

Human Services Commission Meeting
51 Inman Street
3rd Floor Resource Room
Minutes 9/8/2011

Commissioners Present: Ayse Atasoylu, Christopher Hall, Marian Darlington-Hope, Rev. Lorraine Thornhill, Kati LaBraico, Khari Milner, Claudia Hill, Nan Stone, Lori Likis

DHSP Staff: Ellen Semonoff, Janice Alger, Jolyon Cowan, Jose Soares (recorder)

Ellen updated the Commission on the Red Ribbon Commission on Central Square. The last Red Ribbon Commission meeting was held on June 9, 2011. It was a well attended event that represented Cambridge's diversity.

Lori Likis, Human Services Commissioner and Chief Planning Officer for the Cambridge School Department, presented on the Innovation Agenda for Cambridge middle schools (please see attached document). The Cambridge School Committee approved the Innovation Agenda by a vote of 6-1 on March 15, 2011. The Innovation Agenda entails creating four upper schools for grades 6 through 8 with a rigorous academic curriculum system wide, fostering community, and also giving faculty access to high performing professional educational communities.

Under the current system, elementary schools serve students from Junior Kindergarten through the 8th grade. The starting and ending times are varied making it difficult for out-of-school time activities for students and teachers' professional development. The current curriculum is not consistent and can lead to a disparity of educational experiences between schools.

The Innovation Agenda will be implemented in the fall of 2012 and will create feeder patterns from the earlier grades into the four upper schools for grades 6 to 8. Lori believes this system will better prepare students for a more rigorous and richer academic experience at the high school, thus building a challenging academic, social and emotional pathway from grades 6 through 12. This Upper School Network will provide middle school students with a demanding, enriching, and consistent educational experience. The focus will be on the transition from 8th to 9th grades. The main goal of the Innovation Agenda is to close achievement gaps between students. It will also present an opportunity for major facilities upgrades in the upper schools that have not already been restored. Only one elementary school will remain K – 8th grade, the English/Spanish immersion Amigos School.

Khari Milner, Director of Complementary Learning Partnerships, presented on the Out-of-School-Time vision to be integrated with the Innovation Agenda. The Cambridge School Department in partnership with the City's Department of Human Service Programs, the Cambridge Health Alliance, and community based agencies will institute in the fall of 2012 a program based on students' needs. A range of concepts, visions and hope were discussed for one year in the initial phase during a series of

collaborative meetings. The intent of this initiative is to develop a sterling quality educational experience system wide by making it student centered.

Ellen suggested that for the October Human Services Commission meeting Cliff Cook from the Community Development Department come and present on the results of the 2010 census with more of the latest demographic data.

Through the Silver Ribbon Commission there has been an ongoing conversation on aging in the city, and Ellen also recommended that Terry Dumas, Director of Planning at the Cambridge Housing Authority, be invited to come to a future HSC meeting to present on CHA's plans and vision for this demographic change. She also suggested Greg Russ, Director of the Cambridge Housing Authority, to present on the CHA's plans for the economic future of its residents.

Ellen also announced that Marian Darlington-Hope, who has been a Commissioner for the past 15 years, is resigning from the Human Services Commission. She thanked her for her wisdom and service. We all appreciate her strong participation and advice over the years.

Meeting adjourned.