

Commission on Immigrant Rights and Citizenship
Thursday, March 16, 2016

Present: Commissioners Marcio Macedo, Yarlennys Villaman, Roxana Maldonado-Garcia, Merline Sylvain-Williams, Leslie DiTrani, Karin Lin, Melanie Torres, and Swati Sawant.

Absent: Commissioners Sana Ghafoor, Jennifer Sparks, and Alejandro Epstein-Santoyo.

CIRC Staff: Nancy Schlacter and Crystal Rosa.

Public: Mr. McMillan, Aid from Vice Mayor McGovern's office, and Linda Daniels and Bill Barnert, two members of the LGBTQ+ Commission

Documents used:

- February Minutes
- March Agenda
- Handout of LGBTQ+ Commission events
- Other handouts

1. Call to order

Executive Director Schlacter called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. No one was recording the meeting.

2. Public Comment

No public comment.

3. Review and approval of January Minutes

The Commission reviewed the minutes of the February meeting and approved them unanimously with edits addressed on a motion from Commissioner Macedo, seconded by Commissioner Villaman.

4. Executive Director's Report

- ED Schlacter attended the Community Engagement Team NEPT event regarding effective Outreach to Spanish-Speaking Communities on February 16, 2017. CET-NEPT is organizing a KYR planned for City and local non-profit social service staff on June 8, 2017. They are seeking 3-4 immigration lawyers to facilitate 80-90 in small group discussions.
- CIRC staff sent the Support Letter for "Safe Communities Act" drafted by the Commission to MA Legislative Delegation on February 21, 2017. ED Schlacter announced a new policy from the City Manager's Office regarding support letters on city letterhead. These letters need to be reviewed by the City Manager prior to submission.
- ED Schlacter has coordinated and attended an additional four KYR Trainings since the last meeting. On Tuesday, February 21, Immigration Attorney Daniel Santiago from CLASCC presented at On the Rise. On Monday, February 27, CIRC completed its first public KYR at Cambridge Rindge and Latin, which was led by Commissioner DiTrani. Approximately 20 people attended the KYR. There was an engaging audience at the Community Room of 402

Rindge Ave on Tuesday, February 28, 2017. Commissioner Epstein-Santoyo, who also led a KYR March 9, 2017, at the Kennedy-Longfellow School, led this KYR. There was a high demand for Somali translated Red Cards at the Found-in-Translation KYR at the Central Square Cambridge Public Library, which was led by Attorney Daniel Santiago. This KYR was incorporated into a regular meeting of a group of immigrant women who are learning to become translators. Commissioner DiTrani and ED Schlacter were also recorded on CCTV – Live show “Not for Nothin’” on March 16, 2017.

- ED Schlacter announced that the City has agreed to fund a new position for a CIRC Outreach & Referral Specialist to help assist Cambridge resident immigrants to navigate City and local services and with distributing information on City and local services and programs to different immigrant populations.

5. Needs Assessment

• Individual Interviews – deadline extended to March 24, 2017

The projected goal is for each CIRC Commissioner to conduct five interviews by March 17, 2017, using the key questions developed by the Commission. Information gathered from the interviews and earlier focus groups will be used to identify local needs and the priorities of CIRC’s work and to assist in the development of CIRC’s vision, mission and goals. Members of the Commission noted locations for recruitment of interviewees, such as CEOC, Cambridge Housing Authority, churches and food banks. ED Schlacter encouraged members of the Commission to let her know if anyone will be unable to meet the March 17 deadline. Interviewees must be people outside of the Commissioner’s family.

6. New Business

• LGBTQ+ Asylum Seekers

- Members of the LGBTQ+ Commission, Linda Daniels, and Bill Barnert brainstormed with the Commission about a co-sponsored event with CIRC on issues effecting LGBTQ+ asylum seeking-immigrants. The LGBTQ+ members explained that their events can draw up to 100 people and food donations are solicited from local businesses to supply refreshments. Members of CIRC were interested in the intersection of topics and discussed forming a subcommittee to help plan the event. Tentatively, this event would be planned for the fall of 2017, Tuesday-Thursday, at the main library. Commissioner DiTrani identified Stefanie Fisher and Valerie Fisk as possible presenters.

- The City Manager is reviewing City Council requests for various immigrant-supporting efforts, including:

• Screening Referral Clinic

During the City’s budget process, there was a discussion about Cambridge holding a free screening clinic one day a month, similar to the Boston MOIA model, with volunteer immigration attorneys. The screening panel would be comprised of volunteer attorneys who would be vetted by a local Bar Association. The screening clinic would conduct 15-minute consultations and refer folks to low cost or no cost legal resources or the AILA immigration lawyer referral website. The Office of the City Manager has been in conversations with the Law and Human Services Departments to identify legal funding options for this kind of program.

- **Municipal ID cards**
Discussions have taken place with department heads of License Commission, CIRC and Law Department to discuss parameters of a municipal ID program for Cambridge. Boston is currently conducting a feasibility study on a possible program. The challenge centers on whether to keep data vs. documents.
- **Languages Access Services**
ED Schlacter is researching information on practices and models used by Boston and Somerville regarding their language accommodations for limited English speakers. Somerville currently uses simultaneous translations for public meetings, which cost approximately \$3000 per language for the equipment, not including the hourly cost of the interpreters. Another option would be closed captioning of meetings in different languages.
- **Training/Information Services**
The City of Somerville has collaborated with MIRA to provide an Intensive Immigration Law training course for residents. This is one part of the application process for BIA certification. This training would only serve as an introduction to immigration law. Cambridge may also consider collaborating with USCIS to create kiosks in the libraries, where immigrants could access information.
- **Fresh Pond Day Outreach**
Fresh Pond Day will be held on Saturday, May 20, 2017, 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM and serves as an environmental and outdoor-focused event. CIRC Staff will send out a Google form to determine if there is enough coverage for tabling at the event. The deadline to indicate interest in participating is April 2, 2017. Commissioners Macedo and Torres stated they were interested in taking a shift to work the event. CIRC staff will need to know in advance if participating in this event is possible because marketing materials will need to be ordered.

Commissioner Torres moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Macedo.

Next Commission meeting will be Thursday, April 20, 2016 at 6:00 p.m.