



DOMINICK PANGALLO
MAYOR

**CITY OF SALEM
RACE EQUITY COMMISSION**

98 WASHINGTON STREET
SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS 01970
978.745-9595 x. 41505

REGINA ZARAGOZA FREY, CHAIR
SHELBY ORTEGA, VICE CHAIR

**DRAFT
MINUTES OF THE RACE EQUITY COMMISSION
July 16, 2026**

A meeting of the Salem Race Equity Commission (REC) was held on July 16, 2026, at 5:00 pm via Zoom, an online video conference call system in accordance with Chapter 2 of the Act of 2025. Pursuant to Section 30A of chapter 20 of the acts of 2021, as amended by 2 section 40 of chapter 2 of the acts of 2023, and further amended by Section 1 of Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2025, the City is authorized to conduct remote meetings of its public bodies through June 30, 2027.

1. Roll Call

Present on the call were: Regina Zaragoza Frey (Chair), Dr. Shelby Ortega (Vice Chair) Alexandra Ramos, Rosa Alvarado, Jennifer Winsor, Dr. Melanie Sonsteng-Person, Dr. Vanita Naidoo, Human Resources Director Lisa Cammarata, Chief of Police Lucas Miller.

Absent were: Chief of Police Lucas Miller, Salem Public Schools Acting Superintendent Kate Carbone, and City Council Liaison Kyle Davis

2. Approve previous meeting minutes.

a. June 4, 2026

VOTE: Motion to approve the meeting minutes for June 4, 2026 was made by Lisa Cammarata, seconded by Alexandra Ramos, and the motion was carried unanimously by roll call vote.

3. Public Comment.

Chair Zaragoza made a call for public comment. There was no public comment.

4. Announcements and Updates



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- a. Progress on grant applications: Regina to provide an update from Kerry Murphy, Health and Wellness Coordinator, regarding the MA Community Health and Healthy Aging Funds grant application.**

This was a major grant that would have allowed the committee to do a lot of work in racial equity in relation to ageism for the next few years. Unfortunately, the City of Salem was not selected as a recipient. Chair Zaragoza Frey had reviewed the application and it was a strong application. So Chair Zaragoza Frey is working with Kerry Murphy and other staff to identify other sources of funding to continue the “Salem for All Ages” initiatives. Chair Zaragoza Frey also serves on this committee and believes there is a lot of overlap between both committees and that there will be upcoming opportunities for collaboration.

- b. Commission Membership Updates. Introduction of Dr. Javier Garcia-Perez.**

Welcome Dr. Javier Garcia-Perez! Dr. Garcia-Perez introduced himself. He has lived in the City for one year and is a professor of social work at Salem State University. Other members introduced themselves as well.

Another membership update: Colby Bomberowitz had to step back from his position due to scheduling conflicts. Chair Zaragoza Frey encouraged members to connect her with any residents who may be interested in serving.

- c. August Meeting Schedule: Discussion of replacing the regular August meeting with an informal Commission gathering.**

There will not be a regular August meeting. Instead, members will be invited to an informal gathering of REC members so everyone can get to know each other outside of the formal meetings. Chair Zaragoza Frey will follow up over email with additional details.

- d. Upcoming City Council discussion on City Seal.**

The City Seal discussion started in REC meetings so Chair Zaragoza Frey shared that the City Council will be taking up a discussion and potential vote on this topic during their meeting on August 25.

- 5. Presentation and discussion from local Salem LUCE network leader, Julia Scherer-Hook: Introduction to Salem LUCE.**



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Julia Scherer-Hook presented about Salem LUCE. LUCE is a hotline that does rapid response verification of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) presence in a community. Anyone can call the hotline to report something then LUCE dispatches people to verify if it is ICE or what exactly is happening then send the information back to the community. The slides presented included the following information:

- Goals
 - Give the immigrant community in Massachusetts a feeling of real support, organizing, and concrete assistance with dignity.
 - Create opportunities to make visible the otherwise invisible attacks on our communities, and their heart wrenching costs.
 - Create opportunities to go on the offensive against those who attack.
 - Connect people to local and statewide organizing efforts.
 - Maintain an identity statewide which is trustworthy, reliable, consistent, reassuring, and that people can go to for accurate information.
- LUCE Theory of Change
 - Ice agents want to operate in the shadows. They want people to be afraid.
 - When we verify ICE presence, we are able to share information;
 - Community members can make informed decisions.
 - Provide witness/protective presence on site.
 - Decreases likelihood of violence/illegal activity.
 - When we verify that it is NOT ICE, we help stop harmful rumors.
- Allies Organizing in Solidarity:
 - Solidarity – LUCE is an immigrant centered immigrant led organizations.
 - Allies play key roles as verifiers.
 - No saviors – we are all in this together, although we are not experiencing violence in the same way.
- On Criminalization of Immigration
 - We do not throw people under the bus - we fight for everyone's freedom - all people who have been criminalized, policed, been in prison.
 - “Good” vs “bad” immigrant narratives seek to further divide and pit people against each other.
- Psychological Torture
 - The fear is the tactic. The fear allows corporations to exploit immigrant workers.
 - They want to create the feeling that they are everywhere, and there is nothing we can do.
 - There are more of us than there are of them.



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- Needs of Rapid Response
 - During ICE activity, we record and document for these simple and serious goals:
 - Reduce or eliminate harm to people in custody or in the community.
 - Prevent escalation that could direct violence toward them or others.
 - Ensure names, information, and family contacts are captured so no one is disappeared.
 - Connect impacted families to legal resources and support.
 - Any tactic that undermines these goals, even symbolically, must be reconsidered.
- Why Whistles Undermine Those Goals
 - Whistles do not increase safety in our specific context. They:
 - Could make it harder to document and capture information.
 - Escalate already volatile ICE agents who don't respect our rights.
 - Increase the likelihood of aggression toward bystanders or the detained person.
 - Create confusion for community members and children, while having reduced utility in a suburban terrain.
 - Loudness does not equal effectiveness.
- What We Have Accomplished Statewide
 - 7,000+ calls to the hotline from February to December 2025
 - Most frequently spoken languages: English, Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian Creole
 - 79% Response Rate
 - LUCE encountered ICE 430 times in 74 towns.
 - 40 verifier "hubs" across the state
- LUCE on the North Shore
 - 3 hubs with verifiers who go out into these communities
 - Cape Ann Hub: Gloucester, Rockport, Manchester by the Sea, Essex, Ipswich
 - Salem Hub: Salem, Beverly, Peabody, Danvers
 - Lynn Hub
- Verification
 - A concerned neighbor calls the statewide LUCE hotline and makes a report to a dispatcher.
 - The dispatcher gets in contact with the appropriate LUCE hub.
 - A trained verifier is given the caller's description of what they saw and is dispatched to the scene.



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- Verifier reports back to dispatcher, dispatcher reports back to caller, community is informed of call outcome.
- Community Outreach
 - Canvassing
 - Mutual Aid
 - WhatsApp Channel
- North Shore Mutual Aid (NSMA) Fund
 - Supporting neighbors affected by ICE detention with cash for housing, childcare, and legal support up to \$3,000.
 - Gifts are tax-deductible through our fiscal sponsor, Trinity Episcopal Church.
 - Also work with San Pedro/St. Peter's in Salem to support those who call for assistance as well as St. Stephen's in Lynn and many other community organizations.
 - How to Give:
 - Write a check. Checks can be made out to Trinity Episcopal Church with LUCE North Shore Mutual Aid in the memo line and handed to a volunteer or mailed to:
 - Trinity Episcopal Church, CC: LUCE North Shore, 124 River Road, Topsfield, MA 01983
 - Give Online: www.givebutter.com/nsluce
- How to Help
 - Get Trained
 - Next orientation is August 4 at 6:30 pm. Learn more at www.lucemass.org/volunteer
 - Support our mutual aid work:
 - Help us connect neighbors to resources like housing, food, childcare, translation, legal
 - Join an event
 - Vigil for Victims of ICE: Wednesday 7/22 at 5:30 PM in front of Lynn District Court
 - 7 Seas Whale Watch Cruise for NSMA, August 8 at 6:30 PM
- Additional information that was sent to members after the meeting:
 - LUCE Hotline Website: <https://www.lucemass.org/>
 - San Pedro's/Saint Peter's Rector's Discretionary Fund: <https://www.stpeters-sanpedro.org/give>
 - Questions or comments, email Julia Scherer-Hoock at hellojuliash@gmail.com or the Salem LUCE hub at salemLUCEhub@proton.me



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After the presentation, REC members had the opportunity to ask questions. Discussion focused on outreach to students at Salem State University and collaborations with the Race Equity Commission. There was also a question about how LUCE partners with local Police Departments; there is no formal relationship but there is a friendly informal relationship.

6. Follow up on changes to the Discrimination Reporting Form. **a. Discuss marketing campaign to distribute the form.**

IT needs some feedback on the requested changes to the Discrimination Reporting Form. Chair Zaragoza shared the following message from IT with items for the REC to consider and make decisions about.

“To help move this forward and ensure I'm implementing the changes as intended, it would be helpful to get some additional detail on the following items:

- Whether the disclaimer language should remain unchanged during consolidation, or if there are specific edits or revisions you would like incorporated as part of simplifying the language.
- Which specific color style changes are being requested, particularly given that the current form was built using City-approved colors.
- If the Type of Discrimination field is moved to an internal review step, whether routing the submission to you for categorization prior to continuing through the workflow is the appropriate process in light of the considerations outlined above.
- Which field(s) specifically fall under the "unnecessary items" that can be deleted from the form.”

Discussion among REC Members:

- Categorization being an internal step, versus the submitters' subjective selection of “Type of Discrimination” may require some additional work for staff or REC members, but is important to do.
- Description should be required and add a sentence in the form instructions encouraging people to provide as much detail as possible.
- There was emphasis among members that this has been a project being worked on for years and should be wrapped up soon, without significant work or costs.
- Potentially explore other options for collecting submissions such as a Fillable PDF, Google Forms, Microsoft Forms, City Website Form Center, etc.
- There was consensus among members that someone from the IT department should be invited to a future meeting to discuss this further.



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- Marketing campaign discussion will be revisited once Chair Zaragoza is present at a meeting to see where Colby left off with it.

7. New Business.

- a. September: Presentation to be determined – Shawn Newton from the Salem Race Equity Task Force.**

Vice Chair shared that Shawn Newton from the Salem Race Equity Task Force will be presenting at the meeting in September. He will share more background about this work and feedback that can inform the current Race Equity Commission members.

No additional new business was presented.

8. Adjournment.

VOTE: Motion to adjourn was made by Rosa Alvarado, seconded by Lisa Cammarata, and the motion was approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:08 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Samantha Giffen
Race Equity Commission Clerk