

**Commission on Immigrant Rights and Citizenship**  
**Thursday, January 19, 2016**

Present: Commissioners Leslie DiTrani, Karin Lin, Marcio Macedo, Yarlennys Villaman, Melanie Torres, Roxana Maldonado-Garcia, Jennifer Sparks, Alejandro Epstein-Santoyo, and Merline Sylvain-Williams.

CIRC Staff: Nancy Schlacter and Crystal Rosa.

Absent: Commissioner Sana Ghafoor and Swati Sawant.

Documents used:

- December Minutes
- January Agenda
- Draft Focus Group Questions

**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. Review and approval of December Minutes**

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

**4. Executive Director's Report**

• **Know Your Rights (KYR) trainings**

ED Schlacter coordinated four trainings and attended three. The first KYR training was led by Commissioners Epstein-Santoyo and DiTrani. Based on the trainings attended by ED Schlacter and the members of the Commission, there were approximately 20 people attending the training at Fresh Pond Apartments, 45 people at the second Community Learning Center training (with 7-8 languages represented), and between 40-50 people at the training at Cambridge Community Fellowship Church. ED Schlacter asked for feedback from the trainings. Commissioner Epstein-Santoyo remarked that CPD Dep. Supt. Christine Elow was a wonderful presenter. Dep. Supt. Elow explained that CPD was training their officers to be welcoming, with a pro-immigrant attitude. ED Schlacter noted that the immigration attorneys explained to the audience that it is appropriate to challenge their attorneys or get second opinions when they are not satisfied with the information they are receiving. Additionally, the list of screening referrals for low cost or no cost immigration legal services was well received. There was a higher demand for Red Cards than expected. CIRC staff will supply the members of the Commission with a stack of Red Cards at the next meeting. ED Schlacter explained that finding translators for the representative languages attending the trainings has been more feasible when facilitated through each host site, instead of coordinating through AILA's network.

## 5. Needs Assessment

- **Focus Group**

ED Schlacter met with the Community Engagement Team (CET) Outreach Workers and CPHD Literacy Ambassadors, to conduct Focus Groups for the development of the CIRC Needs Assessment. The CET Outreach Workers Focus Group met with ED Schlacter and Commissioner Villaman on January 12, 2017. ED Schlacter noted that most CET workers were already very aware and connected to city services. The Literacy Ambassadors Focus Group met on Thursday, January 19, 2017, with ED Schlacter and Commissioner Ghafoor. One theme that was mentioned by both focus groups was the need for cultural competency training for city staff to facilitate positive interactions with immigrant communities. Based on the information provided by the focus groups, members of the Commission refined the key questions for CIRC Commissioner interviews with immigrant community members. The projected goal is for each CIRC Commissioner to conduct 5 interviews over 1 - 2 months, using the key questions. Information gathered from the interviews and focus groups will be used to identify the needs and priorities of the CIRC's work and to assist in the development of CIRC's vision, mission and goals. Members of the commission listed locations for recruitment of interviewees, such as CEOC, Cambridge Housing Authority, churches, and food banks.

- **Key Questions**

The following questions were created during the meeting:

1. Where do you go to get your immigration questions answered?
2. How could the City of Cambridge help all immigrants feel more welcome?
3. What would make it easier for you to learn about your immigration rights/options?
4. What resources for immigrants are you interested in seeing more of in Cambridge?
5. How would you describe your cultural background/story?

## 6. New Business

- a. No new business

- Commissioner Sparks moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Macedo.
- **Next Commission meeting will be Thursday, February 16, 2016, at 6:00 p.m.**