

Minutes of the Cook County
Commission on Human Rights – Open Session
December 9, 2021

Attendance:

Present: Interim Chair Jack Block, Angie Cowan Hamada, Ceylan Eatherton, S. Mayumi Grigsby, Gia Orr, Amber Smock, Rev. Richard Tolliver, Sufyan Sohel, Anjali Waikar

Staff: Director S. Baker, Deputy Director J. King, Investigator A. Cahn, Investigator J. Jones, Investigator J. Brown, Outreach and Training Coordinator J. Epplin-Zapf, Administrative Analyst K. Johns

I. Open Session

A. Call to Order

Interim Chair Block called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

B. Statements by the General Public

Adriann Murawski, Director at Chicago Association of Realtors Local Government Affairs. Ms. Murawski discussed the lack of awareness of the Just Housing Amendment and other County laws that require compliance by landlords. She asked if the Commission on Human Rights and the Cook County Board would consider ways the County might better educate housing providers on laws that impact them the most.

C. Agenda Approval

The agenda was approved and adopted by unanimous voice vote.

D. Approval of the October 7, 2021, Regular Meeting Open Minutes

The meeting minutes to the October 7, 2021, Regular Meeting Minutes were approved and adopted by unanimous voice vote.

E. Director's Report

Director S. Baker reported that staff has seen a significant spike in complaints filed over the past 3 to 6 months. She stated that staff handled, they have gotten through a vast majority of those. Director Baker also reported that there were six cases pending in administrative hearings. Deputy Director J. King mentioned that a vast majority of cases dismissed were the result of party settlements either through mediation or facilitated by investigators. Outreach and Training Coordinator J. Epplin-Zapf reported that several outreach initiatives are planned for FY22, including a video library on fair housing, a monthly human rights newsletter, and trainings on the Just Housing Amendment. She also reported that staff is working to diversify the ways to which information is communicated to the public regarding laws and amendments.

F. Just Housing Report

Director Baker reported that staff recommends to not make any substantive changes to the rules. She also reported that staff recommends making clarifications to the rules to keep the language consistent with what is in the Ordinance. A motion was made by Interim Chair Block, seconded by Commissioner Orr, to approve and adopt the Just Housing Report. The vote of yeas and nays being as follows:

Yea: Commissioners Hamada, Eatherton, Grigsby, Smock, Tolliver, Sohel and Waikar (9)

Nay: None (0)

The motion CARRIED and the Just Housing Report was APPROVED AND ADOPTED.

G. 2022 Commission Meeting Dates

A motion was made by Commissioner Tolliver, seconded by Commissioner Smock, to approve and adopt the 2022 Commission Meeting dates. The vote of yeas and nays being as follows:

Yea: Chair Block, Commissioners Hamada, Eatherton, Grigsby, Orr, Sohel and Waikar (9)

Nay: None (0)

The motion CARRIED and the 2022 Commission Meeting dates was APPROVED AND ADOPTED.

H. Procedural Rule Amendments

A motion was made by Commissioner Grigsby, seconded by Commissioner Hamada, to approve the Procedural Rule Amendments. The vote of yeas and nays being as follows:

Yea: Chair Block, Commissioners Eatherton, Orr, Smock, Tolliver, Sohel and Waikar (9)

Nay: None (0)

The motion CARRIED and amendments to the Procedural Rule Amendments was APPROVED.

I. Afghanistan Refugees Report Status

A motion was made by Commissioner Sohel, seconded by Commissioner Grigsby to approve issuance of the Afghanistan Refugees report to the Cook County Human Relations Committee. The vote of yeas and nays being as follows:

Yea: Chair Block, Commissioners Hamada, Eatherton, Orr, Smock, Tolliver and Waikar (9)

Nay: None (0)

The motion CARRIED and the issuance of the Afghanistan Refugees report to the Cook County Human Relations Committee was APPROVED.

J. Commission 180-day Extension for Investigation

A motion was made by Commissioner Eatherton, seconded by Commissioner Sohel to approve and adopt the extension of the 180-day investigation period. The vote of yeas and nays being as follows:

Yea: Chair Block, Commissioners Hamada, Grigsby, Orr, Smock, Tolliver and Waikar (9)

Nay: None (0)

The motion CARRIED and the Commission 180-day Extension for Investigation as APPROVED and ADOPTED.

K. Chair and Vice-Chair Discussion and Election (Cook County Code §42-34(a)(4))

a. Chair Candidate

- Commissioner Angie Cowan Hamada

A motion was made by Commissioner Eatherton, seconded by Commissioner Sohel to elect Commissioner Angie Cowan Hamada as the Chair of the Cook County Commission on Human Rights. The vote of yeas and nays being as follows:

Yea: Chair Block, Commissioners Grigsby, Hamada, Orr, Smock, Tolliver and Waikar (9)

Nay: None (0)

The motion CARRIED and Angie Cowan Hamada was elected as the new Chair of the Cook County Commission on Human Rights.

b. Vice-Chair Candidates

- Commissioner S. Mayumi Grigsby
- Commissioner Sufyan Sohel

A motion was made by Commissioner Sohel, seconded by Commissioner Block to elect Commissioner Grigsby as the Vice-Chair of the Cook County Commission on Human Rights. The vote of yeas and nays being as follows:

Yea: Chair Hamada, Commissioners Eatherton, Grigsby, Orr, Smock, Tolliver and Waikar (9)

Nays: None (0)

The motion CARRIED and S. Mayumi Grigsby was elected as the new Vice-Chair of the Cook County Commission on Human Rights.

- L. By unanimous voice vote, the meeting adjourned at 11:14 am.

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