

CITY OF CRANSTON

Cranston Census Complete Count Committee

Organizational Meeting of October 29, 2019 – APPROVED MINUTES

The Cranston Census Complete Count Committee met to organize on October 29, 2019, in a meeting advertised in accordance with the Rhode Island Open Meetings Act on October 24, 2019. The meeting was called to order by the Chairperson, Edward Garcia, at 1:01 p.m. It was held in the Third Floor Conference Room at Cranston City Hall.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Edward Garcia (Chair – Cranston Public Library), Nicholas Lima (Recording Secretary – Canvassing Dept.), John Psilopoulos (Administration), Joanne McGunagle (CCAP), Robert Coupe (Cranston Housing Authority), Cpt. Carl Ricci (Cranston Police), Chief Stephen MacIntosh (Fire Dept.), Maria Giarrusso (GIS Manager), Christine Fera (Senior Enrichment Center, for Jeffrey Barone), Drew Pflaumer (Planning Dept.), Norma Cole (School Dept.)

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

NON-MEMBERS PRESENT: None

The chair declared a quorum present.

AGENDA

- I. CALL TO ORDER
- II. CHAIRPERSON'S WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS – EDWARD GARCIA
- III. NEW BUSINESS
 - A. THE COMMITTEE MAY DISCUSS THE 2020 CENSUS AND THE CHALLENGES THE CENSUS BUREAU FACES IN ESTABLISHING AN ACCURATE, COMPLETE COUNT OF CRANSTON RESIDENTS
 - B. THE COMMITTEE MAY DISCUSS AND REVIEW ACTIONS TAKEN TO DATE BY THE CITY IN PREPARATION FOR THE 2020 CENSUS
 - C. THE COMMITTEE MAY DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION ON DEFINING THE COMPLETE COUNT COMMITTEE'S MISSION AND OBJECTIVES
 - D. THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS MAY DISCUSS THEIR RESPECTIVE DEPARTMENTS' ROLES IN ASSISTING WITH CENSUS COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND BEGIN TO FORMULATE A COORDINATED ACTION PLAN
 - E. THE COMMITTEE MAY DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION ON THE RHODE ISLAND FOUNDATION CENSUS OUTREACH GRANT
 - F. THE COMMITTEE MAY SCHEDULE ITS FUTURE MEETINGS
- IV. ADJOURNMENT

CHAIRPERSON'S WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS – EDWARD GARCIA

Mr. Garcia introduced himself and welcomed the members to the organizational meeting of the Cranston Census Complete Count Committee. The members of the Committee introduced themselves. Mr. Lima said he volunteered to be Recording Secretary.

NEW BUSINESS

A. THE COMMITTEE MAY DISCUSS THE 2020 CENSUS AND THE CHALLENGES THE CENSUS BUREAU FACES IN ESTABLISHING AN ACCURATE, COMPLETE COUNT OF CRANSTON RESIDENTS

Mr. Garcia distributed a packet of Census information given to the Committee by the Census Bureau's local outreach partnership specialist, Deborah Smith. The Committee discussed the information and the federal funding that is attached to Census data, highlighting the importance of an accurate, complete count of the city's population, and how that funding affects services used by residents. Mr. Pflaumer noted a large chunk of federal dollars disbursed based on Census data go to the state, and it's difficult to break down what municipalities receive from that. The members likewise noted that a portion goes to support educational programs at various levels. Ms. McGunagle added that a large number of programs related to CCAP's work use federal dollars.

B. THE COMMITTEE MAY DISCUSS AND REVIEW ACTIONS TAKEN TO DATE BY THE CITY IN PREPARATION FOR THE 2020 CENSUS

Mr. Lima said the upcoming redistricting process is entirely reliant on accurate Census data, and that the Census Bureau does not have a great handle on where residents who live along boundaries should be counted, creating the possibility of a miscount. He said Ms. Giarrusso has done extensive work for several years to ensure the Census Bureau has the most up-to-date data possible for the city.

Ms. Giarrusso provided the Committee with maps of hard-to-count tracts in the city as identified by the Census Bureau, which primarily focus along areas of the Providence boundary in Wards 1, 2, and 3. Mr. Garcia said some communications from the Committee should be targeted to the whole city, but a lot of the focus of the Committee's work will be in these identified hard-to-count areas. Mr. Garcia discussed some additional work the Cranston Public Library system has done to partner with and promote the Census. Ms. McGunagle said CCAP has sent out mailings and has done other forms of outreach.

C. THE COMMITTEE MAY DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION ON DEFINING THE COMPLETE COUNT COMMITTEE'S MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

Mr. Psilopoulos asked for clarification on the type of outreach the Committee should be doing and how targeted it should be. Mr. Garcia said the focus should be on altering residents of hard-to-count areas about the Census and encouraging them to respond. Discussion ensued.

D. THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS MAY DISCUSS THEIR RESPECTIVE DEPARTMENTS' ROLES IN ASSISTING WITH CENSUS COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND BEGIN TO FORMULATE A COORDINATED ACTION PLAN

Mr. Garcia said some the roles of individual departments has already been covered in the Committee's discussions today, but asked if there were other groups who should be at the table. Mr. Psilopoulos said that, from the city's perspective, all of the departments that could have a role or feedback for the Committee's work are present. Mr. Garcia said the YMCA and faith-based organizations are some community entities that could be communicated with by the Committee when the time comes for more outreach about the 2020 Census.

Mr. Garcia said the Rhode Island Complete Count Committee is supposed to be producing marketing materials for coordinated Census messaging, and expects to have those materials or templates in early 2020. Mr. Psilopoulos said the city's new website and social media accounts can be leveraged to help in outreach, although he cautioned a challenge remains in conducting outreach for residents who don't have regular computer access.

Discussion ensued. The Committee members suggested various ideas for mailers and outreach the City could do, particularly at low or no cost, such as attaching Census information to existing mailings to residents. It was determined that, in most cases, it wouldn't make sense to do so, given the content and timing of most of those mailings being after the Census field work is complete. Mr. Coupe said he could put up fliers about the Census in the buildings run by the Cranston Housing Authority.

Mr. Lima noted that the Johnson & Wales University campus is a group quarters, and Ms. Giarrusso said they have a special counting procedure with the Census Bureau. She said that the city participated in the LUCA and Block Boundary Suggestion programs over the last several years to help improve Census data for 2020.

E. THE COMMITTEE MAY DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION ON THE RHODE ISLAND FOUNDATION CENSUS OUTREACH GRANT

Mr. Garcia asked the Committee if it would be a good idea to hold some type of event or events to promote the Census. He noted that the Rhode Island Foundation has offered grant funding for groups who plan to do Census outreach of this type, and he plans to attend an upcoming meeting on how to apply for that funding. Ms. Cole said the School Department may be able to provide an event space. Discussion focused on what weekdays and weekends near Census Day 2020 would be best to hold a publicized event, depending on whether there's funding available from grants to cover staffing costs. The Committee members said holding events at locations where the public can access a computer to complete the Census online would be ideal. The YMCA, Pastore Youth Center, City Hall, CCAP, libraries, and various schools were mentioned as possible event locations to consider.

Mr. Garcia asked whether there are any elections mailers coming up, and Mr. Lima said there likely won't be one from the Canvassing Department until next October when the charter and bond referenda mailing goes out. Ms. Fera mentioned the several hundred

residents who are on the holiday meal program for Thanksgiving and Christmas, and Mr. Coupe added the state Complete Count Committee could assist in getting fliers to Meals on Wheels programs. Cpt. Ricci said the Police Dept. could assist with a post on their social media pages. The Committee discussed what social media assets and newsletters the departments present had access to that could be leveraged to promote the Census. Ms. Fera mentioned the Senior Enrichment Center's television local access show as another possibility.

Mr. Psilopoulos said determining contacts with faith-based groups will help with messaging to the broader community, particularly those based in the hard-to-count areas. Mr. Garcia said an effort will be made to reach out to them.

Mr. Garcia said the RI Foundation grant funding can be used in part to fund an outreach campaign, such as for a mailing or equipment that could be used at a Census promotional event. He said he will attend the grant's upcoming informational session and find out more information on what types of expenditures would be covered.

F. THE COMMITTEE MAY SCHEDULE ITS FUTURE MEETINGS

Mr. Garcia said he and some of the members have individual research and tasks to pursue before reporting back to the Committee, so it will not be necessary to formally meet again until December or January to discuss an action plan. Mr. Lima said he will assist Mr. Garcia in compiling meeting notices and minutes.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Mr. Garcia asked for unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting.
PASSED WITHOUT OBJECTION

The meeting was adjourned at 1:58 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nicholas J. Lima
Recorder

APPROVED by the Cranston Census Complete Count Committee: January 15, 2020