



Cambridge Peace Commission

A Department of the City of Cambridge, Massachusetts

Minutes of the Peace Commission Meeting, December 16, 2015

Commission Members Present: Co-Chairs Frank Connelly and Larry Kim, Commission Members Aboma Dirbaba, John Ratliff, Georges Atallah, Elechi Kadete, and James Eliscar

City Staff Present: Executive Director Brian Corr and Administrative Coordinator Crystal Rosa

Commission Members Absent: Gladys Friedler, Lijun Li, and Regina Yang

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:10 p.m.

Welcome and Introductions

The Commission Members and City Staff introduced themselves to Deputy Superintendent Christine Elow.

Approval of Minutes

Commission Member Ratliff moved to approve the October minutes and Commission Member Connelly seconded the motion. The approval was unanimous.

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Corr updated the Commission regarding the December 6th meeting organized by the Cambridge Community Response Network in response to the recent online threats of bomb and gun violence made against Cambridge schools. More than 300 residents met at the Citywide Senior Center to learn about resources and supports, and to hear updates from the City Manager, Police Commissioner, Superintendent of Schools, and the FBI on recent threats against Cambridge Public Schools. Executive Director Corr facilitated the meeting and Trauma specialists from the Riverside Community Care were present during the meeting and explained that the community was expressing normal responses to abnormal events.

Executive Director Corr has also been meeting regularly with Imam Ismail Fenni of the Cambridge mosque since the attacks in Paris.

Executive Director Corr is in the process of organizing the City's annual Martin Luther King Day commemoration. The speaker, Juliette Kayyem, is a Cambridge resident and the granddaughter of Lebanese immigrants. Ms. Kayyem is known for rethinking "security" in ways that connect traditional concerns with the need to make society resilient, just, and equitable. Currently, Juliette serves on the faculty at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. She is an on-air security analyst for CNN and hosts a regular podcast entitled "Security Mom" for WGBH, Boston's local NPR station. Previously, she was President Obama's Assistant Secretary for Intergovernmental Affairs at the Department of Homeland Security. The commemoration focuses around the "giant triplets" of racism, militarism, and materialism that Dr. King spoke about towards the end of his life, with readings excerpted from his famous "Beyond Vietnam" speech that he gave on April 4, 1967.

The Holocaust Commemoration is also in the planning phase, and work is underway to identify a survivor of the Holocaust who is willing and able to participate in the event.

Update from Dep. Supt. Christine Elow

- Dep. Supt. Elow updated the Commission on the situation surrounding the Cambridge schools bomb threats. Dep. Supt. Elow explained the schools have been collaboratively with CPD, which has furthered the opportunity to improve their relationship. There has been increased security at the schools and interest from educators for active shooter training. Dep. Supt. Elow provided a few examples of how CPD and other agencies have shown their ongoing support for city residents.
- Dep. Supt. Elow further explained that there is a current outreach initiative being implemented at 808 Memorial Drive. The initiative is to introduce the new officers and resources to the underserved community in the building by going door to door with the Community Engagement Team.

Meeting Schedule, Next Steps, and Wrap Up

- Commissioner Ratliff proposed a film screening of Dalton Trumbo's movie based on the antiwar novel written in the 1930's called, *Johnny Got His Gun*. Currently, the movie *Trumbo* is being shown at Kendall Square Theater, which depicts Dalton Trumbo and other Hollywood figures get blacklisted for their political beliefs. It was inquired if the library would be a possible collaborator in showing *Johnny Got His Gun*. Executive Director Corr will pass the information to the events coordinator at the Cambridge Public Library and but her in touch with Commission Member Ratliff.
- Co-Chair Connelly encouraged the Commission to actively consider City programs or departments they would want to invite to engage and inform the Commission on their work in the new year and provide their suggestions.
- It was confirmed that Cliff Cook, the demographer at the Community Development Department, will be at the next meeting to present interesting demographic facts to the Commission.

The next meeting of the Peace Commission is scheduled for 6:00 p.m., Wednesday, January 20, at 51 Inman St. in the Second Floor Conference Room.