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Melrose Human Rights Commission

Melrose City Hall, 562 Main St, Melrose, MA 02176

[Human Rights Commission Official Website](#)

humanrightscommission@cityofmelrose.org | Hotline: (781) 979-4140

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December 8, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Lizzy Barr (Chair), Randall Carter, Jay Stapp, Kelsey Lima, Brian Kochanowski, Linda Thompson, Elizabeth Kowal

Members Absent: Laura Bergsten

Members of Public: None

Call to Order: Meeting was called to order by Chair Barr at 6:05 pm with a quorum of 7 Commissioners present.

READING OF THE MINUTES

Prior Meeting Minutes:

- Chairperson Barr entertained a motion to accept minutes of previous meeting
 - Commissioner Carter moves; seconded by Commissioner Stapp
 - Motion passes unanimously

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- The Chair noted that 2 member(s) of the public were present: Brian K. Johnson, Josh Shortlidge
- Chair Barr entertains a motion to open public comment
- Commissioner Stapp moves; seconded by Commissioner Thompson
 - Motion passes unanimously
- Mr. Shortlidge expressed his sincere desire to join the Commission; he has submitted his application to city hall
- Chair Barr entertains a motion to close public comment
 - Commissioner Thompson moves; Commissioner Stapp seconds
 - motion passes unanimously
- [Reading of the Minutes](#)
- Public Comment
 - Brian K. Johnson, MLK Day of Service
 - Sunday 1/18: potluck at 5
 - Monday 1/19: day of service at 9:30
 - requesting MHRC's help with:
 - publishing MLK Day info on city website
 - Promoting MLK Day in Melrose Public School
 - Sharing QR codes and sign-up links through official channels
 - Confirm availability of city spaces (if needed) and any relevant municipal procedures.
 - Point of contact for ongoing coordination during December/January
 - Snow clearing around West Emerson and other venues, Sunday/Monday
- Chairperson's Report

- Recruitment
 - Application from Josh Shortlidge
 - Mayor Jen is reviewing credentials (included in Agenda Packet)
 - City Council will vote in January
 - If voted in, candidate must be sworn in before formally joining Commission and voting on Commission matters
- Reminder that Vice Chair Kelsey Lima's term will expire in February 2026
- Please engage with your contacts
- Recruitment template?
 - to help current Commissioners in their recruitment efforts
 - Commissioner Stapp and Chair Barr to work together on a template
 - Currently, 3 vacancies
 - Not counting Vice-Chair Lima and Commissioner Kowal
 - Chair Barr to ask city solicitor re: whether Commissioner Kowal can continue to serve on MHRC once she is sworn in as a city councillor
- Action item: Chair Barr to contact Lauren Grimek re: process for distributing communications to MPS students
- Melrose Messenger
- Chair had follow-up conversation with Patrick DeVivo on Monday, December 8th
 - focus on MHRC's tangible work, incl.:
 - Ordering and distributing Know Your Rights Red Cards
 - Publishing of Resource Guides
 - Formalizing Intake & Referral process Collaborating and forging relationships with local organizations like Melrose Police, Melrose House Authority, Commission on Disability, Commission for Women, etc.
- Treasurer's Report
 - Donation account balance: \$2425.01
 - Commissioner Stapp to follow-up with city auditor re: balance
- Regular Business
 -
- Updates
 - Website Updated
 - Updates to website are complete
 - Old URL redirects to new site
 - QR code now links correctly to new site
 - Intake Form Review
 - Meeting requested with City Solicitor Phillips
 - Emails sent 12/1 and 12/8
 - Chair Barr to request 11am mtg
 - Commissioners Kowal & Carter to attend as well
- New Business
 - Collaboration with Wakefield Human Rights Commission
 - Chair Barr attended recent WHRC event
 - explore possibilities for collaborations with WHRC
 - WHRC actively involved in events-based work
- Other and/or Unfinished Business
 - Project Planning for 2026

- Chair Barr requests that commissioners start brainstorming their goals for MHRC for 2026
 - Action item: all commissioners submit goal(s) by 1/6/26
- Officers & Roles for 2026
- Next meeting: Jan. 12, 2026
 - TBD on whether it will be in person or remote
 - Commissioner Barr will explore alternatives to Zoom for meetings, incl. Google Meet
- Adjournment
 - Commissioner Carter moves to adjourn; Commissioner Stapp seconds
 - Motion passes unanimously
 - Meeting adjourned at 7:02 pm