



Meeting Minutes

Monthly Commission Virtual Meeting Tuesday, January 28, 2025, at 6:00 P.M.

Present: Commissioners Karin Lin, Felipe Lobo Koerich, Shubhan Nagendra, Karim Razzaz, Ana Mejia, Vanessa Ruget, Anne Odera

City Staff: Executive Director Carolina Almonte, Director of Operations Sarah Binney

Members of the Public: Catiana Jean-Pierre, Christiana Catalano, Petra Loney, Samanta Mendes

Absent: Chair Abhishek Raman, Commissioner Tsamchoe Dolma, Vannessa Sarmiento, Language Access Manager Crystal Rosa, Immigrant Services Liaison Tagesech Wabeto

1. Call to order

- ED Almonte called the meeting to order at 6:06pm.

2. Public comment

- Samantha Mendes introduced herself as a staff-person at GBLS wanting to know more about the work of the Commission. Catiana Jean-Pierre is on the city's Community Engagement Team supporting the city's Haitian community.

3. Review and approval of October 2024 minutes

- Commissioner Lobo Koerich moved to approve the October 2024 minutes. Commissioner Ruget seconded.

4. Welcome and Introductions

- Commissioners and members of the public introduced themselves.

5. Staff Updates

- CIRC hosted a Know Your Rights (KYR) training at the Community Learning Center (CLC) on Monday, January 27. CLC students were in-person and members of the public joined on Zoom. In total there were over 340 online participants and 100 in-person participants. The presentation was put on by immigration attorneys from Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA). There was hybrid interpretation into 8 languages. Another training with the same format will be held at the CLC and online on Thursday, January 30.
- CIRC is also planning the following upcoming KYR trainings:
 - A training for high school students at Cambridge Ringe and Latin School on February 4.
 - A virtual training for direct service providers on February 12.
 - A hybrid training at the library in March, date TBD.
- ED Almonte is working with the law department on guidelines for city staff in case of Immigration Enforcement coming to city property.

- Employers and businesses have requested guidelines on how to support immigrant employees.
- CIRC staff will be updating the city website to highlight Know Your Rights presentations and other key resources.
- CIRC is partnering with the IRS and CEOC for a webinar about filing taxes and accessing tax resources in different languages. The webinar is on Thursday, February 20th at 12:00pm.
- African Bridge Network (ABN) met with CIRC staff to discuss having a CIRC presentation at the ABN seminar in the summer for foreign trained workers
- CIRC staff met with Project Citizenship Staff to begin planning for Cambridge Citizenship Day.
- ED Almonte requested additional budget funding for a position that would provide additional legal support at De Novo.
- Commissioner Ruget asked if CIRC has received increased calls. DOO Binney affirmed that CIRC has received more calls and emails, primarily from individuals and organizations looking for Know Your Rights resources and legal help.

6. Old Business

- Co-chair elections – Commissioner Nagendra was nominated for co-chair. All Commissioners voted in favor.

7. New Business

- Brainstorming for 2025 - ED Almonte emphasized the importance of events focused on belonging, such as the Welcome Event in May. Commissioner Ruget asked about other events that took place in 2017. Commissioner Lin spoke about the Welcome Event and other events during that time.

8. Adjournment- ED Almonte moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:57. Commissioner Lin seconded.