



**Cambridge Human Rights Commission
Thursday, February 7, 2013**

Present: Commissioners Chanta Bhan, Bonita Cox, Mercedes Evans, Melissa Gonzalez-Brenes, Randa Shedid, Caitlin Steirman, and Adrian Velazquez; staff members Vali Buland, Mariah Freark and Carmen S. Negrón.

Absent: Commissioners Elaine Angelone, Matthew Barrett and Brendan St. Amant.

Documents Used:

- January 2013 minutes
- Immigrant Rights Committee Survey Results PowerPoint
- CET flyer of March 7, 2013 Event
- Women's Commission 21 Days of Questions flyer
- Emancipation Proclamation 150th Anniversary flyer

Chair Bonita Cox called the meeting to order at 6:21 p.m.

1. Call to order

No one was recording the meeting.

2. Public Comment

No members of the public were present for public comment.

3. Review and Approval of January Minutes

The January minutes were unanimously approved, with minor changes (Chair Cox and Commissioners Evans, Steirman, Velázquez, Bhan with Commissioner Gonzalez-Brenes abstaining and Commissioner Shedid absent).

4. Executive Director's Report

Vali Buland, Acting Executive Director, gave the Commissioners an update on the hiring process and updated the Commissioners about staff activities. This included a discussion on the progress of planning Fair Housing Month. Acting Executive Director Buland stated that Carmen has been working on the event, which is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. She also informed the Commissioners that Mariah was working on the March 7th CET event.

5. Immigrant Rights Survey Status

This presentation was given before the meeting was called to order.

6. Update on Follow-up Meeting about School issues and Cambridge School Controlled Choice Advisory Committee

Acting Executive Director Buland reported that Jim Maloney will attend the Commission's April meeting to follow-up on the school issues.

7. Cambridge School Controlled Choice Advisory Committee

Chair Cox informed the Commissioners that she was invited to participate in the Cambridge Schools Controlled Choice Advisory Committee, which met over a two-day period. She made available to the Commissioners the binder she was given as a Committee member, which included many different types of data. A discussion was had about how children are assigned to schools now, versus how the district had done it previously. Chair Cox explained that the purpose of the Committee was to brainstorm solutions rather than seek answers to questions.

8. Update on Secure Communities Ordinance

Commissioner Gonzalez-Brenes informed the Commissioners that the proponents of the proposed ordinance are waiting to meet with the Cambridge Police Department before submitting the proposed ordinance to the City Council.

She also suggested that the Commission consider another discussion about Secure Communities. A discussion was had, and the Commission unanimously voted to invite an outside speaker on Secure Communities to give a presentation to the CHRC (Chair Cox and Commissioners Bhan, Evans, Gonzalez-Brenes, Shedid, Steirman, and Velazquez).

Commissioner Gonzalez-Brenes also presented information on a recent meeting hosted by the Bill of Rights Defense Committee (BoRDC), and explained that BoRDC is seeking to create a local network of like-minded agencies. She agreed to transmit information about BoRDC to be discussed at the next meeting.

9. Update on shelter survey outreach status

Commissioner Gonzalez-Brenes explained that the Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition (MTPC) is planning to publish a booklet of guidelines for homeless shelters and connect with Cambridge shelters about this issue. Commissioner Evans brought up a recent case against a transgender woman in Boston that settled for \$20,000. A discussion was had about transgender clients' experience in homeless shelters. Mariah agreed to reach out to MTPC and request information about whether there is a "model" shelter in this state or any positive experiences from Massachusetts shelters that MTPC could share. She also agreed to send the newspaper article about the Boston settlement to the Commissioners.

10. Outreach Projects

Chair Cox updated the Commission on an outreach plan she and Mariah had and the Commission discussed various ways of doing outreach. It was agreed that Mariah would look into the cost of translating various outreach materials, and bring those estimates back to the Commissioners for further discussion.

11. New business

Carmen solicited nominations for the Innovations in Fair Housing award.

Meeting adjourned at 8 p.m. Next Commission meeting will be held on Thursday, March 7, at 6:00 p.m.

12. Meeting of immigrant rights subcommittee

Following adjournment of the Commission meeting, the immigrant rights subcommittee met to discuss planning for the March 7 CET event.