

Human Rights Commission Immigrant Rights Committee Meeting Minutes

April 2, 2025

1. Call to Order
Xin Peng called the meeting to order at 5:34 PM
2. Roll Call
Present (all via zoom) were Xin Peng, Elizabeth Brusie, Corey Barr. Captain Dan Unsworth of the Watertown Police Department joined the meeting as well.
3. Acceptance of Minutes
 - a. Minutes for previous meeting
Corey Barr made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Xin Peng. The Committee voted three to zero to approve the minutes.
4. Discussion
 - a. Draft statement on potential incidents in the community
The Committee discussed a generic statement that can be deployed quickly by the Human Rights Commission in the event of a sudden occurrence. It was discussed that someone on the Commission could be delegated to release the statement at their discretion. It was decided that Corey Barr will ask the Massachusetts Association of Human Rights Commissions for input on how to release such a statement.
 - b. Draft statement on anti-Haitian rhetoric
This issue was tabled for a future meeting.
 - c. Resources for the community
The Committee discussed ways in which it can help the public understand their rights and the role (or lack thereof) of the Watertown Police Department in immigration enforcement. The Committee also discussed potential events including one which would educate the public on immigrants' role in food production in the United States.
 - d. Local and national updates
Xin Peng asked what Watertown's plan would be if ICE were to detain a resident. Elizabeth Brusie shared that the existing law is the Lunn v. Commonwealth case which prohibits state and local agencies from helping or hindering ICE to enforce civil detainers.
 - e. Working with action-plan subcommittee
The Committee discussed working with the action plan subcommittee to go beyond issuing statements. Doug Newton shared that the action plan subcommittee is primarily focused on event planning as of now but will be moving forward with other opportunities in the coming months. Xin Peng made a motion, seconded by Corey Barr, to ask Doug Newton to pass along the immigrant rights committee's discussion to the action plan subcommittee at its next meeting. The Committee voted three to zero to approve the motion.
 - f. Additional manners by which the Human Rights Commission can promote and protect the rights of immigrants

The Committee discussed adding to its list of resources for residents with concerns around immigration and immigrant rights.

5. Public Comment

Jacky van Leeuwen attended the meeting and offered input throughout. She suggested that the Commission delegate one or two members to release the generic statement quickly as necessary.

6. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:29 PM.