



Cambridge Human Rights Commission
Thursday, January 7, 2016

Present: Chair Chanta Bhan, Vice-Chair Harry Reyes, Commissioner Bonita Cox, Nadia Davila, Nicholas Leydon, Sabrina Selk, Zainab Lakhani, Robert Slate, CHRC staff Crystal Rosa and Sabrina Acloque.

Absent: ED Schlacter, Commissioners Mercedes Evans, Kerry Gough, and Kim Nghiem.

1. Call to order

Chair Bhan called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m. No one was recording the meeting.

2. Public Comment

No public comment.

3. Review and Approval of October, November, and December Minutes

Commissioner Cox moved to approve the October minutes; seconded by Vice-Chair Reyes. Absent Commissioners abstained from the vote, however unanimous vote reached of Commissioners in attendance at the October meeting. Commissioner Selk moved to approve the November minutes; seconded by Commissioner Leydon. Although absent Commissioners abstained from the vote, unanimous vote was reached of Commissioners in attendance at the November meeting. Commissioner Slate moved to approve the December minutes; seconded by Commissioner Cox. Absent Commissioners abstained from the vote, however unanimous vote reached of Commissioners in attendance at the December meeting.

4. Executive Director's Report delivered by the Attorney Investigator

AI Acloque updated the Commission on cases, staff activities, outreach and trainings. There is 1 new case, 6 pending cases, and no new closed cases since the December meeting. ED Schlacter has continued her collaborations with the Community Engagement Team (CET) assisting with planning and participating in the CET Networking Event Planning Team (NEPT) event: "Engaging Families: Learning From and Welcoming LGBTQ People" hosted at Cambridge College. ED Schlacter and Chair Bhan facilitated the Area 4 Youth Center poster-making event for the Fair Housing poster contest, which resulted from multiple planning meetings between ED Schlacter and Cambridge Youth Center Directors. ED Schlacter and Commissioner Cox also facilitated the Gately Youth Center Fair Housing poster making. CHRC staff have completed several trainings since the last meeting. Administrative Coordinator Rosa received training on Advanced Excel Training – Pivot Charts, and completed an introductory GIS Training on ArcGIS software. ED Schlacter and AI Acloque also attended the Statewide Fair Housing Coalition Meeting in Worcester.

5. December meeting follow-up:

• **Fair Housing Poster Making Event**

- **Area IV** – Chair Bhan and ED Schlacter facilitated the outreach event. There were ~ 20 students who participated in the poster making and the youth counselors contributed by asking questions after the presentation. Chair Bhan suggested that the presentation should be tailored to young students.

- **Gately Youth Center** – Commissioner Cox and ED Schlacter facilitated the outreach event. There were many students participating in the “family night.” Three students participated in the poster making during the event and a couple students took a poster to complete at home.
- **Upcoming: Cambridge Community Art Center Fair Housing art making event** – The artmaking event is scheduled for January 28 from 4:30-5:30 p.m. at the Community Art Center. Commissioners Slate and Reyes volunteered to participate in the outreach.

6. Cambridge Police Department Update

- Dep. Supt. Burke answered questions regarding the role of the Community Engagement Team and its work with the GLBT community.

7. New Business

- **Fair Housing Poster Awards Ceremony** – Scheduled on Wednesday, April 13, 2016.
AI Acloque asked the Commissioners about holding an April Commission meeting the night after the Fair Housing Event or later in the month of April. During the discussion, Commissioners expressed difficulty with committing to more than one evening in April. Commissioner Leydon moved for the Commission to gather only once in April – the Fair Housing Event; seconded by Commissioner Cox. Unanimous vote was reached.
- **Community Learning Center discrimination law trainings in March & May** – schedule of teacher sign-ups after 1/27. Vice-Chair Reyes will supply the Commission training materials via email in preparation for February’s meeting to discuss edits.
- **The Commission’s interests for 2016**
Chair Bhan encouraged the Commission to consider topics and projects regarding human rights. The Commission clarified that the list provided is not final and will be evolving as the year goes on. The following was provided, in substance:
 - Commissioner Cox raised questions from her community regarding the difficulties that parents of children with learning disabilities experience when excluded from participation in after school programs. Specifically, Commissioner Cox wanted to know more about IEPs and why there is a need for more assessment to participate in after school programs. Commissioner Selk explained that she would contact an IEP Family Representative to better inform the Commission on this topic.
 - Commissioner Slate was interested in an orientation regarding the Commission’s role and boundaries. Specifically, the responsibilities of the Commission vs. those of the staff.
 - Commissioner Reyes expressed interest in letter drafting in support of bills being considered by the MA legislature. Specifically, regarding bills about Transgender Rights and Pay Equity.
 - Commissioner Selk expressed interest in learning more regarding homeless rights and transgender homeless youth in Cambridge.
 - Chair Bhan explained that there is an ongoing debt bondage issue in the Cambridge immigrant community, which are ultimately illegal labor practices. Specifically, Chair Bhan expressed need for resource knowledge to advocate for non-English speakers.
 - Commissioner Leydon guided the Commission to focus on items that are immediately actionable. Specifically, legislation research and letter drafting, presentation about IEPs, and learning about homeless transitional housing.
 - Other topics discussed – How to navigate through Cambridge housing with Section 8 vouchers.

- **Follow up regarding Transit Health Equity research** – Vice-Chair Reyes provided the Commission a brief follow up about research conducted in the Greater Boston Area on Transit Health Equity, which is almost ready for publishing. Vice-Chair Reyes confirmed that Cambridge residents were involved in the study and provided an informal discussion on the study’s findings.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Next Commission meeting will be Thursday, February 4, 2015 at 6:00 p.m.