



## **Meeting Minutes**

### **Monthly Commission Hybrid Meeting Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 6:00 P.M.**

**Present:** Chair Shubhan Nagendra, Commissioners Karin Lin, Felipe Lobo Koerich, Raul Ripoll, Karim Razzaz, Ana Mejia, Anne Odera, Tsamchoe Dolma, and Sarah Figge-Hussain

City Staff: Executive Director Carolina Almonte, Director of Operations Sarah Binney, Immigrant Services Liaison Tagesech Wabeto, Program Coordinator for the Domestic and Gender-Based Violence Prevention Initiative Shameka Gregory.

Members of the Public: Mia Lupica, Erica Dinkens

**Absent:** Language Access Manager Crystal Rosa, Commissioner Vanessa Ruget, Vanessa Sarmiento, Debbie Klein

#### **1. Call to Order**

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

#### **2. Public Comment**

- Mia Lupica is a reporter for the Harvard Crimson reporting on the work of the Commission.
- Erica Dinkens is interested in learning more about the intersection of immigration issues and domestic violence.

#### **3. Review and Approval of January 2025 Minutes**

- Commissioner Lobo Koerich moved to approve the January 2025 minutes. Commissioner Lin seconded.

#### **4. Presentation from Shameka Gregory, Program Coordinator for the Domestic and Gender-Based Violence Prevention Initiative**

- Gregory shared a presentation with the definition of domestic violence, some statistics about domestic violence, and discussed some of the ways that immigrant communities are specifically vulnerable to domestic violence. Commissioner Figge-Hussain asked about organizations that provide wraparound services relating to immigration legal services, domestic violence, and shelter. Gregory shared that most DV organizations

refer immigration cases out to external legal services organization. The lawyers at De Novo work with transition house and have experience providing support for survivors of domestic violence. Mia Lupica asked about the barriers for immigrant women reporting harassment and discrimination. Gregory shared that the barriers include fear of losing job and being unable to get a new job, fear of lack of financial stability, and fear of putting others at risk. Gregory asked for support from commissioners in ideas for how to support immigrants affected by DV.

- Gregory shared about the Cambridge brothel case. Most of the women involved were undocumented immigrants. Most are no longer living in Cambridge. Commissioner Odera asked if the affected individuals would be eligible for a U-visa. Gregory shared that this situation did not meet the legal standard for trafficking so the eligibility is uncertain.

## 5. Staff updates

- ED Almonte
  - ED Almonte shared that her maternity leave is currently scheduled for June through October and she is planning on returning part time in October.
  - The Commission is planning 2 KYR presentations about rights at the workplace. One will be specifically for employers and the other will be for employees. The Commission is also planning a KYR presentation for the Islamic Society of Boston – Cambridge with the City of Somerville.
  - ED Almonte shared a review of the Commission programs for the new Commissioners, including Know Your Rights trainings in partnership with MIRA, PAIR, and De Novo. These trainings took place at the Community Learning Center, CRLS, the library, and online for direct service workers. Additionally, the Commission has distributed red cards in 8 languages and updated the city website with additional Know Your Rights information. Upcoming events include Cambridge Citizenship Day, Cambridge Welcomes, Workshop for Foreign Trained Professionals with African Bridge Network, updated Cambridge Welcomes graphics, and the Welcome Event.
  - Mia Lupica asked if there is city policy for navigating ICE coming to college campuses. ED Almonte shared that the city only has a policy for ICE presence at city buildings, but no system for ICE coming to campuses. Commissioner Ripoll asked if there was any training for bystanders witnessing ICE presence.
  - CIRC is moving offices to 689 Mass Ave. The office move is planned to take place the first week of June.
- DOO Binney
  - Cambridge Welcomes Event will be on **Thursday, May 29 from 6pm – 8pm**. Staff is navigating the balance between broad outreach for the event and the safety of participants. The event will feature food, music performances, resource tables, and kids activities. DOO Binney will reach out to the school's backpack express program, the school bilingual liaisons, the Community Engagement Team, and the Community Learning Center for event outreach. Commissioners should reach out to DOO Binney to let her know if they are available to volunteer at the event.

- ISL Wabeto
  - ISL Wabeto is focused on advertising Citizenship Day, De Novo Legal Clinic, Cambridge Welcomes, Orientation Workshop for Foreign Trained Professionals, and the application for preschool.

#### **6. New Business**

- Welcome New Commissioners!
- Co-chair elections – Commissioners will elect a co-chair to join Chair Nagendra. Commissioner Lobo Koerich self-nominated to be a co-chair. Commissioner Lin seconded. All Commissioners voted in favor.
- The Legal Clinic needs additional volunteer immigration attorneys. Commissioners should reach out if they have any potential legal networks or volunteers.
- CIRC was approved to receive additional funding for a part-time paralegal at De Novo to handle more cases outside of the legal clinic. ED Almonte is working on finalizing the grant agreement.
- There will be a gathering and dinner for multiple Commissions on June 4 at 6:00pm. Commissioners should decide if they would still like to meet in June or replace the meeting with a social.
- The Commission will be on hiatus during July and August.

#### **7. Adjournment**

- Chair Nagendra moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:35pm. Commissioner Lin seconded.