



Seattle Human Rights Commission Meeting Minutes

Thursday, April 2, at 6:00 p.m.

Hosted online on Zoom and in person at Seattle City Hall, 600 4th Ave, Board and Commissions Room #L280.

Call to Order

- at 6:03 p.m.

Roll Call

- Present:
 - Commissioners Bailey, Catsambas, Hultgren, Koss, Lewis, Leydon, Monson, Quander, Tibbs, and Vice Chair Smith.
 - Guests: Jen Wid Hod (zoom name), Castill Hightower
 - Nominees: Queen Adams
- Absent:
 - Commissioners McCullough, Gonser
- Departed Early: Quander
- City of Seattle OCR Staff
 - Present: Sebastian Wilson, Meredith Stone, Erika Pablo (Interim Director SOCR)

Land Acknowledgement

“We are currently occupying the unceded lands of many First Peoples, Coast Salish people, Muckleshoot, Suquamish, Stillaguamish, and Duwamish. We acknowledge and thank local First Nations for their centuries of land stewardship that long predates the arrival of European settlers. We remind you to be aware of the spaces you occupy locally, that these lands were stolen from First People in the name of white settler colonialism and that you seek ways to continue your education and give back to local Indigenous communities.” (Duwamish Tribe’s website)

“We must acknowledge that much of what we know of this country today, including its culture, economic growth, and development throughout history and across time, has been made possible by the labor of enslaved Africans and their descendants who suffered the horror of the transatlantic trafficking of their people, chattel slavery, and Jim Crow. We are indebted to their labor and their sacrifice, and we must acknowledge the

tremors of that violence throughout the generations and the resulting impact that can still be felt and witnessed today.” (Dr. Terah “TJ” Stewart)

Public Comment

- I. Castill Hightower spoke on violence in Seattle and victim resources and support, while urging the commission to support a demand letter to city council and the mayor.
- II. Jen (missing last name) spoke on violence in Seattle and reiterated calls for the commission to support a demand letter to the city council and mayor.
- III. Interim Director Pablo introduced herself as the interim director of SOCR and invited the commission to connect with her as she takes on her new role.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Lewis motioned, Commissioner Hultgren seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Items of Business

- I. Office for Civil Rights- Mike Chin
 - a. Provided an overview of the laws SOCR administers, the structure of the SORC staff who are involved in appeals related to those laws, and provided a breakdown of the laws SOCR enforces.
 - b. Provided an overview of how citizens can file a discrimination complaint related to the laws applicable SOCR enforces.
 - c. Reported that SOCR receives over 1,000 complaints a year. About 100 are complaints that qualify for an investigation.
 - d. Mike Chinn engaged in a role play scenario with Commissioner Catsambas to demonstrate the process of how SOCR accepts and initiates a complaint investigation.
 - e. Commissioners posed various questions to Mike Chin during the Q&A portion for a better understanding of the process and resources SOCR offers.
 - f. A follow-up presentation for SHRC will be scheduled in the future to further the commission’s understanding of the appeals process and how to better collaborate with SOCR staff.
- II. Cut-ties campaign:
 - a. Commissioner Koss provided remarks on her request that the commission approve signing on to the “cut-ties” campaign previously discussed at the commission’s March meeting.

- b. Commissioner Tibbs motioned to approve SHRC signing on to the Cut-Ties campaign, Bailey seconded, 1 abstention, 9 in support. Motion carried.
- III. Public Safety- Office of the City Attorney
 - a. Vice Chair Smith motioned to send the agenda item to the criminal justice reform task force for further discussion and research. Tibbs seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
- IV. Violent Crime: Request for SHRC to sign letter to Mayor Wilson & City Council in support of action and resource development.
 - a. Commissioners reviewed and discussed the letter.
 - b. Vice Chair Smith motioned, Commissioner Koss seconded to send the matter to the Criminal Justice Reform Task Force for further review and discussion.

Committee/Task Force Reports

- I. Executive - Vice Chair Smith reported:
 - a. Chair McCullough and Vice Chair presented the commission work plan to city council members. The LGBT+ Commission requested funds for food at the pride flag raising. The matter will be put on the next agenda.
- II. Communications- Commissioner Duston:
 - a. No report
- III. Appeals - Commissioner Leydon
 - a. Thanks to Gwen, Bryennah and Hector for hearing March cases. The motion was to affirm.
 - b. The February case has moved to remand, so we'll continue working on that case as it returns in OCR.
 - c. Next appeal is scheduled for April 9 with Amy, Mariam and Nicholas.
 - d. We're doing well on signups for Appeals. We're 85% filled.
 - e. We're working with Ariel on reviewing HRC language and SMC with the purpose of clarifying the roles and the responsibilities of the Appeals Committee. We don't have anything to review at this stage but will in the future.
- IV. Events- Commissioner Quander reported:
 - a. May 9 community listening session has been scheduled at Van Asselt Community Center. Requested commissioners/nominees interested in helping that weekend complete the RSVP form.
 - b. Met with Van Asselt community, where the May 9 listening session will occur.
 - c. Currently planning Human Rights Day for December, the venue will be Washington Hall.

- d. The events planned throughout the year are set and budgeted \$1,500 per event.
- V. Criminal Justice Reform Task Force- Commissioner Quander:
 - a. Meetings scheduled to meet with policy staff of the city and hopefully someone from SPD.
- VI. Housing & Unhoused Task Force- Commissioner Bailey shared:
 - a. Toured Roots young adult shelter.
 - b. June event has been rescheduled and tentatively set for June 27.
 - c. Started planning for focus groups and community groups to ask about experiences around encampment closures/moving.
- VII. Human Trafficking Task Force- Commissioner Koss:
 - a. Met with a few organizations about joining monthly meetings and presenting to the task force.
 - b. April is child abuse prevention month, and Commissioner Koss will share resources via email with the commission.

Seattle Office for Civil Rights Updates

- I. Sebastian Wilson reported that SOCR completed workshops for commissioner accounts for social media/communications.
- II. Advocacy 101 materials will be sent out to commissioners once completed by SOCR staff.
- III. A virtual roundtable for all SOCR commissioners has been scheduled for the end of April and SOCR staff requests commissioners complete RSVP in a timely manner.
- IV. May 2 is the first SOCR organized tabling event for 2026 and will be at the El Centro de la Raza Cinco De Mayo event, Sebastian will follow up with commissioners with more info via email.
- V. Sebastian will be on vacation the third week of May but Marta and Meredith will be supporting the commissioner during his vacation.

Adjourned 7:57 p.m.

Motion was made by Vice Chair Smith and seconded by Commissioner Monson to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously.

Next Regular Meeting

May 7, 2026