



Regular Meeting
Thursday, December 12, 2019

Present: Acting Chair Jennifer Sparks and Commissioners Karim Razzaz, Marcio Macedo, Tsamchoe Dolma, Ashebir Gezmu, Aleksandra Ibrahim, Subandha Karmacharya, Ana Mejia and CIRC Staff: Executive Director Nancy Schlacter, Project Coordinator Crystal Rosa

Absent:

Commissioners Karin Lin, Alejandro Epstein-Santoyo, Elizabeth Badger, and Immigrant Services Liaison Tagesech Wabeto

1. Call to order:

ED Schlacter called the meeting to order at 6:10 pm. Acting Chair Sparks facilitated the meeting after the presentation by Hitomi Abe.

2. Public comment

No public was present.

3. New Commissioner Introductions

CIRC staff and members of the Commission introduced themselves to the newest members.

4. Presentation by Hitomi Abe, Director of Community Engagement Team of the Human Services Program Department

Ms. Abe explained that the Community Engagement Team (CET) is comprised of members from the following language communities: Bengali, Amharic, Arabic, Haitian, Spanish, and American-born Black. CET provides technical assistance to programs, community organizations, and City departments interested in receiving support in reaching out to underserved families. Specifically, CET provides training on cultural beliefs and barriers that might affect a family's access to programming. The Community Engagement Team also organizes quarterly networking and training events to help Cambridge agencies increase their knowledge of immigrant and minority communities, share culturally competent outreach techniques and practices, and to teach specific information about cultural beliefs and barriers that might affect potential clients' access to programming. Individual outreach workers also assist families one-on-one to connect them to resources and other social services. Immigrant Services Liaison Wabeto attends regular CET worker meetings to stay connected to the City's community efforts and to keep CET apprised of CIRC's activities.

5. Review and approval of October minutes

Commissioners reviewed the minutes of the October 24 meeting, Commissioner Macedo moved to approve, and Commissioner Mejia seconded.

6. Executive Director's (ED) report

The November legal screening clinic served 20 clients. ED Schlacter handed the State Ethics Law Summary Acknowledgement forms to be signed by each member of the Commission. ED Schlacter explained that ISL Wabeto will provide the highlights of her monthly outreach at the next meeting due to her absence. ED Schlacter announced that staff are considering participating in a Summer Reads Program by the Youth Services Department of the Cambridge Public Library. The invitation to partner with the program is open to members of the Commission. Participating individuals will be asked to present an activity that relates to the theme "Imagine Your Story," which seeks to explore the idea of identity and how it relates to the life of children. Members of the Commission asked how long the presentation would need to be and who to reach out to coordinate time and date.

7. Ongoing Business

- **2020 Election of Chairs**

ED Schlacter read an email by Commissioner Lin that expressed her interest to be nominated as Chair as long as it was a Co-Chair model. Commissioner Razzaz expressed the same interest. No other member was interested in the position. The Commission did not contest the arrangement of Commissioners Lin and Razzaz facilitating the 2020 meetings as Co-Chairs. All present were in favor of the arrangement.

- **Global Arts Live Events**

CIRC has agreed to collaborate with international concert presenters Global Arts Live (GAL) for outreach at GAL events in Cambridge. There are 3 concerts on Sundays in February, March, and April at the Sinclair or Saunders Theatre that need a volunteer for outreach. ISL Wabeto had informed ED Schlacter that she could work the Ladysmith Black Mambazo event on February 2. Commissioner Badger volunteered for the March 8 Red Baraat event and Commissioners Dolma and Karmacharya volunteered for the Zakir Hussein event on April 12.

- **Goal setting for CIRC 2020**

Commissioner Sparks led the Commission and CIRC staff into a roundtable discussion of the reasons each person chooses to work with CIRC. The following was stated, in substance:

- advocating for the rights of immigrants
- community engagement and helping people
- ensuring all feel welcome
- connecting people to social services
- empowering individuals to support the community
- supporting young vulnerable families
- supporting adolescent immigrants during a challenging time of life

CIRC staff will send Needs Assessment to Commission. Members will come to the next meeting with 3 items that can be developed into projects in the next 3 years.

8. Future Projects

- A member of the commission asked ED Schlacter to add social media to the agenda for the next meeting. ED Schlacter explained that members of the Commission would need to manage any social media content creation and scheduling.
- Commissioner Sparks volunteered to train new members on how to engage with the public during events.

Commissioner Razzaz moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Mejia.

The next commission meeting will be on Thursday, January 23, 2020, at 6 pm in the Large Conference Room.