



Regular Meeting
Thursday, September 26, 2019

Present: Commissioners Jennifer Sparks, Elizabeth Badger, Karim Razzaz, Karin Lin, Marcio Macedo, and CIRC Staff: Executive Director Nancy Schlacter, Project Coordinator Crystal Rosa, and Immigrant Services Liaison Tagesech Wabeto

Absent:

Commissioners Alejandro Epstein-Santoyo and Sandra Mercedes Canas

1. Call to order:

Executive Director (ED) Schlacter called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

2. Public comment

No public present, no comment.

3. Review and approval of June minutes

Commissioners reviewed the minutes of the June 27 meeting, Commissioner Sparks moved to approve, and Commissioner Lin seconded.

4. Executive Director's (ED) report

The July legal screening clinic had 33 clients. The August legal clinic had 18 clients. The September legal clinic had 21 clients. Co-Chair Lopez resigned in July because he moved to California. There was positive feedback about the poetry reading by Javier Zamora for Immigrant Heritage Month in June and the Commission's participation at Danehy Park Day. The location of the outreach table had good visibility and was not loud like Riverfest. The ED Schlacter is having ongoing conversations with Emily Singer of College Success Initiative (CSI) and staff from ENROOT. They have been addressing access to information on financial aid resources for undocumented students. ED Schlacter forwarded the PIF PowerPoint training about the Public Charge Rule (PCR) to staff at the Cambridge Public Library and Community Learning Center in May. ED Schlacter passed out a 2-page flyer from PIF Campaign that answers the question, "Public Charge: Does this Apply to Me?" The 2-page flyer will be emailed to the Commission and is available in multiple languages on the PIF website. ED Schlacter met with General Counsel at Cambridge Housing Authority and the City Manager/Law Department regarding the HUD rule to evict undocumented tenants from public and publicly-subsidized housing. ED Schlacter presented about the work of the Commission and at a "Community Conversation" hosted by Lori Lander.

• Report from Immigrant Services Liaison (ISL)

ISL Wabeto provided highlights of her monthly outreach. ISL Wabeto discussed her outreach efforts to promote the Welcome Event. ISL Wabeto shared the event flyer with CEOC, Cambridge Public School Department, Cambridge Health Alliance, Cambridge Learning Center, Cambridge Public Library, along with CET members posting it throughout the city. ISL Wabeto also spread the word to parents that the Public Charge Rule does not impact a student's access to free school lunch. ISL Wabeto passed out a flyer about the Cambridge Public Schools providing free MBTA passes for students who are eligible for free or reduced lunch. The pass is also \$30 for high school students. ISL Wabeto spent some of her time this month helping a parent who is struggling to understand her children because of cultural differences. ISL Wabeto described some of the confusion between the different lottery systems for preschool. ISL Wabeto will participate in a presentation at Rindge Avenue Upper School on the cultural differences and how schools work in the USA compared to other countries.

5. New Business

• New Commissioner Search

There are 3 vacancies at the moment. The vacancies were posted, and the closing application date was extended to September 13, 2019. Members of CIRC reviewed the applicants before the meeting started, Commissioners Lin and El Razzaz volunteered to interview applicants on October 7. CIRC staff will schedule the applicants. ED

Schlacter will reach out to Commissioner Sylvain-Williams to verify her interest in being reappointed to the Commission since her term expired. Since both Chairs resigned over the summer, the Commission will need to fill those roles. Commissioner Lin volunteered to chair the meeting in October and Commissioner Sparks will chair the meeting in December. Commissioner Macedo volunteered to help if needed. The nomination for 2020 Chairs can happen at the November/December meeting.

- **Public Charge Rule**

The Public Charge Rule (PCR) was published in the Federal Register on August 13, 2019 and is scheduled to be in effect on October 15, 2019 if it is not enjoined. The Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition partnered with the City to provide informational training for city staff about PCR changes that may go into effect starting on October 15th. This training will be held in the Cambridge Public Library on Monday, October 7, 2019. A memo about the training was sent to Department Heads from the Community Development Department, Cambridge Public Library, Department of Human Services Programs and staff from Cambridge Public School Department Family Liaison and guidance counselors.

- **New Commissioner Orientation PowerPoint**

ED Schlacter printed the PowerPoint and the Commission reviewed it during the meeting. Members of the Commission provided edits. Commissioner Razzaz asked for the edits to address what it means to be a Commissioner and Commissioner Lin suggested adding information regarding what meetings look like and how many absences are allowed. CIRC staff will make the revisions to the PowerPoint and will provide the PowerPoint as part of the Commissioner onboarding.

- **CIRC “Commissioner in the Community”**

Commissioner Sparks shared an experience at work while she helped a patient and provided that person with information about the legal clinic. Commissioner Razzaz presented about CIRC at a support group for parents at the Peabody School. The group was interested in learning more about KYRs and general information that may help immigrants.

- **HUD Notice of Proposed Rulemaking**

The comment period regarding the rulemaking that would impact mixed-status families in publicly assisted housing is closed. National Low-Income Housing Coalition and the National Housing Law Project have partnered on a “Call to Action” regarding the proposed HUD rulemaking.

6. Ongoing Business

- **Welcome Event**

The Welcome Event is scheduled for Saturday, October 12 with set up starting at 10 AM, doors opening at 11:00 am, and films starting at 11:30 AM. The discussion will follow the videos and the event will end with lunch at 1:00 PM. Commissioners and CIRC staff will start cleaning up at 2 PM. The Cambridge Public Library (CPL) Lecture Hall, Hallway, and Community Room spaces are reserved for the event. CIRC staff will coordinate volunteer shifts depending on catering delivery and library set up logistics. CIRC staff will follow up via email.

- **Follow up from Working Groups** – The Commission decided to disband the working groups until new projects develop. The Commission will keep developing an elevator pitch for new members to participate to serve as a team-building exercise.

- **Goal setting for CIRC 2020**

The Commission agreed to wait until new members are appointed to the Commission.

Commissioner Macedo moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Sparks.

The next commission meeting will be on Thursday, October 24, 2019, at 6 pm in the Large Conference Room.