

## Lowell Immigration Assistance Commission

### Meeting Minutes

April 8, 2013

Present: Ben T. Opara, Chair; Rev. Cecilio Hernandez; Donna McIntosh; Elinor Mondale; Joseph Varnie; Way Sai Tyi.

Absent were: Maria Cunha (family); Robert Gignac (health); Kate Lessard (sick); Vesna Nuon.

Chairman Opara called the meeting to order and asked for approval of the minutes of the last meeting. The minutes were accepted with the addition of Vesna Nuon to the list of those absent.

Rev. Hernandez offered some thoughts about his hopes for our future accomplishments and then a visitor was introduced.

The visitor was Aaron Clausen, Associate Planner from the Department of Planning and Development of the City of Lowell. He explained that the project review team works with developers in order to do long range planning as well as day-to-day planning. Their current concern is use of the open spaces in the city. The plan was extremely comprehensive and includes history, environmental issues, and livability.

The Master Plan has been titled "Sustainable Lowell 2025" and they made especial efforts to include young people in the planning process. The document was approved on March 26 and is available on the city web page. There are a very limited number of copies on paper.

A question was asked about the new rental inspections and it was explained that this is not part of the Plan but is in a city ordinance. The ordinance requires rentals to be inspected every three years, mainly for safety, and can be seen on the city web page [www.lowell.gov](http://www.lowell.gov). Click on "hottopics" and then "public opinion report".

Ben Opara then said that there are one or two new applicants applying to be on the Commission and that he has been trying to discover whether the Commission has any funds to work with. He requested that a link to the Commission be put on the city website.

It was decided that the next focus of the Commission would be focus groups in the various ethnic communities.

The next meeting is scheduled for May 6, 2013 at 5:30.

Submitted by,

Elinor Mondale