



Regular Meeting
Thursday, March 28, 2019

Present: Co-Chairs Yarlennys Villaman and Nick Lopes Cortes and Commissioners Elizabeth Badger, Donna Davis, Karim Razzaz, Jennifer Sparks, Karin Lin, and Merline Sylvain-Williams and CIRC Staff: Executive Director Nancy Schlacter, Project Coordinator Crystal Rosa, and Immigrant Services Liaison Tagesech Wabeto

Absent:

Commissioner Marcio Macedo, Alejandro Epstein-Santoyo and Sandra Mercedes Canas

1. Call to order:

Co-Chairs Villaman and Lopes-Cortes called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm.

2. Public comment

No public present, no comment.

3. Review and approval of February minutes

Commissioners reviewed the minutes of the February meeting, Commissioner Sparks moved to approve, and Commissioner Sylvain-Williams seconded.

4. Presentation by Senior Planning Information Manager Cliff Cook

Cliff Cook, Senior Planning Information Manager for the Community Development Department provided a comprehensive summary emphasizing immigrant and non-English speaking communities in Cambridge. He provided information on household makeup, ethnicity, race, migration, education, income distribution, poverty, and market rate rental costs using data from 1990, 2000 Census, 2013-2017 American Community Survey, 2017 Decennial Census and data from collected in 2017 by the Cambridge Public Schools. Members of the commission asked Cliff Cook additional clarifying questions regarding the data discussed during the presentation.

5. Executive Director's report

The legal screening clinic had its largest turnout (26) of clients at the March 20th clinic. More attorneys will be scheduled to help with increasing demand. ED Schlacter reminded the Commission that volunteers are needed to staff a table at RiverFest on June 1st. The event is rain or shine and volunteers must stay for their full shift. Commission members signed up for shifts at the meeting. To help with coverage, CIRC will share table with the Human Rights Commission. ED Schlacter announced that Danehy Park Family Day is scheduled for Saturday, September 14, from 11:00 am-4:00 pm. CIRC staff will be seeking volunteers for that event in the Summer. The Cambridge Public Library (CPL) has helped schedule the Lecture Hall, Hallway, and Community Room spaces for the 2019 Welcome Event on Saturday, October 12 from 9:00 am – 4:00 pm. The length of the event is tbd. The Welcome Event will feature films highlighting stories of immigrants created by MA Immigrant filmmakers. A working group was developed at the last meeting to determine which films to showcase. CPL will be hosting an event during Immigrant Heritage Month in June and asked CIRC to cosponsor honoraria for poet performers. CPL is interested in booking Javier Zamora. Commission members stated that it may be a good opportunity to get more visibility in the community if CIRC partners with the library. ED Schlacter explained that despite her effort to work with Mass Law Reform Institute to schedule a Public Charge Training for Cambridge Housing Authority and City Housing staff, the event may not happen. MLRI has not committed yet. Thus, ED Schlacter sent an informational flyer to Ellen Semonoff, Assistant City Manager of Human Service Programs, about How to Talk About Public Charge with Immigrants and Their Families created by the Protecting Immigrant Families (PIF) Campaign.

• Report from Immigrant Services Liaison (ISL)

ISL Wabeto provided the highlights of her monthly outreach. ISL Wabeto and CET Outreach Workers attended a presentation at the Amigos School which explained study results that showed if students have more access to

languages in school it promotes better learning. ISL Wabeto also attended the DHSP summer camp outreach. ISL Wabeto attended 5 more outreach events that involved tabling. ISL Wabeto met with her counterpart in Somerville, Irma Flores. ISL Wabeto provided a presentation for CRLS teachers about Ethiopian students and their cultural differences.

6. New Business

• Presentation by CPD Superintendent Christine Elow

CPD Superintendent Christine Elow is confirmed to speak at the next meeting. Thirty minutes have been allotted for her presentation.

• Outreach Memo

Commissioner Davis wrote a memo to the Commission Chairs regarding her thoughts on CIRC's outreach efforts. One suggestion was for CIRC to have a business card in Spanish and Haitian Creole. CIRC staff agreed to have the CIRC resources postcard translated into Spanish and Haitian Creole. Commissioner Davis also suggested changing the phone line to be called "resource information line." Commissioner Davis further suggested redesigning the flyer of the legal screening clinic to a half page.

• Proposed Rule regarding SSA Qualifications (PIF campaign flyer)

ED Schlacter handed out the Sign-on Letter to oppose the Federal Administration's proposed rule changes for the Social Security Administration to "Remove the Inability to Communicate in English as an Education Category." On a motion by Commissioner Sylvain-Williams, seconded by Commissioner Razzaz, the Commission voted to have ED Schlacter sign on the Commission's behalf before the April 2 deadline.

• Suggestions

- Commissioner Villaman shared that webinars have helped bring awareness to the work at the AG's Office, networking with community partners, and sharing best practices.
- Commissioner Badger suggested an orientation for new commissioners to address what they should expect to prepare for their first meeting.

7. Ongoing Business

• Goal setting for CIRC 2019

Commissioner Sparks suggested that the Commission take on a strategic approach that is set by goals for the first year and then reviewed on the third year. The Commission agreed to devote an hour to this discussion at the April meeting.

8. Future projects

• Elevator pitch

The Elevator pitch will be taken on by the Communications Working Group.

Co-Chair Sparks moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:03 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Badger.

Next commission meeting will be on Thursday, April 25, 2019, at 6 pm in the Large Conference Room.