



Cambridge Human Rights Commission
Thursday, December 1, 2016

Present Commissioners: Chanta Bhan, Mercedes Evans, Chara Itoka, Nicholas Leydon, Bonita Cox, Olinda Marshall, Sabrina Selk, Cynthia Orellana, and CHRC Staff Nancy Schlacter, Crystal Rosa, Attorney/Investigator Acloque, and CPD Dept. Supt. Steve DeMarco.

Absent Commissioners: Nadia Davila.

Documents Used:

- November Minutes
- December Agenda
- House No 4595 Anti-human Trafficking Law (Senate, No. 2461)

1. Call to order

Chair Bhan called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m. No one was recording the meeting.

2. Public Comment

No public comment.

3. Review and approval of November Minutes

The Commission reviewed the minutes from the November meeting and approved them unanimously on a motion from Commissioner Selk, seconded by Commissioner Cox.

4. Executive Director's Report

ED Schlacter updated the Commission on cases, staff activities and outreach. Since the November meeting, 2 cases opened, 4 cases pending, with 1 of the pending cases pertaining to public accommodation discrimination based on gender, in post cause proceedings. Two pending cases involve housing complaints alleging racial discrimination based on color. One pending case involves housing complaints alleging racial discrimination and national origin discrimination. ED Schlacter and AI Acloque participated in a conference call with the Massachusetts Fair Housing Coalition and a Best Practices meeting with the Boston Office of Fair Housing and Equity. ED Schlacter and AI Acloque participated in a *Constructive Conversations about the Election* organized by the Employees Committee on Diversity. CHRC staff has continued their collaboration with Community Development Department – Housing Division staff to plan a Fair Housing event in April. CHRC staff will be meeting with participating organizations within the next month.

5. Presentation by Brandy Donini-Melanson from US Attorney Boston Office

Ms. Donini-Melanson provided context regarding the US Attorney's mission of fair and impartial administration of justice, leadership, crime prevention and outreach to increase awareness and ensure public understanding of the roles, responsibilities and its mission. Ms. Donini-Melanson provided an extensive overview about the role that the US Attorney's Office (USAO) in coordinating a local framework for Countering Violence Extremism (CVE). Specifically, the Office of the US Attorney was tasked by the White House National Security Council to address violent extremism at the local level. Ms. Donini-Melanson explained that CVE is not intended to be a federal strategy, but a local exercise to develop a framework. There are three pilot cities, Minneapolis, LA, Boston, charged with

constructing their own frameworks. The Boston USAO met with a network of academic partners who are knowledgeable about violent extremist groups and their outreach, to develop the framework. The local network considered how local law enforcement views CVE and how it is different from countering terrorism. The network developed a model for a diverse initiative involving community members, nonprofits, public health, mental health services, educators, advisors, and some members from the Muslim community. Ms. Donini-Melanson explained that the network developed the framework to focus on violence prevention. According to Ms. Donini-Melanson, the framework is not about surveillance, intelligence gathering, or action oriented toward law enforcement. The assessment of risk and vulnerability to violent extremism is challenging, because a crime has not yet occurred and free speech (even extremist speech) is constitutionally protected. Ms. Donini-Melanson clarified that there is no profile available for countering violence, nor a specific demographic that it effects, therefore all information must be taken in context. Individuals who are prone to violence may feel disconnected from their communities. The goal for CVE is to move the framework out of law enforcement and into health and human services to allow a multidisciplinary approach. Currently, the Department of Health and Human Services has a peer review process for projects that are not and will not be tracked by the USAO. All projects are independently managed. Following the presentation, the Commission agreed to debrief at the next meeting. Commissioner Leydon will reach out to the USAO for more information about the grant solicitation issued by the Dept. of Health and Human Services and the press release of grant awardees.

6. November Meeting Follow Up

- **Fair Housing Event**

Scheduled Saturday, April 29, 2017 from 10 am - 2 pm, to be located in the CRLS cafeteria. ED Schlacter reviewed the list of possible participating organizations with the Commission. It was suggested that the CHRC staff contact the Y2Y shelter for their participation.

- **Housing Programs in Cambridge**

Commissioners expressed interest regarding Section 8 vouchers and how they work in connection with Cambridge Housing programs. Specifically, Commissioner Cox is interested in understanding voucher portability, i.e. whether a Cambridge resident with a Section 8 voucher can return to Cambridge after they have moved outside of the City to use a voucher. This topic may be scheduled for May, if it is not covered during the April Fair Housing event.

- **Speakers on Gentrification**

Commissioners expressed interest regarding a speaker on gentrification, specifically about housing and the small business community in Cambridge. Chris Cotter, Director of Housing, is tentatively scheduled for May or June, if the topic is not covered during the April Fair Housing event.

- **Fair Housing Ordinance**

FHO under review by the City Law Dept. to prepare for Home Rule petition to Legislature

- **Debt-bondage in Cambridge immigrant community**

Deputy Superintendent DeMarco offered to have detectives from the Special Investigations Unit speak to the Commission regarding Human Trafficking. The detectives are scheduled for the February meeting. Chair Bhan distributed House No 4595 Anti-human Trafficking Law (Senate, No. 2461) for the commission to review. Chair Bhan will draft letter in support of proposed Human Trafficking legislation for review at January meeting.

New Business

No new business.

Commissioner Cox moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m. Seconded by Commissioner Leydon.

Next Commission meeting will be Thursday, January 12, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. in the conference room located in the CHRC office.