



Cambridge Peace Commission

A Department of the City of Cambridge, Massachusetts

Minutes of the Peace Commission Meeting March 16, 2016

Commission Members Present: Co-Chairs Larry Kim and Frank Connelly; Commission Members Elechi Kadete, Gladys Friedler, John Ratliff, Georges Atallah, and Regina Yang

City Staff Present: Executive Director Brian Corr, Administrative Coordinator Crystal Rosa, and Deputy Superintendent Christine Elow

Commission Members Absent: Lijun Li, Aboma Dirbaba, and James Eliscar

Call to Order

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

Approval of Minutes

The Commission reviewed the minutes from the February 17, 2016 meeting and approved them unanimously on a motion from Commission Member Ratliff, seconded by Commission Member Friedler.

Executive Director's Report

- **Follow up from February Demographic Presentation**
Executive Director Corr stated that Cliff Cook, Planning Information Manager for the City's Community Development Department will provide a final version of the presentation with edits and answers to questions addressed during the meeting.
- **Follow up on "Don't Bank on the Bomb" Presentation**
Executive Director Corr reviewed the presentation made about "Don't Bank on the Bomb" to the Peace Commission at the February 17 meeting regarding the Cambridge Retirement Board (CRB) holding investments in companies involved in nuclear weapons production. Specifically, presenters were concerned with investments in Lockheed Martin, which they calculate consists of 2.06% of the CRB portfolio. The presenters proposed divestment from nuclear weapon-producing companies to set an example for other municipalities to follow. The presenters are promoting a City Council policy order that could make Cambridge would be the first municipality in the U.S. to divest.

Commission members discussed the appropriate steps to for the Commission to take if it decides to express support for Cambridge's nuclear divestment, including the desirability of informing the City Manager and/or Budget Director, reviewing the ordinance establishing the Peace Commission, and researching the application and practicality of alternative investments. Commission Member Ratcliff stated that he would follow up with the presenters of "Don't Bank on the Bomb" and keep the Commission informed as their efforts progress.

- **Annual Holocaust Commemoration, May 4, 2016**

Executive Director Corr confirmed that Holocaust Commemoration is scheduled for May 4, 2016 at Temple Beth Shalom with Isaac “Jack” Trompeter speaking from the prospective of a child survivor. Mr. Trompeter was separated from his parents and placed into hiding at three months old and was not reunited with them until after the liberation, when he was three years old. The Commission members were encouraged to participate in the various reading and ceremonies that take place during the commemoration. The Cambridge Community Chorus will perform during the commemoration.

- **Conversation with Deputy Superintendent Christine Elow on Recent Events**

Dep. Supt. Elow provided the Commission with information regarding a shooting that occurred at Clement Morgan Park on Wednesday, March 9, 2016. According to Dep. Supt. Elow, the shooting occurred at approximately 3:00 pm, while children and staff from an after-school program were nearby. Executive Director Corr attended a community meeting through the Community Response Network to address the families of those youths affected and communicate the City’s response to the gun violence. Counselors from the Riverside Trauma Center were also present to provide emotional and psychological support. As a result of the meeting, a number of after-school providers are working in collaboration in with the Cambridge Police (CPD) to enhance emergency communication for a future incidents.

Dep. Supt. Elow also provided an update regarding the anonymous bomb threats that Cambridge Public Schools, were receiving in the winter along with many others in Massachusetts. According to Dep. Supt. Elow, the threats were in the form of “Cambridge Mass city middle school,” and never specific enough to result in school evacuations or closures. The Cambridge Public Schools worked with public safety officials to inspect schools and ensure a swift response to the incidents, and no evidence has been found to substantiate the threats.

Dep. Supt. Elow explained that there are nine School Resource Officers that work with Cambridge youth centers and schools. These School Resources Officers work with the Cambridge Health Alliance and Department of Human Service Programs as part of the Safety Net Collaborative. Safety Net fosters positive youth development, promotes mental health, supports safe school and community environments, and limits youth involvement in the juvenile justice system through coordinated prevention, intervention, and diversion services for Cambridge youth and families. Their goal is to provide families in crisis with resources during roundtable discussions to create an action plan for the youth.

New Business

- **Future presentations**

Executive Director Corr recommended the following possibilities:

- Chandra Banks, District Mediator for the Cambridge Public Schools, on Restorative Justice
- The Hip Hop Transformation, a summer program of the Cambridge Community Center, that works with at-risk youth that teaches teens the history of hip-hop culture, the role it plays in their lives and in society as a whole, and equips teens with the skill set to write, record, and perform their own pro-social hip-hop music.

Commissioner Atallah provided the following suggestions:

- Ronnie Miller, a Cambridge resident and director of the Irish International Immigration Center, which works on immigrant integration, refugee resettlement, and community building.

- An investment banker who focuses on sustainable businesses.

Both Executive Director Corr and Commissioner Atallah will follow up with the possible speakers for scheduling onto a future agenda.

Haitian Flag Day

Executive Director Corr announced that Haitian Flag Day is on May 18, 2016 and asked the commission to consider volunteering their time for outreach and support of a possible event. The Commission expressed their interest to help on the day of the event.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

The next meeting of the Peace Commission is scheduled for 6:00 p.m., Wednesday, May 18, at 51 Inman St. in the Second Floor Conference Room.