



MEETING MINUTES

Human Rights and Equity Commission

Date: 02/10/2026

Start Time: 4:30 PM

Facilitator: Scott Jones, Chair

Livestream: [HREC February 2026 Recording](#)

Human Rights and Equity Commission

1. Called to order at: 4:32 p.m., by roll call and where they attended the meeting.

- Scott Jones, Chair, - Chambers
- Jenn Kovitz, Vice Chair - Chambers
- Ruth Vernotico, Council Connector - Zoom & Chambers
- Bet Hannon, Commissioner Connector -Chambers
- Brittany Ellenberg, Community Connector - Chambers
- Cristina Morales Moyano, Community Connector - Chambers
- Agatha Ventura - Chambers
- Eli Loewenstern - Zoom
- Jackie Currie - Chambers
- Mario Anguiano - Zoom
- Navi Hughes - Absent
- Kinsey Martin (ex officio) – Chambers

City of Bend Staff:

- Mellissa Kamanya, She/Her/Hers, Affordable Housing Coordinator, HREC Interim Staff Liaison, (Chambers)
- Megan Perkins, She/Her, Councilor / Mayor Pro Tem / HREC Council Liaison (Chambers)
- Ian Leitheiser, He/Him, City Attorney (Chamber)
- Stephanie Betteridge, She/Her, Assistant City Manager & Chief Innovations Officer (Chambers)
- Renee Mitchell, Communications & Engagement Officer, (Chambers)
- Cassandra Kehoe, She/Her/Ella, Accessibility & Equity Manager / COBAAC Staff Liaison (Zoom)
- Lisa Larse, She/Her, Administrative Support Specialist (Chambers)



2. City of Bend Land Acknowledgement Statement: Mellissa Kamanya, She/Her/Hers, Affordable Housing Coordinator, HREC Interim Staff Liaison.

Support Warm Springs – English:

- The Tribal Democracy Project addresses the systemic and chronic issues of Native voter disenfranchisement: tribaldemocracyproject.org.
- Shop native artists at the Tananawit store at Warm Springs and online: shop.warmspringsartists.org.
- The Chùush Fund brings clean water to Warm Springs: seedingjustice.org/chuush-fund-donation-page.
- Support the Warm Springs community Education & empowerment efforts by donating to The Warm Springs Community Action Team at wscat.org.
- Support the continued art and storytelling of the Warm Springs people by donating to the Warm Springs Museum at museum.warmsprings-nsn.gov.
- Support the Columbia River Institute for Indigenous Development serving Columbia River communities by preserving, sharing, & advancing indigenous language, arts, sports, health, & spirituality by donating at criid.org.

Support Warm Springs – Spanish:

- Apoye al Proyecto Democracia Tribal para abordar los problemas sistémicos y crónicos de la privación del derecho al voto de pueblos indígenas haciendo una donación aquí tribaldemocracyproject.org.
- Apoye a los artistas nativos visitando la tienda Tananawit en Warm Springs y en línea en shop.warmspringsartists.org.
- Hacer una donación para apoyar los esfuerzos para llevar agua potable a Warm Springs contribuyendo al Fondo Chùush en seedingjustice.org/chuush-fund-donation-page.
- Apoye los esfuerzos de educación y empoderamiento de la comunidad de Warm Springs haciendo una donación al Equipo de Acción Comunitaria de Warm Springs en wscat.org.
- Apoye el arte y la narración de historias del pueblo de Warm Springs haciendo una donación al Museo de Warm Springs en museum.warmsprings-nsn.gov.
- Apoye al Instituto del Río Columbia para el Desarrollo Indígena, que presta servicio a las comunidades del río Columbia mediante la preservación, el intercambio y la promoción de las lenguas, las artes, los deportes, la salud y la espiritualidad indígenas, donando en criid.org.



3. HREC Business:

- **Minutes:** Approval of January 13, 2026, Draft Minutes.

January 13, 2026, meeting minutes approved unanimously.

The voice vote passed: 10-0. **Yes:** Ventura, Ellenberg, Morales Moyano, Loewenstern, Currie, Kovitz, Anguiano, Hannon, Vernotico, Jones. **No:** none.

- **Review the February 10, Agenda:** The February 10th agenda reviewed by all who attended today's meeting.
- **Overview of Jan 31 Committee Chair on Electrification Policy:** Chair Jones mentioned there was an Electrification Policy meeting/ presentation on January 31, with Cassie Lacy and representative from the Bend Economic Development Advisory Board and the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee. Chair Jones is working on obtaining the slides.
- **Housing sponsored shelter tour:** optional visit to shelters: Brooke O'Keefe, Shelter Coordinator suggests the Human Rights and Equity Commission (HREC) tour the shelter that the city supports.
- **HREC email addresses:** There was a past overview of public records process and optional email addresses. This is a reminder/ suggestion for HREC members to have a separate HREC email address to use for HREC business.

Ventura would like to have a refresher on the public process. Creating a one-pager on the process would.

4. Standing Item: HREC Council Liaison Update: Megan Perkins, She/Her, Mayor Pro Tem.

- **Overview of January 28 Work Session:** There are three things Council is working towards:
 - Sustainable shelter package to maintain the shelters.
 - Lodging tax for people staying at Airbnb or hotel when visiting Bend; trying to get some legislation that provides more flexibility and how it can be used.
 - Discussions about commercial areas in residential neighborhoods and looking at improvements to legislation to protect new neighborhoods.
- **Joint meeting:** HREC and City Council. Last week people could leave a public comment before tomorrow's work session for public comment on electrification. There were 33 public comments and 29 were about electrification. They received a lot of emails.

They will talk about fee design, where it goes and the outreach process. Do we create a committee, certain targets like incentives.



On January 28, there was a presentation on transportation standards and council wants to ensure safety first and foremost, wants feedback about speed limits in neighborhoods, tools to create to make it safer to walk, bike, drive and roll around town.

Council received Ben Duncan's, from Kearns & West, City of Bend Equity Structures Analysis.

- **City Council Resolution re:** immigration enforcement: opportunity for 2-3 HREC commissioners to participate in review of document before Council meeting. This is a statement of values about our immigrant neighbors, and our values as a city and as councilors and tying this into Welcoming Week and the hours we have at Latino Community Association (LCA). Perkins mentions that City Manager Eric King would be able to put somewhere between 50 to 100K into this, tying it into the council goals.

Perkins asks for 2 or 3 volunteers to be involved in a temporary group along with LCA and representative from other immigrant groups in our community. This would be a safe environment and not open to the public.

Commissioner Volunteers: Ellenberg, Loewenstern, Martin, and Morales Moyano.

Catalina Sanchez Frank from Latino Community Association (LCA) gave Kamanya some available dates and times for when LCA can host and she will share with the volunteers.

Catalina Sanchez Frank mention there are some resolutions already out there for the cities that have been highly impacted by ICE activity against the immigrant community and that the city has wrote as a response to this crisis. She approached City Council and May Keebler in early January to say, let's be prepared.

Vice Chair Kovitz: Wants the opinion of commissioners if this meeting should have a mediator to facilitate the conversation.

Kamaya suggests adding this to a future agenda and frame out what that might look like. Some of the commissioners agreed.

Vernotico suggested reevaluating our purpose and the force for starting HREC and understanding their role. As time goes on and new commissioners are added, the entire goal of what of HREC seems to get further away from what was intended.

Ventura mentioned having input from HREC and having representation at City Council meetings and bringing information back to the HREC meeting.

Commissioner Connector Vernotico mentioned he should be doing this, but others can volunteer.

5. Staff Liaison Update: Mellissa Kamanya, She/Her/Hers, Affordable Housing Coordinator, HREC Interim Staff Liaison.

Kamaya shared that she knows there have been many liaisons before her and wants to share some things about herself and she is building off the amazing work of the liaisons before her. She was a HREC commissioner five years ago, resigning after a year, and lived in Central Oregon for 16 years, raising a large family. They are biracial and bicultural. When her kids were little, the community loved and supported them, and felt welcomed, until they started looking adults, it turned. In 2020 her family faced hatred and racism.

- **Pronouns - website update:** Kamaya will meet privately with each commissioner. The city does not have a problem with some pronouns being posted on the website.
- **Public Comments - ways to respond:** Invite the City Attorney, Leitheiser, to a future meeting to talk about how to respond and understand some of those limits.
- **Update on Administrative Policy - Prohibition of using Public Property for Immigration Enforcement:** It is an administrative policy; it is not on how staff interact with the community or how staff engage with ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement). It is more about how the building safety is contained. The policy is sign and staff training ongoing. Please listen to Matt Stuart, he/him, Real Estate Director detailed explanation of this Administration Policy on [YouTube livestream timestamp 50:50 to 1:05:07](#)
- **Prioritization of Commission Workplan and Projects:** mapping out the process of prioritizing collaboration requests from city departments and committees. Kamanya has been approached by six different teams that want to work with HREC. This is in addition to your workplan, AIM tool, and working with Ben Duncan. We need a prioritization discussion.

Commissioners would like to receive the information with time to review and have feedback ready. Ellenberg asks this be added to an agenda.

6. Business: Ben Duncan, He/Him, Kearns & West. Bend Equity Infrastructure Analysis

City Of Bend Equity Structures Analysis: Process, Key Findings, and Recommendations.

Slides:

- **DESIRED OUTCOMES FOR TODAY**
 - Outline structural recommendations.
 - Clarify next steps.
 - Questions and discussion with HREC.



- **KEY FINDINGS**

- Clarity and Direction
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Consistency of Practice
- Leadership Structure
- Distributed Leadership and Coordination
- Accessibility
- Core Functions
- Role of Advisory Bodies
- Community Trust and Relationships

- **HIGH LEVEL RECOMMENDATIONS**

- **Embed Equity Analysis into Decision Making:** Ensure leadership structure that results in equity expertise being able to influence decision-making around policies, programs and practices.
- **Balance Centralized Oversight with Decentralized Implementation.** "Hub and Spoke" model with a strong centralized equity structure connected to departments through a cross-departmental team responsible for collaboration, coordination, and best practices implementation supports.
- **Develop Capacity Organization-Wide to Sustain Change.** Focus on systems, frameworks and practices that support consistent standards across the organization.
- **Embed Community Engagement as a Core Component:** Through HREC and COBAAC and with a strong link to engagement frameworks and leadership roles, ensure community voice and concerns impact City decision-making and programs.

- **RECOMMENDATION**

- Establish a "hub and spoke" model, with a **centralized office that would focus on policy and programs** to ensure that equity expertise, leadership, and analysis is embedded at the highest level of policy development, implementation, and equity programs. The centralized office ("hub") would have an internal focus by working with and influencing Departmental practitioners (the "spokes") on programs, practice and policies advancing equitable external outcomes. This model will require a parallel process defining and clarifying the role of the Engagement Leadership role, ensuring that there is a strong link between the roles.



- **NEXT STEPS**

- City Leadership to "translate" recommendation.
- Work with City and Council leadership, HREC leadership and Interim HREC Staff Liaison to chart out a path for HREC planning.
- Identify role for HREC in Engagement Leadership and Equity Leadership hiring processes.

- **HREC DISCUSSIONS**

- Questions about recommendations?
- What would the HREC need to ensure it is informing policy decision-making, particularly related to Council Goals?

Duncan hopes this is a transformative moment and trust is earned. Implementation will ultimately demonstrate the city's commitment and there is no doubt where this work is going. He has really valued what I've seen from Eric King, and our initial conversations to where I hear from our initial conversations to where I hear him talking about and exploring and being supportive. Watching that shift happen in real time.

Morales Moyano feels that the issues with the previous Inclusion Director still need to be addressed and conversations need to happen and why is leadership not personally having this conversation with HREC without a person in the middle. It would help build trust.

Commissioners asked if it would be helpful to have an agenda for when City Council and HREC meet in August.

Ventura mentioned, with Portela's departure and process of not being able to talk about the investigation, was understandable but there was no prior notice from leadership letting the commissioners know what was coming next. Information was learned separately from people we worked with. She felt like they were an afterthought.

Kamanya stated this is an opportunity to go back to your current charter. You make recommendations to council. It is not currently in your charter to make those recommendations to staff.

Duncan said, from a relationship and trust process standpoint as a practitioner. The idea of co-creation is an absolute must. What are the goals for council? What are the goals for HREC? How do you find alignment around the purpose of coming together around the outcomes you are seeking? How do you balance power dynamics in a place where you have elected and appointed commissioners?



7. Public Comment:

Huong Tran shared that on Friday, some youths are getting together to practice their voices and have a student walk out. They would like to invite our community leadership to be there to support our youth. Event info: all high schools are planning the walk out at 2:00 pm and walking to Peace Corner.

8. Roundtable: HREC Commissioners.

Currie: Duncan mentioned building a department. This would be the time to have a discussion since it did not work before. It may be a point of contention within the community.

Loewenstern: Wants to talk about future for the HREC commissioners to visit homeless shelters. He spends a lot of time in and out of the shelters as a community health and outreach worker. When there he would like to take some time to document some human rights concerns that he sees at some of the shelters. Chair Jones mentioned this is something we are trying to coordinate with the city. O'Keefe or Kamanya will be contacting each commissioner to organize this, so we are not meeting a quorum. Hannon mentioned incorporating Loewenstern's documentation work.

Vernotico: Pushing for pronouns on the website. Kamanya will meet with each commissioner to see who wants their pronouns added to their names.

Commissioner ?: Asked Chair Jones about the electrification slides and the action item or ask from HREC. Chair Jones: it was more of a providing us with information. Perkins suggests that people listen tomorrow because that is exactly what is going to be talked about. The level of engagement that we want to see from other councilors.

Hannon: Her work is in digital ADA compliance. She had some concerns and met with Jabob Riggle, UX (User Experience) and shared some suggestions and sent some resources.

Vernotico: Reminds everyone why they are here, is to be constructive and it is part of why we are here. Not complaining as a community member mentioned.

Morales Moyano mentioned that she liked it when all the people attended the last meeting to support HREC. It made her feel like that there is issues to be addressed and start moving forward.

Currie suggested a discussion about how commissioners want to be addressed or a printout. Some do not like to be called commissioner Currie.

9. Adjourned: 6:32 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Larsen, She/Her, Administrative Support Specialist, Accessibility Program



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