Prince George's County
Human Rights Commission

Monday May 18, 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
Sylvia Johnson
Erin Kabba
Regina Truesdale
Ademola Oduyebo
Kayon Williams

Staff:

Jose Villegas
Executive Director

Azeem Lyons, Clerk
to the Commission

Guests:

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 April 27, 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 once again thank everyone for the continued commitment to human rights in our county, especially in today's political climate.

Chair Reed stated that, as always, the Commission continues to carry out its core responsibilities, which are to investigate incidents of discrimination for all county residents. As a quasi-judicial body, the Commission takes every case seriously. The Office of Human Rights and this body of Commissioners treat each case with fairness and professionalism.

Chair Reed wanted to briefly note the recent Supreme Court decision in Louisiana versus Calais, which was recently issued concerning section two of the Voting Rights Act.
The ruling has been widely described as a significant narrowing of protections that have shaped voter rights law for more than 60 years. While the Commission does not take positions on ongoing legal or political debates and has no jurisdiction over voting matters, the Commission needs to remain mindful of how changes in civil rights law may affect local communities.
Chair Reed reminded the Commission to remain impartial and accessible and ready to act to manage that which fall within its authority.

Finally, Chair Reed wanted to express thanks to Commissioners for their continued service.

5. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Executive Director Villegas wanted to echo the sentiment that Chair Reed mentioned about the recent ruling on the Voting Rights Act. Even though the Commission does not have jurisdiction on the voting rights, it needs to closely monitor situations like these because other civil rights may be impacted in the long run.

Executive Director Villegas mentioned an article in the Washington Post dealing with the EEOC. In the article, it is mentioned that they are considering stopping private businesses from reporting employees by race and gender.

Executive Director Villegas reported that The Office of Human Rights is planning an interfaith leadership summit for Wednesday, May 21st, 2026 at the Hyattsville Mennonite Church. The goal is to bring leaders from different religions to a place where they can discuss certain actions that they have taken to help their respective communities.

Executive Director Villegas also reported that the third program in OHR community conversation discussing Amendment 4, 5, and 6 will take place Thursday at 7pm. The link can be found on OHR's website. The discussion will be conducted with former executive director Renee Battle-Brooks and Commission Attorney Gabriel Christian.

Executive Director Villegas reported that the Outreach Division is starting to work with the library system every year during the summertime on a social justice camp.

Executive Director Villegas wanted to inform the Commission that OHR lost an investigator in February. The interview process will begin this week for the seven candidates.

Executive Director Villegas reported that the county has two upcoming programs that OHR is participating in, and both are being held on May 30th. The first is the County Executive Multicultural Parade and the other is the United States 250 Celebration. Volunteers for both events are requested.

Executive Director Villegas is looking forward to connecting with each Commissioner virtually over the next two months. The goal is to hear what types of programs we would like to offer, or what each person would like to accomplish.
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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 June 22, 2026.

11. **CLOSED SESSION-** None

12. **ADJOURNMENT-** Motion by Vice Chair Adams and seconded by Commissioner Oduyebo to adjourn the meeting at 5:48pm

Shonda W. Harmon, MBA, MPA

Shonda W. Harmon
Commission Secretary