

Human Rights Commission  
August 26th, 2021  
Monthly Meeting

Present

Christopher Spicer-Hankle, Commissioner  
Lara Versari, Commissioner

Members of the Public Present:

Derrick Rice  
Fernando Cervantes Jr. Somerville Times  
Tim

Approval of the Minutes from the HRC meeting on July 29, 2021

Commissioner Christopher moved to approve the minutes from the prior meeting held on July 29, 2021. Commissioners Lara agreed to make the minutes official.

Next steps in the hiring process for an Executive Director:

Commissioner Lara and commissioner Christopher agreed to approve a motion to formally request the following to the Somerville Administration (and Director Denise Capers):

1. The immediate hiring of an interim executive director, to be filled before November.
2. A clear plan and timeline to fill more than half of the seats of the HRC.
3. A hiring process, to be pursued in 2022, for an Executive director, on procedural par with police chief hiring process whereby committee semi-finalists interviewed with HRC veto power but HRC recommendation not subject to discretion of Mayor, who may choose from finalists.

Upcoming Trainings sponsored by the HRC and open to the public:

- Training Active Bystanders (Intermediate level) by Quabbin Mediation
- Training by Sonja Darai about the powers and potential of City Commissions

Additional assets for the Commission:

The commission and other participants expressed their strong recommendation for hiring an expert in public outreach and social media in any capacity (Executive Director, new commissioner or volunteer).

The Commissioners discussed the need for further resources to be displayed on the HRC webpage. Approval was given to the following resources (compiled by Kevin O'Keefe, resource librarian at Somerville Public Library).

National Women's Law Center: Massachusetts  
<https://nwlc.org/state/massachusetts/>

Greater Boston Legal Services  
<https://www.gbls.org/our-work/immigration>

Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition  
<https://www.miracoalition.org/>

National Resources:

ACLU  
Amnesty International  
Children's Defense Fund  
Human Rights First  
Human Rights Campaign - Massachusetts  
Human Rights Watch  
NAACP  
UNICEF - Boston Office  
United Nations - Human Rights

#### In-person promotion of Immigrant Stories Project

The Commissioners reviewed the next steps for the Immigrant Voices project. First they agreed to create in consultation with SomerViva the outstanding translated letters (Nepalese and Haitian Creole)

Second, the current letters (English/Portuguese/Spanish) will be updated with the Director Capers as the new contact.

Commissioners agreed to advise her of the project, to follow up with interested volunteers, and to dedicate hours these coming weeks to outreach to restaurant owners.

#### Internal practices:

Commissioners agreed to renew our practice of announcing upcoming meetings by email invitation and including minutes of prior meetings. Possible collaboration from Derrick Rice to be the person inviting community members who have expressed interest.

#### Next meeting

Thursday, September 9, 2021

