

RECEIVED

By City Clerks Office at 7:16 am, Feb 17, 2026



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

[@MelroseHRC](#) [@Melrose_HRC](#) [@MelroseHRC](#)

January 13, 2026 Meeting Minutes

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

Members Absent:

Members of Public: Josh Shortlidge

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

READING OF THE MINUTES

Prior Meeting Minutes:

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

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- The Chair noted that 1 member(s) of the public were present. The Chair reiterated the official policy on public comment.
 - Josh Shortlidge (132 Bay St. Rd.) commented on the MLK Day of Services events planned on 1/20/26
 - The Chair entertains a motion to close public comment
 - Commissioner Thompson moves; Commissioner Carter seconds
 - motion passes without objection
- Chairperson's Report
 - Reminder re: conflict of interest training (if applicable)
 - Commissioner Kowal has officially resigned, owing to her election to Melrose City Council
 - Vice Chair Lima's term will expire at the end of February
 - Massachusetts HRC
 - Chair Barr attends; 1st Friday of the month at 9am
- Treasurer's Report
 - donation balance confirmed with City: \$2425.01
 - Discussion re: reimbursement for MLK Day of Service expenditures
 - Josh Shortlidge inquired re: possibility of funding for MLK Day of Service
 - for e.g., potluck dinner, breakfast, etc.
 - MHRC can sponsor and/or participate in community events
- Regular Business
- Updates

- Communications for MLK Jr. Day of Service
 - issues w/ communications to schools
 - “digital backpack” no longer used for messaging to students
 - Chair Barr making inquiry with Melrose Schools
 - Discussion re: Facebook posts to raise awareness of, e.g., MLK Day
- Feature in Melrose Messenger
 - News article on MHRC—very informative and provides useful info, including how to join the Commission
- Other and/or Unfinished Business Intake Form Review with City Solicitor
 - Recruitment
 - Recap of December 2025 meeting of several commissioners with City Solicitor
 - provided guidance on disclosure language, privacy of reports made to MHRC
 - Chair Barr shared flowchart of reporting process
 - Chair Barr intends to have City Solicitor review intake form again before piloting the program
 - Will plan vote at February meeting for launch
 - Also, need to test the functionality of the intake inbox, etc.
 - Commissioners encouraged to think of people they may know who would be suitable for MHRC, and to reach out to them about interest in joining
 - Chair Barr & Commissioner Stapp to meet in late January re: generating outreach template
 - Collaboration with Wakefield Human Rights Commission
 - 2026 Goals & Planning
 - Recruiting
 - Federal immigration policy
 - Know your rights education
 - Ways MHRC can support community and be more present
 - **Action item:** Chair Barr to ask City Solicitor re: sharing events, e.g. vigils, rallies, etc.
 - Commissioner Carter suggests meeting between now and scheduled February meeting
 - Chair Barr tentatively suggests 1/26 for interim meeting
 - **Action item:** all Commissioners to think of ways that MHRC can support Melrose Community
- New Business
 - World Culture Fair at Melrose Schools—March 13th
 - email from member of public, inquiring about possible past collaboration b/w Lincoln School & MHRC
 - Chair Barr to follow up and inquire about their needs
 - Chair Barr entertains motion to pre-authorize spending up to \$280 to support/sponsor the Fair
 - Commissioner Kochanowski moves; Commissioner Thompson seconds
 - motion passes without objection
- Adjournment
 - Commissioner Carter moves to adjourn; Commissioner Thompson seconds
 - Motion passes unanimously
 - Meeting adjourned at 7:23 pm

