



Regular Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Thursday, September 24, 2020

Present: Co-Chair Karin Lin and Co-Chair Karim Razzaz, Commissioners, Tsamchoe Dolma, Ashebir Gezmu, Subandha Karmacharya, Jen Sparks, Aleksandra Ibrahim, and Elizabeth Badger and CIRC Staff: Executive Director Nancy Schlacter, Project Coordinator Crystal Rosa, and Immigrant Services Liaison Tagesech Wabeto

Absent:

Commissioners Marcio Macedo, Ana Mejia, and Alejandro Epstein-Santoyo

1. Call to order:

Co-Chair Razzaz called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm.

2. Public comment

No public present at the start of the virtual meeting. There was no public comment. Resident Jamal Merritt joined the meeting afterward but did not have public comment.

3. Review and approval of July 2020 minutes

Commissioners reviewed the minutes of the July 23, 2020 meetings. Commissioner Badger moved to approve the meeting minutes, and Commissioner Lin seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

4. New Business

There was no new business on the agenda. ED Schlacter asked the Commission if they had anything they wanted to bring to the table. Chair Razzaz mentioned that the Public Charge Rule was in effect a week ago. ED Schlacter informed the Commission that ISL Wabeto attended a training on the Public Charge Rule through Allston Brighton Health Collaborative.

5. Executive Director's (ED) report

The numbers to the virtual legal screening clinics have been steady. Since the last meeting, CIRC and De Novo have served a total of 42 clients. There were 20 callers to the August virtual clinic and 22 callers to the September clinic. ED Schlacter explained that Irish International Immigrant Center has changed its name to Rian Immigrant Center, which is now holding more frequent virtual screening clinics. CIRC staff has updated the legal screening resources flyer online to address the changes.

6. Immigrant Services Liaison (ISL) Wabeto Report

Immigrant Services Liaison (ISL) Wabeto provided a summary of her efforts during the COVID-19 shutdown. ISL Wabeto assisted Cambridge Public School with phone calls and texting families to make announcements about school related meetings. Each community has a different meeting schedule with interpreters available that check on how families feel about going back to school (especially in-person). Families filled out survey questions on whether they choose in-person or virtual learning. ISL Wabeto has assisted with announcing school registration and filling out the annual form. ISL Wabeto informed families to apply for free or reduced school lunch to receive an EBT Card with a value of \$190 per month until the school is fully in-person. Once in-person school is back in operation, families can have free lunch at school. Chromebooks and internet Hot spots are provided with Xfinity Internet Essentials for \$9.95/month through CPS's contract agreement. This service is for families who are eligible for free or reduced school lunch only. This year, City of Cambridge paid \$9.95 per family to prevent them from worrying about internet expenses for their children's learning.

7. Ongoing Business

Strategic plan for 2020-2021

Project Coordinator (PC) Rosa reminded the Commissioners of the goals identified earlier in the year. The group agreed to focus on the top 3 items as strategic priorities for 2020 -2021. Working group 1 is Family Preparedness

with Commissioners Karmacharya, Lin, Epstein-Santoyo, Macedo. Working group 2 will work on outreach to health centers with Commissioners Macedo, Sparks, Epstein-Santoyo, Karmacharya. Working group 3 will focus on undocumented workers' rights with Commissioners Epstein-Santoyo, Dolma, Ibrahim, Karmacharya. Commission members were encouraged to reach out to each other so long as they remained less than a quorum in each working group.

Commissioner Lin moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:10 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Badger.

The next commission meeting will be on Thursday, October 22, 2020, at 6 pm via a Virtual Zoom meeting.