



MINUTES OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION

October 16, 2025

ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 19:09 by Ravi Srinivasan, Chair. Ravi Srinivasan, Chair, had arranged with Matthew Amaral, Township Communications Director, to have posted on the Township website.

Roll Call:

Commissioners Present	Ravi Srinivasan (Chair), Kevin Allen (Vice Chair), Sheila Boyd (New Commissioner), Leslie Brown (Treasurer), Matilda Carvajal, Leonore Dickinson, Matthew Frankel, Kevin Pierre, Reubena Spence, Nelson Campbell (remote)
Commissioners Absent	Madeline Gale, Yvonne Bouknight (Ed Designee), Joni Cohen, Sol Demefack (HS Liaison), Renee Baskerville (Council Liaison)
Other Parties in Attendance	Alicia Dawkins (Human Resources), Diane Anglin (President, Montclair NAACP), Parker Chehak (Resident), Scott (?) (Student Observer).

Per Township website: There are currently 4 generic open vacancies / appointments for the CRC, and the MSU appointee position is also open.

Meeting notice was provided on [Meeting Dates Township of Montclair, NJ \(montclairnjusa.org\)](https://montclairnjusa.org) as well as filed with the Township Clerk. Civil Rights Commission activities also listed in Montclair Local (Internet only news site) with link to Township site for meeting dates: [Montclair Civil Rights Commission: Come Be Part of Change - Montclair Local](#).

Public Comments Section

Diane Anglin (President, Montclair NAACP) shared that the NAACP is moving from a **social organization to one focused on action and purpose**. The organization prioritizes civil engagement and **social justice** for Black youth, adults, and seniors. Ms. Anglin stressed the need for intentional **cooperation and collaboration** between the NAACP and the CRC. She noted

the NAACP receives discrimination complaints and offers support, but cannot provide legal advice. The NAACP's education committee is working directly with the Board of Education and the superintendent regarding the **financial deficit** that is anticipated to negatively impact services for Black and Brown students. Ms. Anglin voiced concern about the **dwindling African American population** in Montclair due to rising costs, urging protection for people of color and seniors. She also highlighted the necessity for existing Black families to **welcome new Black families** who may feel disconnected from the community. The CRC offered to share its annual reports (2021-2024) to clarify CRC activities.

* **Parker Chehak (Resident)** presented a symbolic resolution supporting the **Immigrant Trust Act (ITA)**, pending state legislation intended to prevent local resources from being used for immigration enforcement and to bar local police cooperation with federal immigration authorities. Mr. Huck was frustrated by the **Town Council's resistance** to putting the resolution on the agenda, despite 18 towns and 2 counties (including Essex) having adopted similar measures. Commissioners recommended that Chehak consult with local immigrant advocacy groups like **Navegadores** and MFEE to ensure appropriate community support and timing.

Public Session of CRC meeting

Meeting Compliance and Minutes: Chair Ravi Srinivasan confirmed the meeting was in compliance with the New Jersey Open Meetings Act. Minutes from the prior September 18th meeting were reviewed and approved. The Chair reiterated that minutes should continue to follow the **structured template format**.

* **New Commissioner Introduction: Sheila Boyd** was introduced as a new commissioner, sharing her professional background in human resources and motivation to serve.

* **Educational Budget Cuts:** The discussion focused on anticipated school budget cuts that threaten programs like **Brother to Brother, Sister to Sister, and Imani**. The CRC resolved to **continue monitoring the facts** of the cuts closely and planned to discuss the matter with the Superintendent, who is targeted for the November meeting.

* **Township Wellness Event:** Alicia Dawkins (HR Director) announced the Township's first Health and Wellness Fair on **Friday, October 24th, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.**. The event is an opportunity for the CRC to engage with the approximately 580 Township employees. Leslie Brown volunteered to coordinate attendance.

* **Business Operations and Logistics:**

* **Business Cards:** The new logo was approved. Reubena Spence was asked to expedite ordering new business cards for upcoming events.

* **Reimbursement:** Reubena Spence expressed frustration with the manual process and delays in expense reimbursement, suggesting a need for **petty cash**. Chair Srinivasan noted



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that the new Township Manager, Stephen Marks, was sympathetic to the issue and promised assistance.

* **Technology/Remote Access:** The Chair addressed the ongoing difficulty in securing a dedicated Township Zoom account, noting that the IT department (Tony Fan) has been unresponsive. It was clarified that **in-person attendance is the norm**, and remote participation should remain the exception (e.g., severe weather or illness). Kevin Allen volunteered to follow up with IT personnel regarding Zoom access.

* **Open Seats:** The CRC recognized the need to recruit residents for the numerous open commissioner positions. The Chair committed to following up on website updates with Matthew Amaral to reflect current commission membership.

* **Anti-Bias Training:** The Chair noted that the Town Council has not acted on the CRC's recommendations regarding anti-Semitism and anti-racism training, a matter pending for nearly a year.

* **Hate Incident Follow-up (Leslie Brown):** Leslie Brown updated the commission on the personal hate incident she experienced in her residential building (Bellclair Apartments) on July 23rd, involving a racial slur. The police identified the perpetrator, but the prosecutor's office declined charges, citing **free speech protections**. Leslie reported that the elevator security camera was non-functional. Commissioners advised her to draft a **certified letter** to building management, documenting the lack of security and the incident, and offered the backing of the CRC to deter potential retaliation concerning her residency. The Chair will assist Leslie Brown with the precise wording regarding CRC backing.

Action Items and Responsible Parties:

Coordinate CRC representation at the Township Health and Wellness Fair (October 24th).	Leslie Brown
Follow up with Township IT (Tony Fan) regarding obtaining a dedicated CRC Zoom account.	Kevin Allen
Follow up on ordering and printing new business cards with the approved logo quickly.	Reubena Spence
Share the CRC Annual Reports (2021-2024) with Diane Anglin/NAACP.	Ravi Srinivasan
Draft a certified letter to Bellclair Apartments management regarding the hate incident and non-functional camera, including wording for CRC backing.	Leslie Brown (with assistance from Ravi Srinivasan)
Follow up with the Township Manager (Steven Marks) regarding solutions for expense reimbursement issues.	Ravi Srinivasan
Follow up with Matthew Amaral (Communications Director) to update the CRC website commissioner roster/liaison statuses.	Ravi Srinivasan
Parker Chehak to consult with Navegadores/MFEE regarding the appropriate timing and necessity of the Immigrant Trust Act resolution as well as impact to other towns that have passed such a resolution	Matilda Carvajal



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Follow up on the status of anti-bias/anti-racism training recommendations sent to the Town Council.	Ravi Srinivasan
Determine next steps for collaboration based on research into other New Jersey civil rights commissions.	Commissioners
Share annual reports with Diane Anglin and transparency on open CRC positions	Ravi Srinivasan