



## Regular Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Tuesday, January 25, 2022

**Present:** Chair Karin Lin, Commissioners Tsamchoe Dolma, Eva Gottschalk, Joe Manok, Anna Mejia, Abhishek Raman, Karim Razzaz, and Jen Sparks

CIRC Staff: Executive Director Jennifer Mathews, Project Coordinator Crystal Rosa, and Immigrant Services Liaison Tagesech Wabeto

**Absent:** Commissioners Ashebir Gezmu, Subandha Karmacharya, and Aleksandra Ibrahim

### 1. Call to order:

Chair Lin called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm.

### 2. Public comment

No public was present at the start of the virtual meeting. There was no public comment.

### 3. Review and approval of December 16, 2021 minutes

Commissioners reviewed the minutes of the December 16, 2021 meeting. Commissioner Sparks moved to approve the meeting minutes, and Commissioner Raman seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously with edits addressed.

### 4. Election of New Chair(s)

Chair Lin summarized the role of the Chair with running the monthly meeting, collaborating with staff in drafting the agenda, and reviewing minutes. Commissioner Raman expressed interest in the nomination if another, longer-serving, member could be involved as a Co-Chair. Commissioner Sparks nominated herself as Co-Chair. The Commission unanimously accepted the nominations of Commissioners Raman and Sparks as Co-Chairs. Commissioner Sparks abstained from the vote because of the self-nomination.

### 5. Commission Working Groups Follow-Up Discussion

Commissioner Lin explained that so much of the working group planning process was interrupted by the pandemic. There is new stability with new members on the Commission and a permanent Executive Director. Co-Chair Abhishek asked if there had been a sort of long-term planning working group. Commissioners discussed and agreed this would be a valuable working group; initial planning work was covered in the 2017 Needs Assessment but is due to be revisited. A member volunteered to organize a working group to start planning the work of the Commission. The members who volunteered to join Co-Chair Raman in the working group are Commissioners Razzaz, Gottschalk, Manok, and Lin.

### 6. Staff Updates

#### New Resident Overview

ED Mathews shared a draft of the New Resident Overview. ED Mathews explained that new residents in Cambridge often do not know where to start when searching for programs and services to meet their needs. ED Mathews described the document as a one-pager and not meant to be an exhaustive list. The document was made to provide a structure of support services that would not overwhelm a community member from engaging with the various programs. ED Mathews listed additional resources that could be added like the immigrant legal resources guided. Once finalized, the document will also be translated.

Members of the Commission recommended the following information to be added:

- Public library programming
- Spiritual/cultural connection serves for community

- Information about legal clinics

#### **KYR with the Central Square Public Library**

The KYR with the Central Square Library will be scheduled in April. Attorneys from PAIR will present information that was requested by library staff. The materials will be translated into Spanish, Amharic, and Haitian Creole.

#### **Cambridge De Novo Legal Screening Clinic**

ED Mathews reported that 15 clients called the virtual clinic in January, which is 10 callers less than usual months.

#### **Language Justice Work - Plain Language Update**

Project Coordinator (PC) Rosa provided an update on the work developing a Language Justice program for the city. In collaboration with the Family Policy Council and the Department of Human Service Programs, has prepared a draft Plain Language Guide. In February, PC Rosa will present the draft guide as training at the next Community Engagement Team (CET) networking event. Additionally, CRLS design students are working on creating a poster of Plain Language Best Practices to serve as a reminder to all staff to check their work before public distribution.

#### **Immigrant Services Liaison (ISL) Wabeto Report**

Immigrant Services Liaison (ISL) Wabeto announced updates about new initiatives happening in Cambridge.

- ISL Wabeto helped conduct outreach for Amharic speaking community members to attend a focus group on “Parking in Cambridge.” The focus group was hosted by the Community Development Department (CDD) and facilitated by CET. CDD asked questions and the community members answer based on their experience living in Cambridge. ISL Wabeto summarized that the meeting was full of complaints about the bus lane on Massachusetts Avenue, driving in Cambridge, and issues around biking.
- ISL Wabeto helped with outreach about the kindergarten lottery registration, which ends on January 31st.
- ISL Wabeto announced that Cambridge Public Schools will be hosting budget planning meetings for different language communities.

Commissioner Manok moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:22 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Sparks.

**The next commission meeting will be on Tuesday, February 22, 2022, at 6 pm via a Virtual Zoom meeting.**