



Commission on Immigrant Rights and Citizenship
Thursday, May 18, 2017

Present: Commissioners Marcio Macedo, Yarlennys Villaman, Merline Sylvain-Williams, Karin Lin, Melanie Torres, and Alejandro Epstein-Santoyo.

Absent: Commissioners Sana Ghafoor, Leslie DiTrani, Jennifer Sparks, Roxana Maldonado-Garcia, and Swati Sawant.

CIRC Staff: Nancy Schlacter and CIRC Staff Crystal Rosa

Documents used:

- April Minutes
- May Agenda
- Immigrant Resource Flyers:
 - Know Your Rights: Home
 - Know Your Rights: Public
 - Know Your Rights: Work
 - ILRC Safety Plan for Families
 - PAIR Know Your Rights Handout
 - Mayor's Office Referral List
- Summary of CIRC interviews
- Meet Your Neighbor Day 2017 draft flyer

1. Call to order

Executive Director Schlacter called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m. No one was recording the meeting.

2. Public Comment

None.

3. Review and approval of March Minutes

The Commission reviewed the minutes from the April meeting and approved them unanimously with edits addressed on a motion from Commissioner Macedo, seconded by Commissioner Torres.

4. Executive Director's Report

- There was a KYR at Amigos School (15 Upton Street), led by Attorney Daniel Santiago on Tuesday, April 25. This KYR was in Spanish and open to the public. There was a group of 12 people present, who actively participated.
- The position for an Outreach/Referral Specialist closed on May 2, 2017 with 47 applicants. Three CIRC Commissioners, 1 CIRC staff person, 1 CHRC staff person, and Executive Director of Initiative on Domestic Violence reviewed the applications and provided suggestions on the finalists. The applicants will be interviewed by the end of May, with a possible start date in late June.

5. March Meeting Follow Up

- **Screening Referral Clinic**

Discussion about the status of the Screening Clinic. The Law Dept. is involved in identifying and arranging for experienced Supervising Immigration Attorney(s) for volunteer attorneys with more limited immigration experience. Due to the Anti-Aid Amendment in the MA Declaration of Rights, the City cannot pay for legal counsel of individuals, but may be able to fund supervision of volunteers. The City needs to find a space that can accommodate the Clinic, and some early site suggestions include a church, Cambridge Health Alliance, Multi-Service Center and the Community Learning Center. Creating a screening referral clinic has become a priority for the City Manager. Commissioner Villaman stated that she could reach out to her church, Saint Mary's on Norfolk Street.

- **Needs Assessment**

Commissioners conducted 33 interviews. Commissioners Lin and Macedo reviewed and discussed the analyzed information with the Commission. They anonymized each participant and turned the interviews into qualitative data. Within the next month, ED Schlacter will draft a report narrative.

- **LGBTQ+ Asylum Seekers**

ED Schlacter will continue her collaboration with the members of the LGBTQ+ Commission for an awareness-building event about LGBTQ+ Asylum Seekers and Undocumented LGBTQ+ people in fall 2017. ED Schlacter has coordinated with 2 Attorneys, Lisa Weinberg of CLSACC and Stefanie Fisher of Araujo & Fisher. Commissioner Villaman has volunteered to meet with the group and assist and Commissioner Macedo also expressed interest in helping, but neither is able to attend the first scheduled planning mtg. ED Schlacter will follow up with Bill Barnert from the LGBTQ+ Cmsn regarding CIRC's further involvement with the planning subcommittee.

- **Languages Access Services**

ED Schlacter researched information on practices and models used by Boston and Somerville regarding their language accommodations for limited English speakers. Somerville currently uses simultaneous translations for public meetings, which cost approximately \$3000 per language for the equipment, not including the hourly cost of interpreters, two of whom are needed for each interpreted language, for any event longer than 20 minutes. Another option would be closed captioning of meetings in different languages. ED Schlacter explained that she does not want the Commission involved in managing a technical equipment service.

6. **New Business**

- **Open Discussion**

Commissioner Sylvain-Williams expressed interest in drafting a letter for the City to declare support for Haitian immigrants who have been here since the U.S. offered temporary protected status (TPS) to those displaced by a deadly earthquake in the Caribbean nation in 2010. Their status expires in July. ED Schlacter explained that a letter could be drafted in support for protecting the Haitian immigrants but the letter would need to be approved by the Commission and then sent for review to the City Manager. Given the urgency of TPS renewals, ED Schlacter stated that anyone on the Commission could draft a letter to MA federal legislative delegation, but the letter could not be on Commission letterhead.

- The Commission worked together to create several ideas for a CIRC tagline, which the Commission agreed on: *Welcome, Inform, Connect, Support*. The Commission also suggested the purchase of T-shirts to help with outreach events and a tablecloth that would serve as a banner with the logo.

- **Immigrant Welcoming Event – Fall 2017/TBD**

There was a discussion of event activities such as outreach tables, speakers, dancers, food and educational resources and venue options such as indoor or outdoor, including public schools. The Commission continued their discussion of the importance of City Hall as a symbol for inviting and welcoming the immigrant community within its walls. ED Schlacter expressed that concerns exist among immigrant communities regarding a potential ICE presence at a public immigrant event. City staff will do research on any restrictions the city may have with regard to outside food vendors in city buildings, which may limit the use of some spaces over others.

Commissioner Torres moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Macedo.

Next Commission meeting will be Thursday, June 15, 2017 at 8:00 p.m.