



MEETING MINUTES

Human Rights and Equity Commission

Date: 03/10/2026

Start Time: 4:30 p.m.

Human Rights and Equity Commission

1. Call to order at: 4:30 p.m., by roll call and where they attended the meeting.

- 1) Scott Jones, Chair, Chambers
- 2) Jenn Kovitz, Vice Chair, Chambers
- 3) Ruth Vernotico, Council Connector, Zoom
- 4) Bet Hannon, Commissioner Connector, Chambers
- 5) Brittany Ellenberg, Community Connector, Absent
- 6) Cristina Morales Moyano, Community Connector, Zoom
- 7) Agatha Ventura, Chambers
- 8) Eli Loewenstern, Zoom
- 9) Jackie Currie, Chambers
- 10) Mario Anguiano, Chambers
- 11) Navi Hughes, Zoom
- 12) Kinsey Martin (ex officio), Chambers, left at 5:11 pm

City 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)
- René Mitchell, Communications & Engagement Officer, (Chambers)
- Cassandra Kehoe, She/Her/Ella, Accessibility & Equity Manager / COBAAC Staff Liaison (Zoom)
- Lisa Larsen, 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.
 - a. Based on consultation with the Warm Springs Tribal Council, City Council has moved away from reading the land acknowledgement at every council meeting and will be migrating towards a Sovereignty Acknowledgement, which is currently being developed. We honor this request at this meeting and instead would like to share some opportunities to directly support and engage with the Warm Springs community. This can be an evolving list that can be added onto and distributed while the Sovereignty Acknowledgement development proceeds.

3. **HREC Business:** Chair Jones
 - a. Approval of February 10, 2026, Draft Minutes.

February 10, 2026, meeting minutes approved unanimously.

The voice vote passed: 10-0. **Yes:** Ventura, Morales Moyano, Loewenstern, Currie, Kovitz, Anguiano, Hughes, Hannon, Vernotico, Jones. **No:** none.
 - b. Review March Agenda: The March 10 Agenda was reviewed by all who attended today's meeting.
 - c. Staff in audience: Gillian Ockner – Water Services, Rene Mitchell – Communication and Engagement Officer, Mike Gafney – Assistant City Attorney, Andrinna Lease – Community Development, Lindsay Wengloski – Equity Management Analyst

4. **Standing Item:** HREC Council Liaison Update: Megan Perkins, She/Her, Mayor Pro Tem.
 - Council meeting on Wednesday we will talk about Junipers, concerns with the tree code and the City arborist talked about equity concerns.
 - Franklin will be closed at various times and in different sections due to improvements. Working businesses and community to ensure it does not affect high tourist and during holiday times.
 - Council will talk with Bob Townsend from Central East Transit CET about the fare increases and what affects it has caused and what Bend will do with the Bond money and the allocation to help the transit system.
 - Electrification Fee: Council moving forward with the lower fee; 20% of maximum fee, not the 20% home price and later discussing the process of implementation what kind of exemptions.
 - At the Advisory Body Summit they previewed the Growth Plan timeline. The proposal was, instead of the City creating a new committee to help advise staff on the process, they would ask one to two volunteers from each of the committees, commissions, or groups.



- Overview of Immigration Support Resolution work group from 2/17: A group of people represented Central Oregon Immigration where they met in a safe and comfortable environment to have conversations.

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

- April 28 'Fault Lines' screening: Save the date, you are invited. You will be sent a link and can register for up to four free tickets.
- Pronouns are now on the website.
- Communication preferences: A list of how each commissioner wants to be addressed was shared.
- PRIDE in Public Service Lunch & Learn is an employee resource group at the City of Bend and being held in the fall of 2026. They would like to extend an invitation to HREC and City of Bend Accessibility Advisory Committee (COBAAC) collaborate focusing on inclusive communication. Please contact Lindsay Wengloski at: lwengloski@bendoregon.gov
- Council Excel spreadsheets: You had a sneak peak where to sign up for Council meetings of your choice.
- Shelter tour: We will talk about the shelter tour in our prioritization conversation.

6. Business:

- a. Immigration Support Resolution review and recommendations to Council: Brittney Ellenberg (absent), HREC Commissioner, Cristina Morales Moyano, HREC Commissioner, and Ian Leitheiser, City Attorney.

HREC Community Connector shared her offsite meeting on February 17th, she attended online. There was a nice representation of communities. Sharing the details and different points of each community was good. Being together, trying to find common ground, creating together, and working as a community. It was nice to see all the different communities coming together was priceless.

City Attorney Leitheiser shared the drafting and revising process: They went into the February 17 meeting with a draft where some iteration had happened. It was shared with this large, connected group of folks before the meeting.

They wrapped up the meeting it was said of all of the suggestions, thoughts, and questions. There was not anything shared in the meeting that was outside of the realm of what could be included. Most of the things that came up in the meeting were incorporated in subsequent drafts. They continue to work on changes and additions as suggestions come in. At some point it will go to Council.



Catalina Frank from Latino Community Association (LCA) shared thoughts on the meeting. There were almost twenty people in person as well as the attendees online. Catalina agreed it was a beautiful effort to be in the community and create this document that is well intended. Spending the time reviewing and with a sense of urgency has been the focus of everyone who is collaborating.

Catalina mentioned the draft brought to the meeting was outdated. There is better news around it, the Immigration Justice Package approved seven bills out of what was proposed to continue to support the immigrant and refugee community in Oregon. There is reference in the document about efforts that started around 2020 or 2021, with the sanctuary law.

Catalina spoke about the last item in the resolution regarding collaboration between LCA and the City. There is a group working with the quantity and how to allocate the money. The LCA asks for the full 100K, splitting it 50/50, estimated to help fifteen families. Distributing a stipend to families with a maximum amount. The other half would be to create a program to support new immigrants moving to Bend.

Liaison Kamanya asked the commissioners, at Councilor Perkins request, for their recommendations on whether it is ready for council approval in March.

Commissioners' discussion before Voting Timestamp 33:12 to 50:31

Commissioner Venture motioned to accept the Immigration Support Resolution as it is currently written.

The motion to move forward and approve the Immigration Support Resolution was approved unanimously.

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

- b. Equity updates: Stephanie Betteridge, Assistant City Manager/Chief Innovation Officer.

HIGH LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION

- **Embed Equity Analysis into Decision Making:** Ensure that at entry level of the City, from City Council to frontline programs and practice, utilization of the AIM tool is part of standard operations.
- **Balance Centralized Oversight with Decentralized Implementation:** Frameworks reflecting best practices are developed centrally and consistently applied within departmental programmatic work.



- **Develop Capacity Organization-Wide to Sustain Change:** Activate and set expectations for equity staff with expertise to provide technical assistance, consultation, training, tools, and resources for staff across the city.
- **Embed Community Engagement as a Core Component:** Clarify the role and relationship between equity and engagement leadership positions and HREC and COBAAC. Invest in best practices and frameworks that are employed across the City and inform(s) all engagement efforts.

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 roles.

CORE CITY FUNCTIONS AND EXISTING WORK

- **Internal Efforts:**
 - Language Access
 - ADA Compliance Future Work Employee Experience
 - AIM Assumptions, Identify, Measure) Equity Tool
 - Employee Indicators And Data Analysis
 - Employee Resource Group Leader
 - digital accessibility
 - Training Supplier Diversity in our procurement & legal division
 - human resources
- **External Efforts:**
 - Human Rights and Equity Commission
 - City of Bend Accessibility Advisory Committee
 - Complaints and Investigations (Civil Rights Focus – Accessibility Manager Kehoe
 - Tribal Relations
 - Engagement Program: through sponsorship and events



CORE EQUITY TEAM – With Department Liaisons

- **City Manager’s Office: Policy** – Office of Equity & Accessibility
 - Equity Leader
 - Accessibility & Equity Manager
 - Equity Management Analyst
 - Administrative Support
- **Communications & Engagement**
 - Engagement Leader
 - Community Relations Manager

Next steps

- Recruitment for Equity and Engagement Leadership roles (March)
- Recruitment: Selection Process (April)
- Focused consultant work defining the Human Rights and Equity Commission's purpose, scope, and authority (March-May)
- Equity Leaders: definition of departmental liaisons (Spring/ Summer)

Commissioners were to add sticky notes with insight to three different poster boards with core roles and responsibilities. Commissioners that are online will email Liaison Kamanya with their suggestions.

- c. HREC Work Prioritization: Mellissa Kamanya, She/Her/Hers, Affordable Housing Coordinator, HREC Interim Staff Liaison and Ben Duncan, He/Him, Kearns & West.

GOAL – DECEMBER 2026

- Code Change
 - HREC knowledge of current role and where changes are desired.
 - Staff has learned how to engage HREC.
 - Staff / Council identify where changes are desired.

WORKPLAN TIMELINE

- 3/10: HREC Meeting
- 4/14: Water AIM tool pilot
- 5/18: HREC lens progress, Hate and Discrimination updates
- 6/9: HREC lens adoption, Welcoming Week
- 7/14: Electrification
- 8/11: Preparedness / Wildfires
- 9/8: Equity Hub
- 10/13: Holding space for future topics.
- 11/10: Review of findings, prep for December
- 12/8: Final recommendations to leadership, Council



PREDICTABLE MILESTONES

- Building off the work that has been done – not at the starting line:
 - Workplan (behind schedule)
 - Monthly meetings

EMERGENT ISSUES OR IDEAS

- Invitations – Committee participation
- Engagement
- Resolutions
- Community Events
- Shared Council attendance
- Book club / shared learning
- Other emergencies or urgent needs

PARALLEL PROJECTS

- City 101
- AIM Tool – utilization, measurement.
- Interpersonal relations
- Hate and Discrimination Coalition

Ben Duncan discussed with the commissioner about the future plans for the HREC workplan Timestamp 1:22:27 to 1:49:24

7. Public Comment:

- Brennon Breen thanked Commissioners for the work they do, being at the City meeting at 6:30 pm on a Tuesday as a grandson of interned Japanese American people. Appreciating this commission exists, especially at a time when there is active federal hostility to people for arbitrary distinctions, and also in the case of funding cuts. He is the campaign coordinator with Energize Bend and worked as a Chemical Engineer and worked in the renewable natural gas industry for three years and left to do community organizing on this policy campaign. Wants to have a conversation and know about climate change as an accelerant of inequalities that exist particularly in housing and energy affordability.
- Michael Funke mentioned that he attended the HREC January 13, 2026, meeting, where a lot of people attended to show HREC support. A lot of people of color attend and Michael wanted to know if city staff reached out to any of the people that attended to help formulate these proposals that were presented this evening. Moreover, did you invite any of the commissioners to participate in these proposals? Michael suggested engaging with the community and getting community input into all the future work. He encouraged that commissioners demand to take part in interviews.

Commissioner Ventura had a question for the City. As you are hiring for these new positions, she is an equity professional and would like to for an opportunity to like this but personally feels like we have been able to note all of the qualities that these professionals should have, but the change has not happened internally to set these people up for success.

Commissioner ?: At the leadership meeting that we had to prepare for this meeting. Several of us shared the same feedback with Asst. City Manager Betteridge and City Attorney Leitheiser. Mentioning that this is part of his work.

8. **Roundtable:** HREC Commissioners.

- Loewenstern shared Jewish Voice for Peace Bend will host a screening of a movie on Friday at Central Oregon Community College. Invite extended to City staff.
- Vice Chair Kovitz noticed that City Manager King had put his information in HREC Liaison Kamanya's outreach, took him up on that and hopes that others will do the same. Kovitz gave Interim Liaison Kamanya her flowers for the excellent commissioner advocacy work.

9. **Adjourned:** 6:39 PM

Respectfully Submitted by,

Lisa Larsen, She/Her, Administrative Support Specialist, Accessibility & Equity



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Puede obtener esta información en formatos alternativos como Braille, formato electrónico, etc. También disponemos de servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Póngase en contacto en correo electrónico accessibility@bendoregon.gov o número de teléfono 541-693-2198. Los usuarios del servicio de retransmisión deben marcar el 7-1-1. Por favor, envíe sus solicitudes con 48-72 horas de antelación al evento; todas las solicitudes están sujetas a los tiempos de procesamiento del proveedor.