



# Cambridge Peace Commission

*A Department of the City of Cambridge, Massachusetts*

## Minutes of the Peace Commission Meeting of February 17, 2016

**Commission Members Present:** Co-Chair Larry Kim, Commission Members Aboma Dirbaba, Gladys Friedler, John Ratliff, Georges Atallah, and Regina Yang

**City Staff Present:** Executive Director Brian Corr and Administrative Coordinator Crystal Rosa

**Commission Members Absent:** Co-Chair Frank Connelly, Lijun Li, Elechi Kadete, and James Eliscar

**Members of the Public:** Danielle Boudrow, Kenny Likis, Susie Flug, Melissa Castillo, Lucas Perry, Abel Corver, Prof. Jonathan King, Pastor Henry Wilson, Sarah Kim, Michelle Sham, Dan Jang

### Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:10 p.m.

### Welcome and Introductions

The Commission Members and City Staff introduced themselves to visiting members of the Civic Unity Committee and members of the public.

### Approval of Minutes

Commission Member Ratliff moved to approve the December minutes and Commission Member Dirbaba seconded the motion. Unanimous vote reached of Commissioners in attendance at the December meeting.

### Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Corr reported on the 2016 Martin Luther King Day Commemoration Day with keynote speaker Juliette Kayyem. There were approximately 200 people in attendance and 100 people stayed for the luncheon afterward. The Commission discussed how to engage and attract participation from young people at the event next year.

Executive Director Corr attended and spoke at a Peace Assembly at Fletcher-Maynard Academy held on January 22, 2016. Mayor Denise Simmons and Superintendent Jeffrey Young were also present.

Executive Director Corr encourages everyone to see *The Convert*, which is produced by Cambridge's Underground Railway Theatre. The play captures the nature of colonialism and the dehumanization of both those colonized and the colonizers.

Executive Director Corr explained the evolving possibility of a sister city relationship between Reykjavik, Iceland Cambridge. Executive Director Corr and US Ambassador to Iceland (and Cambridge resident), Robert Barber, discussed some reasons why there may be growing interest

in having a sister city relationship between the two cities. After direct discussion with various stakeholders from Reykjavik, Executive Director Corr met with a five member delegation while visiting Cambridge. The Reykjavik delegation visited Cambridge to learn more about our affordable and public housing systems, policies, and financing. The possible sister city relationship is still in an exploratory phase.

Executive Director Corr has also been working with Citizens' Committee on Civic Unity in developing its mission to foster fairness, equity, unity, appreciation, and mutual understanding across all people and entities in Cambridge. Susie Flug, Chair of the Civic Unity Committee, provided a brief description of the committee's work and how the committee plans to raise awareness of issues while building understanding across communities. A handout on the Cambridge Citizens' Committee on Civic Unity was also distributed to those in attendance.

Executive Director Corr is working on the Cambridge White Ribbon Day Campaign. He is organizing an event on March 1, 2016 where the City is inviting the public to take the White Ribbon Day Pledge on the steps of City Hall. March 3, 2016, there will be an event at the State House. Cambridge will be engaging in various activities to encourage and engage men in the effort to stop violence against women and all gender-based violence. Massachusetts White Ribbon Day is a part of the international White Ribbon campaign that was created in 1991.

Executive Director Corr provided an update on the Holocaust Commemoration which is being scheduled for some time in May 2016. The event will be held at Temple Beth Shalom with Mr. Isaac "Jack" Trompeter speaking about the lessons learned from the Holocaust and how the role of "bystander" only perpetuates conflict. Mr. Trompeter was born in Amsterdam in August 1942 during the Nazi occupation and the persecution of the Jews in the Netherlands. Mr. Trompeter was separated from his parents and put into hiding at 3 months old. Mr. Trompeter was not reunited with them until after the liberation at the age of three. He immigrated to the USA in 1949, became a commercial artist, farmer, artisan and Holocaust survivor speaker. Mr. Trompeter currently lives in Cambridge with his wife.

### **Presentation by Cliff Cook**

Cliff Cook, Planning Information Manager for the City's Community Development Department (CDD), provided the Commission interesting demographic facts about Cambridge's residents, focusing on population trends and neighborhood diversity. Mr. Cook also provided data of Cambridge households regarding: population trends, racial and ethnic diversity, people with disabilities, languages spoken, educational levels attained, income statistics and proportions of families living in poverty, and migration patterns. Commission members and members of the public present were very interested in the information, and asked a number of questions. The presentation will also be available through the CDD website after available answers are added, along with minor edits and clarifications.

### **Presentation on "Don't Bank on the Bomb"**

Abel Corver, a member of the Harvard College chapter of Massachusetts Peace Action, and Lucas Perry, Coordinator of the Future of Life Institute Project, presented a case for Cambridge's divestment from companies involved in the production of nuclear weapons, which support from Jonathan King, from Massachusetts Peace Action. The presenters raised concerns about the Cambridge Retirement Board (CRB) investments mutual funds with investments that include companies involved in nuclear weapons production. Specifically, the presenters were concerned with Lockheed Martin, which they calculate consists of 2.06% of the CRB portfolio. The presenters proposed divestment from nuclear weapons companies to set an example for other municipalities to follow suit. The presenters noted that Cambridge would be the first

municipality in the U.S. to divest, so they hope that community support would promote a City Council resolution or the adoption of a policy order. Commission members offered suggestions about strategy and Mr. King raised the possibility of a forum on socially responsible investing for the wider community.

**New Business**

No new business discussed.

*The next meeting of the Peace Commission is scheduled for 6:00 p.m., Wednesday, March 16, at 51 Inman St. in the Second Floor Conference Room.*