

Human Rights Commission (HRC) Rights Violations Subcommittee

HRC Meeting Minutes – December 11, 2025

Attendees: Chair Jason Mackey, Commissioners: Jenny Bonham-Carter, Jovana Calvillo.

Staff: Haakon Brooks

1. Opening

- The meeting was called to order by Chair **Jason Mackey at 10:30 a.m. via Zoom**. Roll call was conducted. Quorum was confirmed.

2. Scope and Mandate of the Subcommittee

- Chair Mackey noted that the Rights Violations Subcommittee is newly established and requires a clearly defined scope, charge, and role. Members discussed the lack of clarity around existing city processes for handling human rights violations and hate incidents.
- Commissioners raised questions regarding how incidents are currently reported, what protocols exist, and whether the HRC is formally involved. We agreed that the subcommittee's authority, escalation pathways, and access to information remain unclear.
- Chair Mackey proposed drafting a framework outlining the subcommittee's intended role and presenting it to the City. Members agreed.

3. Intake, Triage, and Referral

- Members discussed the subcommittee's likely role in documentation, triage, referral, and advocacy rather than adjudication. Potential referral pathways discussed included social services, community organizations, police, and non-police entities.
- We agreed that early-stage involvement is critical for meaningful impact. Members also discussed the possibility of developing a broader human rights framework or declaration for the City of Somerville.

4. Intake and Reporting Gaps

- We agreed that the lack of a standardized intake process is a major structural barrier. Members emphasized the need for a clear, public-facing intake pathway and internal workflow.

5. Institutional Positioning

- Members discussed the HRC's positioning within city government and the need to clarify that it is a universal resource for residents and not solely an executive function.
- Concerns were raised that elected officials sometimes handle constituent complaints independently without notifying the HRC. Members agreed that rights concerns should be routed to the HRC as a standard practice.
- Jenny shared that Mayor-Elect Wilson has expressed interest in strengthening the HRC and engaging with commissioners.

6. Internal Operations

- Members expressed frustration with the lack of shared document storage, communication tools, and institutional continuity.
- Chair Mackey proposed building a shared knowledge base to preserve institutional memory. Members agreed.

7. Action Items

The following priorities were identified:

- Drafting a formal framework outlining the subcommittee's role
- Developing an intake and triage structure
- Creating a contact map of relevant departments
- Scheduling meetings with the Mayor-Elect and key City officials
- Bringing operational concerns to the full HRC
- Chair Mackey will prepare draft materials for the next full HRC meeting.

8. Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Jenny and seconded by Chair Mackey. Vote: Passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 11:29 a.m.

Minutes prepared by:

/Jason Mackey/

Chair, Rights Violations Subcommittee