Prince George's County
Human Rights Commission

Monday March 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
Turkessa Brown
Caren Gillison
Erica Jenkins (absent)
Sylvia Johnson
Erin Kabba
Regina Truesdale
Ademola Oduyebo
Kayon Williams

Staff:

Jose Villegas
Acting Executive Director

Azeem Lyons, Clerk
to the Commission

Guests:
Kyla Hanington, Public Outreach and Engagement Division Manager

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 as distributed.

3. Approval of Minutes of March 23, 2026, Commission meeting. The Chair called for a review of the minutes. The minutes were adopted as distributed.

4. REPORT OF THE CHAIR

Chair Reed wanted to acknowledge several civil rights developments.

First, ICE agents being deployed to staff major airports can heighten anxiety among citizens. This commission must remain committed to ensuring all residents' rights are maintained regardless of immigration status.

Also, in a significant shift at the Federal level, the Department of Education is stepping back from its traditional discrimination stance and oversight at schools. This responsibility now falls to local agencies, such as the commission. We must remain vigilant in our county and in our schools.

In addition, the US Commission on Civil Rights found in their monthly meeting an increase in source of income housing discrimination (i.e. vouchers, public assistance, etc). This contributes directly to housing instability.

Chair Reed affirmed that these developments remind us why our work on this commission is valuable and needed.

5. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Executive Director Villegas wanted to echo what Chair Reed stated about housing source-of-income discrimination which is a part of Division 12.

Executive Director Villegas wanted to acknowledge that March is Women's History Month. The Office of Human Rights is participating in the County Executive's Luncheon.

Executive Director Villegas wanted to highlight several events with our outreach and public engagement manager. During March, OHR conducted two youth leadership academies sessions: Human Trafficking and social justice.

OHR also conducted Office of Human Rights in Conversation Program, and interviewed Rocio Tremenos-Lopez, who is the first Latino elected as in a mayor position in the state of Maryland.

OHR also conducted a Democracy in Action discussion and had the privilege of having former director, Ms. Renee Battle-Brooks, as well as the Commission's attorney, Mr. Gabriel Christian, to discuss the topic of the U.S. Constitution. This discussion will continue and cover various parts of the Constitution.

OHR conducted a young adult book discussion at Upper Marlboro Library.

Executive Director Villegas participated in the MAHRA (Maryland Association of Human Rights Agency) meeting. During that meeting, the federal government's new housing guidelines were discussed, which require any agency who has a partnership with HUD or investigates the Housing Rights Act or Fair Housing Act. If that agency has more protection than the Fair Housing Act, then they will be deemed not substantially equivalent, and may have their contract terminated. Maryland is the only agency in the state that is considered substantially equivalent with HUD.

Executive Director Villegas and Ms. Hanington had the privilege to give a brief presentation to the Prince George's House delegation, to discuss the Office of Human Rights and its responsibilities.

In April, the Office of Human Rights and partners within the county government are working to conduct a community information resource fair that will take place in Hyattsville.
The entire program will be conducted in Spanish and will target the Latino Community. County Executive Braveboy and District 2 Councilmember Wanika Fisher have been invited to attend.

Executive Director Villegas introduced Ms. Kyla Hanington to speak. Ms Hanington has almost 10 years with OHR, currently serves as the Public Outreach and Engagement Division Manager, and is always looking for different ways to engage people, virtually, or in-person. Information was provided about an upcoming awareness event on April 18th and Commissioners were invited to share table duty and engage with the public. Ms. Hanington welcomed the opportunity to collaborate with commissioners on any upcoming events that could highlight Human Rights and the work being done. For example, interviewing an author whose book is in the Human Rights space.

Ms. Hanington expressed appreciation for Chair Reed's opening remarks regarding source of income housing protection in Prince George's County. Getting the message about this protection is critical.

Executive Director Villegas reminded us that his public confirmation hearing as Executive Director of Office of Human Rights on March 24, 2026.

Chair Reed requested a calendar of upcoming events.

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 April 27, 2026.

11. CLOSED SESSION- None

12. ADJOURNMENT- Motion by Vice Chair Adams and seconded by Commissioner Johnson to adjourn the meeting at 5:52pm

Shonda W. Harmon, MBA, MPA

Shonda W. Harmon
Commission Secretary