



Cambridge Human Services Commission
Meeting Minutes
March 12, 2015
5:30 – 7:30pm
Citywide Senior Center
806 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

Commissioners present: Christine Elow, Christopher R. Hall, Khari Milner, Nan Stone

Regrets: Dr. Ayse Atasoylu, Lori Likis, Katharine Emilie Thomas, Rev. Lorraine Thornhill

DHSP staff: Janice Alger, Mike Payack (recorder), Ellen Semonoff

Presenter: Lee Gianetti, Director of Communications and Community Relations

Guest: Sumbul Siddiqui, community member

Ellen introduced Lee Gianetti, City of Cambridge Director of Communications and Community Relations.

Lee briefly recounted the history of the Open Data Initiative. Two years ago, City Councilor Leland Chung proposed the Open Data Ordinance. Now the City is in the process of hiring a full-time Open Data Coordinator. However, Lee commented, the City has already had Open Data for years with the Geographic Information System (or GIS).

Lee defined Open Data as data that can be freely used, reused, and redistributed by anyone. Lee noted that Open Data does not include data that is governed by privacy, security, confidentiality, or any protection of the law.

Lee stated that the City's goal in investing in Open Data is to make government data available in easy to find and use formats, therefore creating meaningful opportunities for the public to help solve complex challenges. But, it can also be a powerful new interdepartmental collaborative tool and community engagement tool.

Other goals of the initiative include:

- Providing greater access: The Open Data Initiative will provide the City and the public with opportunities to work collaboratively on complex challenges facing the community
- Creating greater transparency
- Improving delivery of City services: Better engage community resources to produce new analyses, insights, and findings which potentially could assist the City's efforts in providing efficient and effective government services
- Realizing social and commercial value: The large amount of data generated by the City can be a resource in creating innovative business and services solutions that deliver social and commercial value

To date the City has uploaded 57 datasets, 52 maps, and 21 charts to the Open Data portal. The portal has had over 150,000 page views. The top searched terms have been: health, crime, and restaurant inspections. Lee added that members of the public have the option of suggesting data sets that are not already provided.

After thanking Lee for his presentation, Ellen announced that the City received a 4.7% cut to its FY2016 CDBG allocation. This translates to a cut of \$18, 399.15 to Public Services grants.

Mike announced that the next Human Services Commission meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 9, 2015, and will feature a presentation by Jen Bailey on two Agenda for Children Literacy Initiative programs: Pathways to Family Success and Let's Talk!

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Payack
Planner/Contracts Manager
DHSP/Planning & Development