



CITY OF PITTSBURGH
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RELATIONS
RACHEL SHEPHERD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Monthly Commission Meeting Agenda

September 8, 2025

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. MEETING MINUTES
 - a. July 7, 2025
3. PUBLIC COMMENTS
4. COMMITTEES
 - a. FINANCE
 - b. PERSONNEL
 - c. COMMUNITY RELATIONS
5. DIRECTOR'S REPORT
6. OLD BUSINESS
7. NEW BUSINESS
8. ADJOURNMENT



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DIRECTOR'S REPORT

September 8, 2025

PERSONNEL AND ADMINISTRATION

- More commissioner suggestions were forwarded to Darius in the Mayor's office. Deputy Mayor Pawlak stated that they have made contact with some people and are working to schedule interviews.
- HUD no longer permits use of their logo on our marketing materials. We were compelled to remove any and all marketing materials that have that logo or statements by HUD.

CASES AND ENFORCEMENT

- As of 9/3/2025 there are:
 - 52 open investigations (+10 since August);
 - 66 pending intakes (+9 since August);
 - 5 cases awaiting a response and assignment (-2 since August);
 - 8 pending mandatory conciliations (-3 since August);
 - 5 cases in court (+1 since August); and
 - 2 cases on the public hearing track (-2 since August).
- Compliance Review saw ten determinations on August 18th.
- We completed 65 cases and submitted 19 intake-only cases to the EEOC this year. We will be paid for 57 cases and 17 intakes.
- We completed 21 housing cases and will be paid for 20 cases.

MEETINGS AND NEW CONNECTIONS

- Sara Rosso of Hugh Lane
- Maggie Beldecos of the Trade Institute of Pittsburgh
- Liz Gray of Oakland Planning and Development Corporation
- Chris Rosselot of Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment Group
- Upcoming: Marlene van Nelson of Trellis Legal, LLC

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

- National Night Out

- City in the Streets East Liberty, Allentown
- John Lewis Day of Action
- Employment Discrimination CLE
- Civic Learning Youth Day
- Fair Housing for Landlords training
- We just received our second quarterly report from Just Mediation Pittsburgh. Our landlord and tenant fair housing
- Advertising update:
 - Still running bus ads through September; have had some direct referrals from those.
 - Running a full-page ad with Soul Pitt in their summer issue
 - We are reviewing Qburgh, Jewish Chronicle, and Championship Chase advertising options
 - Lamar billboards are secured for two locations: Penn Avenue and 31st Street Bridge during August and the Parkway/Blvd. Of the Allies ramp in November/December

SPECIAL PROJECTS

- Code updates are just about ready for commissioner review.
- Protection updates:
 - Housing Status – Will be introduced at City Council on 9/9
 - Commercial Property – Will be introduced at council soon; we have final approval from the solicitors
 - Disparate Impact/Civil Rights – Council has this; waiting on final review from our solicitors

UPCOMING EVENTS

Eradicate Hate Summit (tabling)	September 15-17 from 9am-5pm
Convention Center	
IAOHRA Conference (travel)	October 4th-9th
Anchorage, Alaska	
Legal Protections for Survivors at Home & Work	October 30 th

Commission on Human Relations Meeting Minutes

Monday, July 7, 2025

Attendance: virtual meeting via Zoom

Commissioners:

Genevieve Rosselot
Richard Morris
Isabel Ruiz-Flint
Alberto Benzaquen
Kyle Webster
Carleen King
Jamie Gibson

Staff:

Rachel Shepherd, Director
Christopher Sault, Deputy Director
Rita Turpin Porterfield, Senior Investigator
Jeffrey Cameron, Senior Investigator
Lauren Law, Senior Investigator
Kevin Carroll, Administrative Assistant
Courtney Smith, Fiscal & Contracting Coordinator

Guests: Pre-registered through Zoom, Sherri Bridget, Thea Young

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** – Vice Chair Cmr. Rosselot called the meeting to Order at 3:32 p.m.
- II. **ADOPTION OF MINUTES** –
 1. Corrections: None
 2. Motion to adopt minutes, including any corrections noted above, made by Commissioner Rabbi Gibson
 3. Seconded by Commissioner Rosselot
 4. Unanimous voice vote in favor
- III. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**
 1. Pittsburgh Racial Justice Summit Cookout – Prospect Shelter at Schenley Park
 2. 10a-2p
 3. Email info@prjs.org to RSVP
- IV. **COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORT**
 - A. **Committee Reports**
 - i. **Finance Committee** – 2026 Budget is up for vote other than last month's notes there are no updates/business to report.
 - ii. **Personnel Committee** –

1. Commissioner Webster looking for approval of evaluation form from Commissioners to evaluate Director Shepherd; thereafter, use the form for feedback (once accepted)

iii. ***Community Relations Committee*** –

1. None

iv. ***Public Hearing Section*** –

1. None

B. Director's Report –

i. Personnel and Administration:

1. Getting a Learn and Earn intern

ii. Cases, Investigation, and Enforcement:

1. As of 7/1/25:

- i. 42 open investigations,
- ii. 57 pending intakes,
- iii. 7 cases awaiting a response and assignment to investigators
- iv. 11 pending mandatory conciliations
- v. 4 cases in court
- vi. 2 cases on the public hearing track
2. 7 determinations for Compliance Review this month
3. 3 trainings completed this month to fulfill settlement agreement compliance.
4. We have met EEOC contract numbers and then some. We are waiting for credited case response; highest in the last decade.

iii. Education, Outreach, Meetings, and New Connections:

1. ACHD presentation done by Dir. Shepherd for disability needs and habitability intersections.
2. Dep. Dir. Soult presented to Center for Victims during their regular staff meeting regarding City's domestic violence protections.
3. Will table at Eradicate Hate Summit in September
4. Met with Jacob from Allegheny County about updates to the County Commission and discuss outreach to the Aspinwall Commission; County search for executive director is open.
5. Met with Matthew Forth for Keystone Development Center about co-ops and how the Commission can provide training in an employment context. Also getting them

connected with other Pittsburgh agencies who may benefit from working with them.

6. At the press conference on June 24th Director Shepherd connected with Kelsey Leigh from Pittsburgh Action Against Rape, who asked if we would be willing to train their staff on when to refer people to the Commission.
7. Also at the June 24th press conference Nicky Ripley asked if the Commission would be willing to participate in a town hall to better address questions and concerns from the LGBTQ+ community regarding discrimination. This would also be coordinated with Dena Stanley of TransYOUning.
8. Emilia connected Dir. Shepherd with Maggie Beldecos of the Trade Institute of Pittsburgh. We have an upcoming meeting to discuss how the Commission can assist with training their students.

iv. Special Projects

1. Dep. Dir. Soult sat in for legislative updates proposed by Councilperson Warwick
2. Press Conference and Mayor spoke to recognize the Commission's 70th Anniversary on 7/1/2025
3. Finalizing updates to Rules and Regulations
4. Looking at adding new code protections and a full roster of commissioners as the Administration sets end-of-term priorities

v. Upcoming Events/Misc.:

1. John Lewis Day of Action July 17th
2. Will be at Little Italy Days in Bloomfield: August 14-17, Liberty Ave. in Bloomfield

V.OLD BUSINESS –

A. Budget:

i. Proposal One:

1. Community Liaison position
2. Lead Investigator Position
3. Increase Fiscal and Contracting Coordinator salary
4. Part time budget increase from \$5,000 to \$10,000

ii. Proposal Two:

1. Community Liaison position
2. Additional Investigator
3. Increase Fiscal and Contracting Coordinator salary
4. Part time budget increase from \$5,000 to \$30,000

- iii. No guidance as to limits; last year was don't ask for anything; Cmr. Morris noted that the asks were large dollar amounts. Director Shepherd expressed that asks are based on years of underfunding and an increase in workload and protections; hoping this year would be growth and traction.
- iv. Cmr. King thought the ask was small compared to the outsized attack in nationwide backlash to DEI efforts. Dir. Shepherd acknowledged that the asks invest in worker power to further the Commission's objectives.
- v. Requesting for proposals to be submitted to Council for consideration and approval. Two proposals to ease Council choice.
- vi. Move to vote to accept by Cmr. Gibson; seconded by Cmr. King; unanimous voice vote in favor.

B. Election of Executive Committee

VI. NEW BUSINESS –

- a. Community Tension and Anti-Semitic actions in Pittsburgh
 - i. There have been verbal attacks, leafletting, and vandalism
 - ii. Shooting in Washington DC has shaken the Jewish community in America.
 - iii. Cmr. Gibson would like to invite speakers to bring up these issues; particularly a community-based meeting and address conflating Israeli conflict and anti-Semitism. For example, most Pittsburghers don't know that 22%-24% of the Jewish community in Pittsburgh lives below the poverty line and their concentrated population here in Pittsburgh (5%) is at risk for targeted attacks.
 - iv. Jewish Community Center willing to host a meeting, which Cmr. Gibson would arrange for August meeting.
 - v. Cmr. Rosselot called for motions on the topic.
 - vi. Cmr. Morris moved to have next meeting moved to JCC with tensions over anti-Semitism, with following meeting to be focused on immigrant community tensions. Meetings are to be held in the evening to expand community access.
 - vii. Seconded by Cmr. King.
 - viii. Comment by Cmr. Webster to include the trans and LGBTQ community in focus as well.
 - ix. Unanimous voice vote in favor.
- b. Announcement of Elections results for Executive Committee
 - i. Chair Teaira Collins
 - ii. First Vice-Chair Genevieve Rosselot

- iii. Second Vice-Chair Richard Morris
- iv. Treas. Carleen King
- v. Sec. Alberto Benzaquen

VII. ADJOURNMENT – Commissioner Gibson moved to adjourn, which was seconded by Commissioner King. Unanimously adjourned at 4:42 p.m.