

Commission on Immigrant Rights and Citizenship
Thursday, September 29, 2016

Present: Commissioners Marcio Macedo, Swati Sawant, Yarlennys Villaman, Melanie Torres, Karin Lin, Roxana Maldonado-Garcia, Alejandro Epstein-Santoyo, Sana Ghafoor, and Merline Sylvain-Williams.

Absent: Commissioners Jennifer Sparks and Leslie DiTrani.

Documents Used:

- April 27, 2015 - Voting Memo to City Manager by Election Commission Executive Director
- September 12, 2015 – Response letter to City Manager by CIRC Executive Director

1. Call to order

Executive Director Schlacter called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. No one was recording the meeting. ED Schlacter attempted to conference call Commissioner Sparks, who was unable to attend in person, due to medical reasons, however Commissioner Sparks was unable to be reached.

2. Public Comment

No public comment.

3. Commissioner and staff introductions

Commissioners introduced themselves and described their interests or professional experience in immigrant rights. ED Schlacter provided the commissioners with a training packet with the CIRC ordinance, the Open Meeting Law guide, state ethics summary, and draft rules of procedure for their approval.

4. Executive Director's Report

ED Schlacter explained that CIRC will meet on the third Thursday of every month, except July and August.

- **Local voting for noncitizens**

ED Schlacter reported that the process of local voting for noncitizen residents exists in only a few cities across the country. Cambridge has submitted home rule legislation to the State in the past, as have other MA cities and towns, but the Legislature has not taken up any of the measures.

5. New Business

- **Procedures for CIRC**

- ED Schlacter explained that in order for the Commission to vote on an item, there must be a quorum present, which would be 6 or more commissioners.
- ED Schlacter guided the Commission on their first vote, for the adoption of the Rules of Procedure, which was moved by Commissioner Ghafoor, seconded by Commissioner Torres, then unanimously approved by the Commission. ED Schlacter noted that the Law Dept. would need to review and approve the proposed Rules of Procure before they were formally adopted.

- ED Schlacter gave an example for the use of executive session and explained the value of having a chair facilitate the meeting. ED Schlacter recommended that the chair have a 1-year term, renewable upon re-vote for 2 additional one-year terms, to promote equity in the group. The Commissioners agreed to elect a chair at the January 2017 meeting.

- **Assessment of Need**

ED Schlacter informed the Commission that the Office of the City Manager is looking to CIRC to develop a gap analysis to assess the needs of the immigrant population in Cambridge. ED Schlacter provided the Immigrant Women's Roundtable Report, a 2012 document created by the Women's Commission, as an example of a previous survey by a City Commission. ED Schlacter encouraged the commissioners to think about a survey tool to use, how to reach people for participation, and identify ways to engage residents with limited English proficiency.

CET was identified as a resource for CIRC, with experience in outreach to linguistic and cultural communities in Cambridge. ED Schlacter will contact CET's ED, Carole Sousa, to schedule a presentation for the October meeting.

The Commissioners agreed that including a list of services the City already provides as part of the survey instrument would be helpful. Specifically, asking residents which services they know about and use. A discussion regarding confidentiality of respondents to the survey led to an agreement that it would be an important provision.

- The following data was identified as important information to seek in a survey:
 - Country of origin
 - Family size
 - Neighborhood
 - Education level
 - Access to medical service
 - Access to transportation
 - Childcare
 - Use of language services

It was suggested that CIRC survey the broader immigrant community, then narrow into a focus group for those who indicate an interest in participating.

- **Immigrant Welcoming Event**

Scheduled for September 2017. The Commissioners suggested changing the name for the event and clarification of intended attendees.

- **ID NYC**

ED Schlacter noted that New York City has recently instituted a photo ID for all residents, citizen and non-citizen. Boston is currently considering a similar program. This topic was suggested for future discussion.

- **Other suggestions/concerns**

- **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.

Commissioner Epstein-Santoyo moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Lin.

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