

**Chairperson**  
Aaron Richman



**Members:**  
Shawna Curran  
Lilian Chukwurah  
Izaida Gonzalez  
Robyn Kennedy  
Edward G. Robinson  
Elizabeth O'Callahan

**Vice-chairperson**  
Cara Berg Powers

**City of Worcester  
Human Rights Commission**

**Monthly Meeting Summary – Monday May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017, 6pm  
Worcester City Hall, Esther Howland Chamber, 455 Main St., Worcester, MA**

**Members Present:** Aaron Richman, Izaida Gonzalez, Robyn Kennedy, Lilian Chukwurah, Edward G. Robinson, Elizabeth O'Callahan, Shawna Curran, Cara Berg Powers

**Staff Present:** Jayna Turchek and Simon Elliott

1. **Call to Order:** A quorum was established and Chairperson Aaron Richman called the meeting to order at 6:10pm. The Chairperson welcomed the Commissioners and those present. Commissioners, staff and guests briefly introduced themselves.
2. **Approval of April 10th, 2017 meeting minutes:** Commissioner Kennedy motioned to approve the minutes as written. Commissioner Robinson seconded. Unanimously approved as written with Commissioner Berg Powers abstaining.
3. **New Business:**
  - a. **Presentation and conversation on immigration rights (Diona Vakili, Staff Attorney at Central West Justice Center):**

Diona Vakili overviewed President Trump's recent Executive Orders pertaining to immigration and refugee resettlement. The new Administration has expanded removal priorities, expanded detention space, directed Immigration and Custom's Enforcement (ICE) to revive and expand programs that use local law enforcement to act as ICE agents, and has expanded expedited removal. Two state courts have issued stays on the orders. The questions of constitutionality surfaced by those stays will likely be addressed at the United States Supreme Court.

Undocumented individuals who fear deportation should talk to an immigration attorney, make an emergency plan, learn what rights everyone has and what to do during encounters with ICE. There are Know Your Rights Cards that can be used to inform individuals of their rights as well as to inform ICE agents that the individual knows their rights. ICE's "Sensitive Locations" policy



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remains in effect, which generally states that ICE will not do targeted enforcement in the following types of venues: schools (during school hours), medical treatment and healthcare facilities, places of worship, funerals and weddings, and during public demonstrations (such as marches, rallies or parades).

The Worcester Police Department has not adopted the practice of holding individuals without documents and notifying ICE agents of their detentions. Commissioner Kennedy requested that Director Turchek provided the Commission with information regarding the work that the Lowell School Committee has done, and with a possible similar proposal for the City of Worcester. Commissioner Robinson inquired as to the links to immigration information on the City's Office of Human Right's website. Vice-chairperson Berg Powers motioned to move forward in recommending to the City Manager that he make it a requirement that all public spaces in the City have Know Your Rights Cards on hand. Commissioner Kennedy seconded. Unanimously approved. Berg Powers also motioned to recommend to the City Manager that he look into which City department heads interface directly with the public, and request that the City Manager require that these department heads complete a Know Your Rights Training. Commissioner Kennedy seconded. Unanimously approved.

**b. Proposal for Critical Media Literacy training**

Vice-chairperson Berg Powers explained to the Commission the need for critical media skills, as well as the ability to observe things such as subtle bias and unreliable sources in the media. Vice-chairperson Berg Powers already has prepared a presentation that deals with exactly this topic. Director Turchek informed the Commission that the Coalition Against Bias and Hate is holding a spring forum about responsible journalism, which could be a good opportunity to advertise for the Commission's training in June.

**c. Review of Worcester Police Bureau of Professional Standards Quarterly Reports (July-December 2016 and January-March 2017)**

The Commission reviewed the Quarterly Reports and reviewed a document prepared for today's meeting that reviewed the Commission's previous discussions of the BOPS. Some of the Commission's recommendations to the BOPS have been adopted, including the Police Route Numbers. Commissioner Curran stated that there is missing context as well as experience in order to interpret the data. Commissioners expressed frustration at the lack of analysis that comes with the BOPS Quarterly Reports, and will seek more qualitative data in the future from the BOPS. The Commission debated whether they should work towards seeking more information from the BOPS or different sorts of commitments from the BOPS.

**4. Location of next meeting (June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2017, 6PM): City Hall, Levi Lincoln Chamber**

The next Commission meeting will be a dual event, including the Critical Media Literacy training and a showing of the film Loving. Commissioner Curran will be resigning as Human Rights Commissioner after this month's meeting.

**5. Public comment (3 minutes per individual):**

**6. Adjournment at 8:08pm**