

Commission on Immigrant Rights and Citizenship
Thursday, October 20, 2016

Present: Commissioners Marcio Macedo, Swati Sawant, Yarlennys Villaman, Melanie Torres, Karin Lin, Roxana Maldonado-Garcia, Alejandro Epstein-Santoyo, Sana Ghafoor, Jennifer Sparks and Merline Sylvain-Williams. CIRC Staff: Nancy Schlacter and Crystal Rosa

Absent: Commissioner Leslie DiTrani.

Documents used:

- September Minutes
- October Agenda
- Community Engagement Team presentation slides
- CET Networking Events 2004-2016 sheet
- Cambridge Public Health Department 2015 Bulletin
- Envision Cambridge CET Survey
- Board of Immigration Appeals Legal Resource sheet

1. Call to order

Executive Director Schlacter called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. No one was recording the meeting.

2. Public Comment

No public comment.

3. Commissioner and staff introductions

Commissioners and staff introduced themselves to Commissioner Sparks, who was unable to attend the previous meeting. ED Schlacter provided Commissioner Sparks with a training packet with the CIRC ordinance, the Open Meeting Law guide, state ethics summary, and draft rules of procedure.

4. Presentation by Carole Sousa, Co-Chair of Community Engagement Team and instructor at the Community Learning Center

Ms. Sousa provided an extensive overview of CET's role as a resource to Cambridge residents and its program development for city government. CET started in 2004 as an early opportunity-learning grant aimed at developing a community outreach plan for the city. Ms. Sousa explained that CET began with a paradigm shift, from serving those who come to the city for services, to a model of community leadership training. Specifically, CET recruits individuals who are members of various underserved linguistic and cultural communities, trains those individuals so they can reach out to others in their communities about city services, and works with the Outreach Workers to train other community partners about outreach to underserved communities. Some recruitment occurs through the ESL teachers at the Community Learning Center. Ms. Sousa emphasized that CET outreach workers are not language translators, but can be considered cultural interpreters.

CET works collaboratively with the Community Learning Center in providing cultural workplace experience training for new residents from different countries to ease employment transitions.

CET also provides technical assistance to programs interested in receiving support in reaching out to underserved families and in learning specific information about cultural beliefs and barriers that

might affect potential client's access to programming. For example, CET has assisted with Family Fun Day at Danehy Park, Back to School activities, and offers service provider networking events focused on related topics.

CET provides technical assistance, which includes designing agency specific workshops on outreach techniques to staff, having an outreach worker assist with special outreach projects or sit on an agency's advisory board. Currently, CET is facilitating a 7-session training on outreach engagement, called Making Connections, for city staff. Additionally, CET has helped diversify survey respondents and focus group participants for city research.

Ms. Sousa explained that housing in Cambridge is an area that requires more attention to meet community need. Ms. Sousa also addressed that many immigrant families and individuals do not apply for federal services, despite their eligibility, because of cultural implications, misperceptions and fears.

5. Review and approval of September Minutes

The Commission reviewed the minutes from the September meeting and approved them unanimously on a motion from Commissioner Macedo, seconded by Commissioner Sparks.

6. Executive Director's Report

• Open discussion after presentation

Commission discussion explored the following questions:

- What is citizenship?
 - Specifically, how are new residents learning about their rights as immigrants and about the citizenship process? – Possibly through CLC.
- Have there been incidents of anti-immigrant tensions in Cambridge?
- What is the Commission's charge?
- What is Cambridge's role as a Sanctuary City? – ED Schlacter will supply the Commission with the Sanctuary City policies adopted by Cambridge City Council.
- What is the Commission's view on a municipal ID? – Currently, under review in Boston. Would a municipal ID impact the need for a State issued ID? Cambridge Learning Center provides student IDs.
- How are Cambridge Police trained to ask for ID? – Dep. Supt. Ames may be the point person to speak on this issue.
- What are the employment challenges for limited English speakers? – There two job placement resources within Cambridge. 1) Workforce Development: which supports intermediate English speakers. 2) Career Source, which requires proficient English. Currently, there is an MIT lab for job training in combination with a certificate program in an area of hospitality.

7. New Business

• Board of Immigration Appeals legal resources

Commissioner Torres and ED Schlacter explained that the Commission should implement a best practice of referring persons seeking immigration legal advice to Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) - recognized organizations and accredited representatives, to prevent potential harm from well-intended, but ill-informed sources of legal information. The BIA updates its legal resources

list regularly and should be used as a resource when referring residents to immigrant legal services. The BIA only refers to 501(c) (3) nonprofits that charge minimal fees.

- **Immigrant Welcoming Event**

Scheduled for September 2017. The name of the event is not official and the planning phase will commence in the spring.

- **CIRC website**

The Commissioners were interested in having their photos available to the public on the CIRC website as a method to build rapport and demonstrate the diversity of the group. There would be a short bio of commissioners and their language capabilities listed. The Commissioners will submit their interest, values, and background information via Google Drive.

Commissioner Epstein-Santoyo moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Sparks.

Next Commission meeting will be Thursday, November 17, 2016 at 6:00 p.m.