



MEETING MINUTES

Human Rights and Equity Commission

Date: June 9, 2026

Start Time: 4:30 p.m.

Facilitator: Chair Scott Jones

Meeting Recording

Human Rights and Equity Commission (HREC)

1. Meeting called to order at, 4:31 p.m.

- 1) Scott Jones, Chair, Chambers
- 2) Jen Kovitz, Vice Chair, Chambers
- 3) Ruth Vernotico, Council Connector, Zoom
- 4) Bet Hannon, Commissioner, Chambers
- 5) Brittany Ellenberg, Community Connector, Chambers
- 6) Cristina Morales Moyano, Community Connector, Chambers
- 7) Eli Loewenstern, Chambers
- 8) Jackie Currie, Zoom and Chambers
- 9) Mario Anguiano, Zoom
- 10) Navi Hughes, Absent
- 11) Mila Shelehoff, Chambers, New Commissioner
- 12) Patricia Sargent, Chambers, New Commissioner
- 13) Lucia Barragan, Chambers, New Commissioner
- 14) Kinsey Martin, Absent (ex officio)

City Staff in Attendance:

- Mellissa Kamanya, She/Her/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 (Chambers)
- Stephanie Betteridge, She/Her, Assistant City Manager & Chief Innovations Officer (Chambers)



- René Mitchell, Communications & Engagement Officer, (Chambers)
- Cate Schneider, Executive Policy Officer
- Cassandra Kehoe, She/Her/Ella, Accessibility & Equity Manager / COBAAC Staff Liaison (Zoom)
- Lisa Larsen, She/Her, Administrative Support Specialist (Chambers)

2. HREC Chair Business: Chair, Scott Jones

- Follow-up from last meeting with hounq tran, They/Them, Mindful Healing
hounq reminded the commissioners that working in this space people may bring up a mixture of feelings, emotions, whether personal or professional, hope passion, exhaustion, and curiosity. In a public meeting space openly can leave one feeling vulnerable and exposed.

The commission's meaningful work hounq has noticed is thoughtful engagement, important conversations, and a commitment to the community with care.

Disagreements and tensions are natural in this space because of the difficult conversations it often leads to more opportunities of learning how we want this space together with more reflection and growth.

Commissioner shared their thoughts on how they were currently feeling about their meetings.

- April and May 2026, draft meeting minutes approved unanimously.

Voice vote passed: 12-0, **Yes:** Scott, Kovitz, Vernotico, Hannon, Ellenberg, Morales Moyano, Loewenstern, Barragan Currie, Anguiano, Shelehoff, Sargent. **No:** None.

- Review June Agenda: Was reviewed by all who attended today's meeting.
- Introductions and welcoming new Commissioners.
 - Lucia Barragan: Development Manager with the Latino Community Association, from Mexico, and moved to Bend four years ago.
 - Mila Shelehoff: An immigrant from Ukraine. Shared a flection of what human rights mean to her. There are a lot of meanings and levels. Recently variations have been considered a violation of human rights that include individuals to large scale (counties). It is critical to think of them daily.
 - Patricia (Trisha) Sargent: Lived in Bend since 2004. Mentioning to really move forward as a community, it takes us to be able to be in an uncomfortable space and hear each other's lived experiences and the decisions we make as a community. The commission has a great opportunity to assure those lived experiences are discussed and recommendation are made based on our entire community.



- Chair Jones: August 31st is International Overdose Awareness Day and thinks it may be a good opportunity for HEC to practice putting a proclamation and presenting it to City Council.

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

Council Update:

- Council Liaison role is to serve as a conduit between council and HREC and for it to go both ways.
- Long debate about Electrification climate fee. The first reading was five to one in support of the fee. The second reading meeting will be on June seventeenth.
- Code updates to three of our advisory bodies: Bend Economic Development Advisory Board, Transportation Bond Advisory Committee, Affordable Housing Advisory Committee. Councilor Méndez mention that they should look into the Human Rights and Equity Commission's code as well.
- There will be discussion about where the next City Hall will be, in order to accommodate the growing city staff.
- Joint meeting with Warm Springs on June 30th.

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

- Kamanya is the Staff Liaison between HREC & City Staff and sharing each other's feedback.
- Work Timeline for 2026 Break in July and August from Regular Meeting's, but Optional Subgroup to support onboarding / Water Tour / Subgroup to draft proclamation(s) / Social Activities:

3/10- HREC Work Prioritization,

4/14- AIM Tool - Water 101,

5/18- HREC lens planning and Hate Discrimination updates,

6/9- HREC lens adoption, Welcoming Week,

7/14 BREAK- Was Electrification – will present in the future,

8/11 BREAK- Was Preparedness/Wildfires – will present in the future,

9/8- Equity Hub,

10/13- Holding space for future topics,

11/11- Review of findings, prep for Dec.,

12/8- Final recommendations to leadership, Council.



Chair Kovitz took notes of Volunteers:

- Onboarding: Vernotico, Hannon, Currie
 - Commissioner Anguiano: Will create an onboarding process and present the draft to HREC.
- International Awareness Day Proclamation Drafts: Chair Jones, Sargent, Vernotico, Loewenstern, Morales Moyano
- Social Activities: HREC Commissioner Connectors will help plan social activities.
- Equity and Engagement - City Leadership Update, Cate Schneider, She/Her, Executive Policy Officer
 - Equity and Inclusion Manager: Completed first round of interviews
 - Community and Engagement Manager – New Position: Still conducting first round interviews

5. Business:

- a. HREC Lens follow up: Mellissa Kamanya, Affordable housing Coordinator

Reminders:

- Goals by December 2026
 - HREC knowledge of current role and where changes are desired
 - Staff has learned how to engage HREC
 - Staff / Council / HREC identifies where changes are desired
- Common language
 - Predictable Milestones (HREC Workplan)
 - Parallel Projects (City of Bend 101)
 - Emergent Issues or Ideas

Feedback from HREC commissioner Ellenberg: HREC Lens as a compliment to the AIM (Ask, Identify, Measure) Tool:

Ellenberg reviewed and read aloud information received through the addendum regarding the AIM Tool Pilot HREC exercise. He also presented and discussed responses to questions submitted by the Water Department, along with feedback provided by HREC members. **(Timestamp 53:51 to 57:50).**

- b. HREC Role and Role and Structure - Visioning for Future: Ben Duncan, Kearns & West Consultant

Consultant Duncan is here to facilitate a conversation and provide an overview of his background and how he came to this work. His role is to help build



relationships, identify resources and investment opportunities for HREC, assess the current state of equity practices, organizational structures, and policies, and develop recommendations to help guide the City's future direction. Presentation slides with discussion topics (**Presentation Timestamp 58:25 to 1:35:42**)

- DESIRED OUTCOMES FOR TODAY
 - KEYFINDINGS FROM ANALYSIS (HREC FOCUS)
 - Initial Report
 - Previous HREC Discussions
 - ADVOCACY AND ACTIVISM
 - Working "with the system" to influence and impact,
 - Role outlined within City Code
 - HREC DISCUSSION: CURRENT STATE
 - What feels most important to HREC's success in the short term (next year)?
 - HREC DISCUSSION: FUTURE STATE: Based on the previous discussion, what resources/supports does HREC need for this to happen? What considerations could this include:
 - Pre-meeting
 - Meeting effectiveness
 - Workplan
 - City partnership
 - Community partnership
6. Public Comment: No public comments left.
7. Roundtable: HREC Commissioners.
- Anguiano shared an experience that may be affecting Bend residence about rental deposit theft by illegally withholding deposits. Please reach out to commissioner Anguiano, he is happy to work with them and provide the steps.
 - Hannon shared: Juneteenth Event on the 20th at the Open Space Event Studios on 2nd Street.
 - Currie shared that seven students out of Deer Ridge Correctional Institution walk the stage to receive their diplomas. And:
 - Commissioner Currie expressed disappointment regarding the process for serving on the leadership interview committee. She stated that, in the future, she would like information about leadership interview committee



participation and selection to be brought before the HREC commissioners following HREC leadership discussions for an equitable way to decide.

- Vernotico: Pride was scaled back because of the burden put on the event. Scaling back was necessary and feels it impacted the way everyone showed up and still an incredible win.
 - Vernotico is still wrapping around the last meeting's conversation about the resignation of commissioner Ventura and the concerns and moving on from the points raised at the May 2026, meeting.
 - Vice Chair Kovitz called Duncan (consultant) and asked for examples of Governance Structure for commissions that are different than a chair/vice chair structure leadership. Asking if HREC can consider modeling a HREC commissions structure without hierarchy but did not slow down the work.
 - Liaison Kamanya: It is in the *Bend Municipal Code* that all of our committee have a chair and vice chair. This will not be changing but we have the option to change how the chair and vice chair respond and lead.
 - Anguiano mentioned that onboarding process that he is creating will help.
 - Sargent mentioned that there seem to be trust issues> Everyone wants to build but we cannot build if we do not know what each person is bringing to the table. We need to trust in the subcommittee members and know that they are knowledgeable in the subjects.

For the full Roundtable agenda item: **Timestamp 1:44:50 to 2:03:58.**

8. Adjourn: With no other HREC business, the June 6, 2026, HREC meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Lisa Larsen, she/her, Administrative Support Specialist, Equity, Inclusion + Accessibility



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