



**Cambridge Human Rights Commission**  
**Thursday, December 6, 2012**

Present: Commissioners Matthew Barrett, Mercedes Evans, Bonita Cox, Chanta Bhan, Caitlin Steirman, Brendan St. Amant, Elaine Angelone, Melissa Gonzalez-Brenes, and staff members Vali Buland, Mariah Freark and Carmen S. Negrón.

Absent: Commissioners Randa Shedid and Adrian Velazquez.

Documents Used:

- October, 2012 minutes
- Proposed ordinance regarding Secure Communities Program
- Immigrant rights survey

Meeting was called to order at 6:14 p.m.

**1. Recording of meeting**

No one was recording the meeting.

**2. Public Comment**

No members of the public were present for public comment.

**3. Review and Approval of October Minutes**

The October minutes were unanimously approved.

**4. Executive Directors Report**

Vali Buland, Acting Executive Director gave the Commissioners an update on the hiring process for the Executive Director position. She also updated the Commissioners about staff activities, and informed the Commissioners of upcoming events they may be interested in attending.

**5. Subcommittee updates:**

**Shelter Survey and Transgender Shelter Access** – Chair Gonzalez-Brenes stated that she is still working on the transgender access with the shelters. She said that the Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition (MTPC) has drafted recommendations for how homeless shelters can best provide services to transgender clients. She said that the next step will hopefully be to facilitate a discussion between the MTPC and the Cambridge shelters, given the Commission's relationship with the shelters. Chair Gonzalez-Brenes encouraged Commissioners to let her know if they would be interested in assisting her on this project. The Commission unanimously approved a motion (Chair Gonzalez-Brenes and Commissioners Angelone, Barrett, Bhan, Cox, Evans, St. Amant, and Steirman) to follow up with the shelters and work with the MTPC to present recommendations about access for transgendered clients.

- **School issues follow-up** – Commissioners decided they would like to invite Jim Maloney back to give the Commission an update. The Commissioners unanimously approved a motion (Chair Gonzalez-Brenes and Commissioners Angelone, Barrett, Bhan, Cox, Evans, St. Amant, and Steirman) to invite Jim Maloney to report on:
  - Whether the middle school reforms provide racial and socioeconomic balance;
  - Whether the Family Resource Center is providing adequate information and resources to families about their available choices; and
  - Information about the lottery – how many families did not get their first choices, and why?

**Immigrant rights survey and March event** – Chair Gonzalez-Brenes stated that she had received the surveys from the CET outreach workers. Commissioner Steirman offered to help review the data. Chair Gonzalez-Brenes discussed some of the general results with the Commissioners, and gave the Commissioners some of the primary recommendations that the CET outreach workers had passed along. Commissioners Steirman and Bhan, Chair Gonzalez-Brenes, and Investigator Mariah Freak will work on the surveys. Commissioner Steirman offered to write the final report. The Commissioners also discussed what other City agencies may be interested in the data or resulting report.

#### **6. New Business – Proposed Ordinance regarding the Secure Communities Program**

Chair Gonzalez-Brenes talked about her work with a group of individuals who oppose the Secure Communities Program. This group has drafted a proposed ordinance which they would like the Cambridge City Council to adopt. She explained that several other cities have passed similar ordinances. She stated that City Councillor Marjorie Decker has been working on this issue and would like to have the proposed ordinance adopted by the City Council before Councillor Decker begins her term as State Representative, where Councillor Decker hopes to have a similar law considered at the state level. The group proposing the ordinance has asked the Cambridge Police Department to review it and would like to have the Police Department's support before bringing it before the City Council.

The Commissioners discussed the proposed ordinance. Several commissioners expressed concern with particular language in the proposed ordinance. Some commissioners suggested that a vote be taken on supporting the concept without supporting the specific ordinance. The Commission approved the following motion (Chair Gonzalez-Brenes and Commissioners Angelone, Barrett, Bhan, Cox, Evans, with Commissioners St. Amant and Steirman abstaining):

The Cambridge Human Rights Commission supports an ordinance that directs city law enforcement agencies to not use city resources to enforce the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Secure Communities Program.

Commissioners requested that they be informed if the proposed ordinance is brought before the City Council.

#### **7. Planning for 2013**

Upcoming election – Chair Gonzalez-Brenes exhorted Commissioners to consider running for Chair in the January elections. She stated that she felt the duties were manageable and it is healthy for groups to have changes in leadership.

Outreach projects – Chair Gonzalez-Brenes asked if anyone would be interested in assisting Commission staff with outreach. Commissioner Cox expressed her interest. Commissioner St. Amant offered to help with outreach presentations.

**Chair Gonzalez-Brenes requested the Commissioners let staff know whether Commissioners will be able to attend January's meeting, since a quorum is necessary to hold elections.**

Meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m. Next Commission meeting will be held on Thursday, January 3<sup>rd</sup>, at 6:00 p.m.