

Meeting Minutes

Human Rights and Equity Commission

August 27, 2025, from 4:30 to 6:00 PM

Virtual Meeting Only

Agatha Ventura called the **Human Rights and Equity Commission** (HREC) regular *virtual only meeting* to order at 4:35 PM. **Watch the HREC livestream recording.**

1. Roll Call and Welcome: Zoom only meeting.

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| 1.1. Agatha Ventura, Chair | 1.8. Eli Loewenstern |
| 1.2. Linda Hiemer, Vice Chair | 1.9. Fenix Van Tassel - <i>Absent</i> |
| 1.3. Jackie Currie, Council Connector | 1.10. Jennifer (Jenn) Kovitz |
| 1.4. Scott Jones, Commissioner Connector | 1.11. Mario Anguiano - <i>Absent</i> |
| 1.5. Cameron Fischer | 1.12. Mary (Bet) Hannon |
| 1.6. Carly Colgan | 1.13. Ruth Vernotico |
| 1.7. Cristina Morales Moyano | 1.14. Kinsey Martin (ex officio) |

City Staff:

- Andrés Portela, He, Him | El, Equity & Inclusion Director (Awbrey Butte)
- Megan Perkins, She, Her, Councilor / Mayor Pro Tem / HREC Council Liaison (Zoom)
- Ian Leitheiser, He, Him, City Attorney (Awbrey Butte)
- Stephanie Betteridge, She, Her, Assistant City Manager & Chief Innovations Officer (Awbrey Butte)
- Cassandra Kehoe, She, Her | Ella, Accessibility Manager / COBAAC Staff Liaison (Awbrey Butte)
- Kathi Barguil, She, They | Ella, Community Relations Manager (Awbrey Butte)
- Lisa Larsen, She, Her Administrative Support Specialist (Awbrey Butte)

Family Kitchen:

- Tori Wild, Family Kitchen Operations Manager

Public Comment:

- Jennifer King
- Katheryn Styer Martinez
- Lorenzo's Notetaker
- Gina Franzosa, City Councilor
- Kanaan Kanaan
- Michael Funke
- Mike Riley, City Councilor

2. City of Bend Land Acknowledgement:

Commissioner Kovitz read the Land Acknowledgement aloud in English.

3. Standing Item: HREC Council Liaison Perkins. She/Her, Update.

- Read a letter from HREC about the unhoused crisis on our public lands at the Coordinated Houseless Response Office meeting. Thank you, Commissioner Loewenstern, for attending this meeting. And talked about how and what they could use the remainder of the funding.
- Council meeting: Conversations about the Bond and Reed Market roundabout and what widening would look like and the cost and the delay of another project.
- Continued conversations about prioritizing transportation projects.
- Fees for incentivizing electrification and disincentivizing gas. A vast majority of single-family homes built in the last five years were built.
- We will be talking about Parking districts and about transportation funding based on what happens with Legislature.
- They will also be talking about the temporary safe-stay area at Juniper Ridge.

4. Roundtable of HREC Commissioners:

HREC Liaison Portela talked about the Sponsorship Program and extended an invitation to Assistant City Manager Betteridge to give a presentation at the next meeting on the extent of the program itself. The program supports community events, programs and services aligning with key city initiatives and council goals. The process for folks asking for funding typically takes 7 to 10 days to finalize an agreement.

The following conversation was about **concerns that the HREC brought up about the sponsorship policy as it related to funding for Juneteenth**. (17:02 to 40:16)

Chair Ventura's statement read aloud: For the record as Chair of this commission, with a brief breakdown of my perspective from this situation.

HREC Leadership met with Mayor Pro Tem sharing our concerns with not having been informed of the situations at hand directly from Council, citing the contextual nuances relating to social identity that the members of this commission could speak to and shed light upon (well within the bounds of our charter) while the Council reached their decisions and executed the policy. We thank Mayor Pro Tem Perkins for meeting, and noting to Council that "HREC exists to bring up issues and systems that may make us uncomfortable or make us defensive here on the dais ... and it's [your] job to listen and to absorb that feedback even if [you] don't agree." and HREC can play a role in providing that additional context in your decision making. And shoutout to Councilor Franzosa for flagging our involvement in the last city council as well. I appreciate that we will continue to work on our shared communication and collaboration in the future and that was a takeaway from our meeting.

We have a group of knowledgeable and passionate commissioners with a wide breadth of lived and learned experiences represented and we aim to activate when the community is impacted. We found this to be a missed opportunity for dialogue and learning, not to scrutinize the policy or decision-making. Furthermore, we are consistently working to improve how we best advise the council and as a

group hoped to address the conversation within a reasonable timeframe and with other agenda items in mind. We stand with the decision to hold a meeting and would appreciate being granted that agency for future requests with trust in our interest in fulfilling our charter in honor of the feedback of our community members, and our continued commitment to our partnership with Council as well. Lastly, we openly invite community members to connect with us directly as well if we can be of support as you navigate a situation as it relates to human rights and equity.

Each commissioner was given time to share their thoughts about this situation.

5. Business:

- Welcoming Week Event:

- Liaison Portela proposed that HREC work with Family Kitchen.

Tori Wild is the Operations Manager of Family Kitchen and talked about what she does and volunteer opportunities.

Family Kitchen serve seven meals a week. Their mission is to serve nutritious meals to anyone in need in a safe and caring environment. They serve between 300 to 450 at their eat in or to go lunch and dinners.

There are various opportunities to serve, prep and deliver meals.

They have 5 staff members in the Bend location and approximately a thousand volunteers and the only reason they can serve this huge quantity of meals, and deliver them to different locations in Bend, Redmond, and Sisters.

You can contact Volunteer Coordinator, Clara Patt at clara@familykitchen.org to schedule a group volunteer effort. Prerequisites include signing a waiver, reading a little volunteer 101, and a confidentiality agreement.

Register to volunteer at three different Family Kitchen locations.

The commissioners discussed and shared experiences and ideas with Operations Manager Wild and the HREC funds/budget.

- Council Presentation:

This is a presentation to show Council HREC successes on

Events:

- Cityfest
 - Welcoming Week

Support Staff:

- Target Sector Analysis
 - Housing Department Presentations
 - Stipend Program
 - COBAAC Connections

Letters to Council:

- Support for unhoused community members

- State level support for affordable housing funding
- Camping code

Focus Areas and Outcomes of each:

- **Policy Advocacy:** Develop, evaluate, and recommend equity focused policies that support systematic change in bend.
- **Advisory:** recommend policy and practice changes to the City Council through an equity lens.
- **Community Engagement:** Develop and implement strategies for inclusive, sustained and trust-based engagement with the community.
- **Education and Awareness:** Foster public and institutional learning through culturally relevant education that centers on the lived experiences of bend community members.

There was talk about the workplan timeline and other shared updates and HREC thoughts. HREC Staff Liaison Portela shared that HREC has an annual budget of 5K.

6. Adjourn: 5:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Larsen, Administrative Support Specialist, Accessibility



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Servicios de asistencia lingüística e información sobre alojamiento para personas con discapacidad

Puede obtener esta información en formatos alternativos como Braille, formato electrónico, etc. También disponemos de servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Póngase en contacto con Gestor del proyecto o creador del documento Katherina Barguil, Community Relations Manager equity@bendoregon.gov en o número de teléfono 541-323-5992. Los usuarios del servicio de retransmisión deben marcar el 7-1-1.