Prince George's County
Human Rights Commission

Monday February 23, 2026
Zoom Meeting of the
Prince George's County
Human Rights Commission

Attendees:

Commissioners:

Joseph Reed, Chair
Keith Adams, Vice-Chair
Shonda Harmon, Secretary
Traci Birckhead (Excused)
Turkessa Brown
Caren Gillison
Erica Jenkins
Sylvia Johnson
Erin Kabba
Regina Truesdale
Ademola Oduyebo
Kayon Williams (Absent)

Staff:

Jose Villegas
Acting Executive Director

Azeem Lyons, Clerk
to the Commission

Guests:
Rebecca Scissors, PG Parks & Rec
Brianna Ford
Denette Mason

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

1. Call to Order – The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. Secretary Harmon conducted the roll call for the Commission Meeting. The Chair announced that a quorum was present for the meeting.

2. Adopt Agenda – The Chair called for a review of the agenda. The agenda was approved with a correction on the date to February 23, 2026

3. Approval of Minutes of January 28, 2026, Commission meeting. The Chair called for a review of the minutes. The minutes were adopted as distributed.

4. REPORT OF THE CHAIR

The Chair wanted to acknowledge commissioners and staff members for their dedication and continued dedication to advancing equity, dignity, and justice for everyone in Prince George's County.

Chair Reed also wanted to remind commissioners to file their 2025 financial disclosure documents are due no later than April 30, 2026. This will ensure that the commission remains in compliance. Any questions regarding submission should be directed to HRC staff.

5. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Executive Director Villegas wanted to acknowledge the passing of one of the civil rights leaders in this country the Reverend Jesse Jackson. He was instrumental and involved in the civil rights movement, his work with the Rainbow Coalition to pursue equity and justice for people in this country will not be forgotten.

Executive Director Villegas introduced the new Deputy Director Brianna Ford and allowed her to introduce herself. Deputy Director Ford expressed excitement to be a part of the team. Deputy Director Ford expressed being eager to learn the process.

Executive Director Villegas reminded us that January is the Human Trafficking Awareness Month. Multiple events took place, some of the events were postponed to February due to weather conditions. Executive Director Villegas attended the third annual human trafficking symposium organized by the University of Maryland Medical System at the Capital Region Hospital, held in partnership with the Prince George's County Human Trafficking Task

Executive Director Villegas also attended the Protecting Civil Rights During Challenging Times Symposium organized by Maryland Commission on Civil Rights held at Bowie State University. Any upcoming future events happening in Prince George’s County will be shared especially Maryland Commission events.

In addition, the Outreach Division is working with the Maryland Commission to organize a Women's History Month event on March 21, 2026. If you would like to attend, additional information can be provided.

Executive Director Villegas also wanted to notify the commission that the appointment process for his current position will go before the government operations committee and there will be a public hearing on March 24, 2026 at 12:30pm

Executive Director Villegas mentioned that a new investigator started on February 9th. It is likely in the next few months that we will have another investigator joining the office, not additional head count simply to replace another person who has submitted her resignation.

Executive Director Villegas reminded commissioners if they have any topics dealing with human rights or civil rights that you would like to explore, please contact our outreach or contact Clerk Lyons.

Executive Director Villegas responded to a question posed by Vice Chair Adams regarding the status of switching from Zoom to Teams for future meetings. Communication from the Office of Information Technology suggested, that we will likely be transferring to Teams, as it is a part of the county enterprise license.

Executive Director Villegas responded to Commissioner Johnson's comment regarding an upcoming domestic violence event. He noted that sometimes that domestic violence leads to human trafficking which falls under his area of authority. Commissioner Johnson will provide the office with the event details.

Executive Director Villegas also responded to Commissioner Gillison question regarding increasing awareness in the community about the Human Rights Office. He affirmed that the Office attends a lot of community events with the Outreach Division. If you have any event that you would like the Office of Human Rights to participate in, forward that information.

6. **APPEALS TO CIRCUIT COURT-** None

7. **ATTENDANCE RECORD** – Attached

8. **NEW BUSINESS** – None

9. **OLD BUSINESS** - None

10. **ANNOUNCEMENTS –** The next commission meeting will be held on March 23, 2026.

11. **CLOSED SESSION-** None

12. **ADJOURNMENT-** Motion by Vice Chair Adams and seconded by Commissioner Jenkins to adjourn the meeting at 5:50pm

Shonda W. Harmon, MBA, MPA

Shonda W. Harmon
Commission Secretary