



City of Somerville
Human Rights Commission
Administration Subcommittee
Meeting Minutes

Date: July 20, 2026
Time: 5:00 p.m.
Location: Virtual (Zoom)

Members Present

- Elyse Best, Chair
- Salma Kazmi
- Brian Sokol
- Primrose Chakera

Also Present: Mark Levy, a member of the public. No public comment was offered.

Notetaker: Primrose Chakera

A quorum was present.

Call to Order

Elyse called the meeting to order at **5:07 p.m.** Following confirmation of quorum, the Subcommittee proceeded with the published agenda.

Approval of Minutes

The Subcommittee reviewed the minutes of the June 15, 2026, Administration Subcommittee meeting.

Motion: Approve the June 15, 2026, Administration Subcommittee meeting minutes.

Result: Motion approved unanimously.



Current Business

Bylaw Development

The Subcommittee discussed the status of bylaw development and agreed to temporarily defer further work until other priority initiatives are further advanced. Bylaw revisions will return to the Administration Subcommittee agenda after current projects are further developed.

Human Rights Advisory Council

The Subcommittee continued planning for the proposed Human Rights Advisory Council. Members discussed providing commissioners with an additional opportunity to submit feedback through a Google Form before returning the proposal to the full Commission. The Subcommittee also discussed implementation planning, including organizing Advisory Council materials in the Commission's shared Google Drive, developing an implementation roadmap with key milestones and timelines, preparing recruitment materials, clarifying member roles and expectations, and using the existing one-page Advisory Council overview as the foundation for future outreach. Members discussed a recruitment process focused primarily on commissioner nominations while allowing limited community self-nominations, maintaining a target membership of a maximum of 21 members, and working toward implementation over an estimated six-month timeline. The Subcommittee agreed to prepare the Google Form and a draft implementation roadmap within two weeks and ready for review at its next meeting.

Procedures for Public Comments and Access to Open Meetings

The Subcommittee discussed developing consistent public participation procedures as the Human Rights Commission becomes more visible and subcommittees conduct additional meetings. Members discussed practices to support orderly and respectful public participation, including muting attendees upon entry, recognizing speakers during a designated public comment period, requesting comment topics in the Zoom chat, placing public comment near the end of meetings when practical, providing an introduction outlining expectations for participation, and displaying a Code of Conduct based on the Commission's "Communication Across Differences" guidance from the HRC Onboarding Deck. Members discussed applying these procedures consistently across Commission and subcommittee meetings. Technology options were also discussed to support public



participation, including moderated Q&A platforms and administrative review tools, noting that future budget resources may be required if such tools are adopted.

Meeting Accessibility and Inclusion

The Subcommittee discussed improving accessibility for Commission meetings by ensuring sufficient advance notice and adequate time to coordinate disability accommodations and language access services. Discussion included the importance of publishing agendas and meeting materials earlier to support accommodation requests, recognizing that advance planning promotes equitable participation, establishing project deadlines with sufficient lead time before Commission meetings, and confirming that ADA accommodation and language access requests continue to be coordinated through the appropriate City departments. The Subcommittee will follow up with City staff to determine realistic timelines and procedures for arranging these services.

Administrative Operations

The Subcommittee discussed administrative matters related to Commission operations, including communication and recordkeeping practices. Members confirmed continued use of the Commission Gmail account for official correspondence and record retention and affirmed that Zoom meeting recordings will not be published publicly.

The Subcommittee also reviewed the status of outstanding nondisclosure agreements and incident response acknowledgments and discussed an upcoming meeting with City legal staff to review feedback on the Commission's complaint procedures. It was noted that a complaint form had been created and submitted to the City for review.

Action Items

- Primrose will develop and distribute a Google feedback form to Commissioners regarding the proposed Human Rights Advisory Council. The form will include open-ended questions to solicit feedback on concerns with the current proposal and suggestions for improvement, as well as a nominations section requesting recommendations for potential candidates and identifying any missing categories, communities, or perspectives that should be considered.



- Primrose will prepare a comprehensive implementation roadmap outlining the anticipated six-month development and launch plan for the Human Rights Advisory Council, including milestones, recruitment strategy, public outreach, implementation phases, and projected timelines for review by the Administration Subcommittee.
- Salma will prepare a Code of Conduct slide using the Commission's existing communication guidance and incorporate Elyse's introductory language for the public comment period.
- Elyse will revise and provide introductory language for the public participation portion of meetings, follow up with City staff regarding timelines for disability accommodations and language interpretation and continue work on accessibility planning for future Commission meetings.
- The Subcommittee will research question-and-answer platforms to facilitate public participation and moderated discussion during meetings

As there was no additional business, the meeting was adjourned just before 6:00 PM.

Documents Discussed:

- Human Rights Advisory Council Draft (publicly available)
- Draft Human Rights Commission Bylaws (internal working draft; discussed as part of ongoing development)
- Human Rights Commission Onboarding Deck (publicly available)
- NDA forms

Next Meeting: August 17, 2026