

MINUTES
 LPRAC Regular Commission Meeting
 July 15, 2015
 Spanish Community of Wallingford
 5:30 p.m.

DRAFT

Commissioners Present:	Ramón L. Arroyo, Yolanda Castillo, Migdalia Castro, Richard A. Cruz, Ana González, Jay González, George Hernández, Dr. Ruby O'Neill, Emanuela Palmares Leaf, Dr. Agnes Quiñones, Rubén Rodríguez, Dr. Eugene M. Salorio Christian Soto, Pablo Soto, and Elena Trueworthy, M.S.
Commissioners Absent:	Feny Taylor and Danny Torres
Staff:	Werner Oyanadel, Executive Director, Orlando Rodríguez, Associate Commission Analyst Clarisa Cardone, Administrative Assistant Not present: Lucia Goicoechea-Hernandez

Tape 1 A

Chairman Cruz, Chairman thanked Maria Harlow, Director of the Spanish Community of Wallingford (SCOW) for their warm welcome to the City of Wallingford. He also thanked CT-N for their participation and for broadcasting LPRAC's outreach public meeting. He then asked Commissioner Palmares-Leaf to do the roll call. Quorum was established.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made to approve the minutes of June 17, 2015 by Commissioner Hernández and seconded by Commissioner Trueworthy. Motion was adopted by voice vote with one abstention from Commissioner Castillo.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Maria Harlow, Director thanked LPRAC on behalf of everyone at the Spanish Community of Wallingford (SCOW) for being there and also thanked all public officials and legislators. She then announced that there will be a performance by Mariachi students of SCOW to welcome LPRAC to their community agency. After they performed she said that half of her funding comes from the State and would appreciate it if LPRAC advocate on their behalf and all other Latino Agencies. She also said that the building that they are in was an in-kind contribution by the town. She also pointed out the presence of an artist who was invited to show his artistic photographs. The work is from Luis Luna, from trips he took in large part from Ecuador.

Chairman Cruz then introduced Mayor Dickinson of Wallingford who welcomed LPRAC to Wallingford. He spoke about their Latino community and how SCOW helps them with childcare, music and the STEM programs. Next the following people spoke to everyone:

1. **Dr. Salvatore Menzo**, Superintendent in charge of Global Awareness. He said that they have part-time interpreters now and Maria Harlow helps us occasionally. The challenge throughout the school district is the funding to support our programs. He said through the help of the People Empowering People program out at UCONN, and we had 11 parents involved in that program and there were seven nationalities in that group. They brought students to China; also they have a partnership with Argentina and Germany and will be going there as well. They have 5 full-time bilingual teachers, and 3 or 4 EL teachers. He also pointed out that there are no Latinos serving on the Board of Education in town.
2. **Senator Len Fasano** thanked LPRAC for coming to Wallingford. One of the things that he has done as a new Republican Senate Leader is to open up conversations with more stakeholders in a bi-partisan way. He worked with the Minority Caucus this session on the Excessive Force Bill and the Second Chance Bill. We have to make sure we see where the money goes to the leader of the communities for the best quality education.

Tape 1 B

3. **Laura Juarez**, Adelante America Youth Leadership Program. It is a valuable program for the community as it helps you get financial aid, get ready for a job, etc.
4. **Antonio Pacheco** – spoke in support of a local program entitled STEM (an acronym for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math Education). In his testimony to LPRAC he testified that it has helped him greatly. He started last summer and he got really positively attached to the program. As a matter of fact it helped him find a great job!

Commissioner Ana González asked if he is currently in High School and if the program STEM is inspiring him to pursue one of the STEM careers.

Antonio Pacheco answered that he is a senior next year and because of the program know wants to be an Engineer.

Commissioner Rodríguez said that his son is also in a STEM type of program. He applauded him for being for speaking up.

5. **Dr. Evelyn Robles, Ph.D.**, Principal at Worthington Hooker School and is also part of the Board of SCOW. They struggle to find certified bilingual and ESL teachers. They have less and less resources. She wants LPRAC to advocate for the State of CT to take a look at the certification program for bilingual and ESL teachers. Bilingual teachers need to have a dual certification which is currently very difficult.
6. **Camila Rubino, R.N., MSN**, Application Analyst, Ambulatory Team, Care Connect, Hartford Healthcare. LPRAC should advocate for employer based incentives in giving employees tuition reimbursement, Board member of SCOW.

Chairman Cruz said that he has been in Respiratory Care for 29 years in the Emergency Room. Please continue to keep working as you do.

7. **Dr. Francisco Lopez, Ph.D.**, Clinical Psychologist in Forensic Evaluator spoke next. He was born in Puerto Rico and parents are from the Dominican Republic. He is on the Board of SCOW.
8. **Avery Gaddis**, Director of Urban Affairs for Senator Fasano in the Senate Republican Office. He saw all the great behind the scenes legislative work that LPRAC staff performed at the State Capitol and at the LOB during the last legislative session; He indicated that the legislature needs that type of good advocacy and encouraged the member of the board of LPRAC to continue to do such good work and extended an invitation to everyone to seek his help in the near future.
9. **Chief William J. Wright**, Wallingford's Chief of Police welcomed LPRAC to their community. Their agency enjoys a very warm relationship with the local Latino community and certainly commended all the hard work that Maria Harlow does on their behalf. Maria Harlow, he indicated, has helped tremendously on a number of local projects and therefore he urged LPRAC to continue to push lawmakers to grant SCOW the resources they need to continue to function in their community.

Commissioner Castillo asked how many police officers in town are Latinos.

Chief Wright responded that there are currently 4 Latino Officers and a dozen that are bilingual (i.e., Spanish, German, Polish, French and Russian). They are very much diverse.

Commissioner Rodríguez commented that recent data seem to show that there isn't racial profiling taking place in Wallingford opposed to other locations in Connecticut and asked how do they improved that situation?

Chief Wright responded that training is very important. In addition, he spoke about his efforts to recognize diversity in their police force. All of which has taken place for decades. He also indicated that he monitors very closely all his officers for years and are much for equality for all.

Commissioner Arroyo asked about the numbers of employees that are policemen in Wallingford.

Chief Wright replied that there are 70 sworn and 26 support civilian/staff.

Commissioner Hernández said that we will reach out to the chief to see what they are doing to reach across to other communities.

Maria Harlow acknowledged that they never had any complaints of police brutality.

Commissioner Chris Soto asked why she said this is a sensitive issue.

Maria Harlow replied that according to the last census 2010, it is about 18%, 4,700 individuals, they serve 1,500 Latinos and there are a lot of Latinos that we do not serve. Fortunately, SCOW has been around for 43 years. 80% of their community is Mexican. They work very closely with all agencies but they need more funding to really cover all the growing issues impacting their community.

Tape 2 A

10. **Steve Knight** of the Spanish Community of Wallingford said that they are honored to have LPRAC and thanked them for all that they have done. The Mayor and Town Council support SCOW and their community. Please remember that these agencies like SCOW provide a tremendous education component to their local youth.
11. **Town Councilman – Bob Parisi** said that they have a great Board of Directors in SCOW. We get out there and make it happen but it is very stressful. It will be nice to get a donation.
12. **John Sullivan**, Councilman said that we need to invest in our Latino community. Maria has brought everyone together. He is not a Latino and works for AT&T. We need change in Hartford, these agencies need funding to better help their growing needs. We need you to advocate for us.
13. **Larry Russo**, Councilman for the first year said that SCOW is such a great organization and Maria does such a great job. He echoes what Mr. Sullivan says.

Chairman Cruz announced that at the Capitol, we used to have a “Latino Advocacy Day”. The person who ran this is not longer in the Legislature but LPRAC should bring it back.

14. **Ms. Daisy Lopez** – an 18 year old student attending UCONN. She has been coming to SCOW since she was little, after she attended the summer program, then volunteered getting more and more involved and then took guitar lessons. Then she got involved with the Mariachis and played at the Shubert Theatre and at the State Capitol for very important people. It has kept her connected with her roots that she probably would have lost.
15. **Luis Luna**, Artist said that Maria Harlow asked him to bring his exhibition to your meeting. He works with SCOW with interpretation and transportation. He is very proud to help the Latino community through SCOW.

CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT

Motion made to table the Chairperson’s report, the Executive Director’s report and all reports with a friendly amendment to reflect that we will have Mr. Rodríguez speak through the Priorities and Legislation Committee to summarize the Legislative Wrap-Up report by Commissioner Arroyo and seconded by Commissioner Rodríguez. Motion was adopted by voice vote.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Tabled

PUBLIC INFORMATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Tabled

PRIORITIES & LEGISLATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Commissioner Quiñones, Chair of this Committee gave the floor to Mr. Rodríguez for a short Wrap-Up Report.

Mr. Rodríguez is pleased to report that many of our agency’s 2015 legislative priorities were achieved this legislative session. Roughly \$35 million in additional contracts were set aside for minority businesses. A long-awaited state-approved apprenticeship program for barbering was enacted. Labor laws were extended to domestic workers and more severe penalties were enacted for employers that fail to pay their employees the legal wage. A new program for housing mobility aims to improve access to communities with good schools and low crime for low-income households. Major legislative reforms were enacted with the aim of improving K-12 education outcomes for English Language Learners (ELLs). An additional \$11 million in state education funding was targeted at towns with the largest Latino populations. Legislation was passed that should result in fewer in-school juvenile arrests. New truancy courts will operate in urban school districts to reduce chronic absenteeism. Funding for pregnancy prevention programs was restored. Hospitals are now required to provide medical interpreters when they are located in areas where foreign languages are more commonly spoken. Unexpectedly, legislators reduced criminal penalties for drug possession and required more training for police officers with the aim of reducing the excessive use of force by police.

Commissioner Salorio congratulated the Chair of the Priorities and Legislation Committee, Commissioner Quiñones, Executive Director Oyanadel, and Staff, and especially Mr. Rodríguez for great legislative year.

Dr. Quiñones also recognized the efforts of Mr. Rodríguez for all of his research and work.

Commissioner Castillo congratulated the Chair of the Legislative Committee and that we all serve here as members of this Committee and our job is not to do legislation but to support that legislation that will help our Latino community throughout the state. We work and advocate for those issues and then we work with the Legislators to help us push these issues. We welcome you to come to us when there is an issue that maybe we can help you to advocate so we can push at the Legislature so we can make that policy happen.

Chairman Cruz said that LPRAC is a commission of 21 members and if anyone would like to become one of our members, they must contact their Legislator. We will always welcome new commissioners.

Commissioner O'Neill thanked Mrs. Cardone for all her work in getting the commission meetings ready including the packets.

Mrs. Cardone thanked everyone very much.

Mr. Oyanadel spoke about the Emergency Communication report that is in everyone's packet. Mr. Oyanadel indicated that if Connecticut's Spanish-speaking population is to be sufficiently informed of critical information related to a natural disaster or similar emergency occurring in Connecticut, state government needs to do more to ensure information is delivered promptly and accurately. In the report LPRAC highlighted the results of a series of fact-finding hearings that outlined a series of steps that should be taken. The fact-finding initiative was prompted by Hurricane Sandy in 2012, and anecdotal evidence that the way in which official government emergency information is conveyed to residents who do not understand English, was not as robust as it needs to be to ensure public safety.

Motion made to accept the Emergency Communications report by Commissioner Ana González and seconded by Commissioner Hernández. Motion was adopted by voice vote.

SPECIAL PROJECTS COMMITTEE REPORT

Commissioner Castillo reported that the Awards Selection Committee met on Monday, July 13, 2015 at 5:30 p.m. The members were Commissioners Castillo, Dr. O'Neill, Dr. Quiñones and Rodríguez. The Awardees are in a one page report and we would like to have the recommendations accepted.

Motion made to approve the Special Projects Committee recommendations by Commissioner Chris Soto and seconded by Commissioner Rodríguez. Motion was adopted by voice vote as follows:

1 Nay: Commissioner Dr. O'Neill

3 Abstentions: Commissioners Arroyo, Rodríguez and Pablo Soto

OLD & NEW BUSINESS

Motion made to accept the Legislative Wrap-up report by Commissioner Hernández and seconded by Commissioner Trueworthy. Motion was adopted by voice vote.

Commissioner Salorio reminded everyone that the next meeting is in Stamford and he would like to have many people attend there as well. He also wants to invite Governor Malloy as he was a former Mayor of Stamford.

Motion made to adjourn at 7:45 p.m. by Commissioner Arroyo and seconded by Commissioner Castillo. Motion was adopted by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted by,

Emanuela Palmares Leaf
Secretary
LPRAC Board

EPL:ejc