Sohel, Commissioners, Amber Smock, Pushkar Sharma, Michael Lapinski, Dr. Simone Griffin, Shobana Verma, Rev. Richard Tolliver
 - **Nays**: None

- **Absent:** Vice Chair Orr, Commissioners Jack Block, Charles Isaacs, Hedy Ratner

J. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made and carried by unanimous voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:48 am.

Minutes submitted by Commission staff.