

Commission on Immigrant Rights and Citizenship
Thursday, February 16, 2016

Present: Commissioners Leslie DiTrani, Karin Lin, Melanie Torres, Jennifer Sparks, Alejandro Epstein-Santoyo and Swati Sawant.

CIRC Staff: Nancy Schlacter and Crystal Rosa.

Absent: Commissioners Marcio Macedo, Yarlennys Villaman, Roxana Maldonado-Garcia, Sana Ghafoor and Merline Sylvain-Williams.

Documents used:

- January Minutes
- February Agenda
- Massachusetts Safe Communities Act (SD. 1596 and HD 3052)

1. Call to order

Executive Director Schlacter called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. No one was recording the meeting.

2. Public Comment

No public comment.

3. Review and approval of January Minutes

The Commission reviewed the minutes from the January meeting and approved them unanimously on a motion from Commissioner Sparks, seconded by Commissioner Lin.

4. Executive Director's Report

• **Know Your Rights (KYR) trainings**

ED Schlacter has scheduled five upcoming KYR trainings. ED Schlacter stated that members of the Commission are free to attend the KYRs. The next KYR is on Tuesday, February 21 at On the Rise and will be led by immigration lawyer Daniel Santiago. The second KYR will be on Monday, February 27 at Cambridge Rindge and Latin, led by Commissioner DiTrani. The third KYR is at the Community Learning Center on Tuesday, February 28, led by Daniel Santiago. The fourth KYR will be held in the Community Room of 402 Rindge Ave on Tuesday, February 28, 2017 and led by Commissioner Epstein-Santoyo. The fifth KYR will be held at the Kennedy-Longfellow School on Thursday, March 9, 2017 and led by Commissioner Alejandro Epstein-Santoyo. There has been a high demand for Red Cards and the cards will be translated into the seven predominant languages in Cambridge.

5. Needs Assessment

• **Focus Group**

The projected goal is for each CIRC Commissioner to conduct five interviews by March 17, 2017, using the key questions. Information gathered from the interviews and focus groups will be used to identify the needs and priorities of the CIRC's work and to assist in the development of CIRC's vision, mission and goals. Members of the commission have listed locations for recruitment of interviewees, such as CEOC, Cambridge Housing Authority, churches, and food banks. ED Schlacter encouraged the members of the commission to let her know if anyone will

be unable to meet the March 17 deadline. Interviewees must be people outside of the member's family.

6. New Business

- **City Budget meeting**

CIRC staff met with the City Budget Director and City Manager to discuss Fiscal Year 2018 funding for CIRC. There was discussion around translation and printing costs for a resource guide. There was discussion of a part time case manager/outreach worker to assist with coordination of city services for immigrant residents. There was also discussion about Cambridge having a screening clinic one day a month, similar to the Boston MOIA model, with volunteer immigration attorneys. Commissioner DiTrani explained that managing a panel of volunteer attorneys would not be simple or easy and suggested that coordination be considered part of a full time job. Commissioner DiTrani added that there would need to be strict requirements for the panel of volunteer immigration attorneys:

- A certain minimum \$\$\$\$ amount in malpractice insurance coverage
- 5 or more years experience in immigration law
- Over 20 Continuing Legal Education (CLEs) course credits
- Membership in AILA

Commissioner Sawant expressed concern over the requirement to AILA and recommended that this requirement not limit less expensive forms of memberships.

- **Move CIRC meeting date**

ED Schlacter asked if the April meeting could be moved up a week, to April 13th, due to the scheduled absence of Project Coordinator Rosa. The suggested date was not approved by the Commission. Commissioner DiTrani asked that members of CIRC consider moving the meetings to a different Thursday, starting in September, because it conflicts with a standing meeting AILA has with its members. A new meeting day was not confirmed.

- **LGBTQ+ Asylum Seekers**

ED Schlacter explained that the LGBTQ+ Commission was interested in participating in a brown bag with CIRC on Asylum Seekers. Members of CIRC were interested in the intersection of topics and agreed to a brown bag in March, if possible.

- **Letter of Support – MA Safe Communities Act**

Members of the commission were interested in drafting a letter in support of the Massachusetts Safe Communities Act and eager to send the letter to the Cambridge Chronicle. Commissioner DiTrani spent some time during the meeting drafting the letter and the Commission reviewed it. Commissioner Lin agreed to verify the details surrounding the bill's status and will provide updates to the letter to ED Schlacter. Commissioner DiTrani moved to approve the letter of support, with any bill docket updates. Commissioner Sparks seconded the motion and the letter of support was unanimously approved. ED Schlacter agreed to sign the letter on behalf of the board and mail to the Cambridge legislators.

Commissioner Sparks moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:58 p.m., seconded by Commissioner DiTrani.

Next Commission meeting will be Thursday, March 16, 2016, at 6:00 p.m.