

Cape Verdean Commission — Preliminary Meeting Minutes

Date: October 14th, 2025

Time: 12:00–1:00 PM ET

Format: Virtual - Microsoft Teams

1) Call to Order & Recording

- Meeting opened at 12:00 PM by Sen. Liz Miranda; Rashelle Centeio (Sen. Miranda's office) initiated recording and facilitated logistics.

2) Roll Call / Attendance

Legislative appointees (present unless noted):

- **Sen. Liz Miranda** (Senate President appointee) — Present
- **Sen. Dylan Fernandes** (Senate President appointee) — Present
- **Sen. Michael D. Brady** — Absent
- **Sen. Patrick O'Connor** (Minority Leader appointee) — Absent
- **Rep. David T. Vieira** — Present
- **Rep. Kip Diggs** — Present
- **Rep. Antonio (Tony) Cabral** — Present
- **Rep. Rita Mendes** — Absent

Executive appointees:

- **Governor's Appointee: Monica Veiga** — Present (UMass Boston institute staff; adjunct professor)
- **City of Boston (Mayor's) Appointee: Manuel (Manuel) Lopes** — Absent

Legislative Staff:

- Rashelle Centeio (Senator Liz Miranda)
- Irondina Abreu (Representative Antonio Cabral)
- Gregory Denton (Senator Patrick O' Connor)
- Matthew Connolly (Senator Dylan Fernandes)

Quorum: Reached for purposes of discussion and actions recorded below.

3) Opening Context & Mandate

- **History:** Seven-year effort originating in the House (initially advanced by former Rep. Evandro Carvalho; early bond-bill earmark).

- **Purpose:** Statutory **feasibility study** for establishing a **Massachusetts Cabo Verdean Cultural Center** in **Boston**.
- **Funding:** Seed appropriation referenced (approx. **\$75,000–\$100,000**; exact figure to be confirmed).
- **Timeline:** Aim to produce a **report within one year**; meet **monthly or quarterly** (to be set).
- **Commonwealth-wide lens:** While sited in Boston, the Center is envisioned as a statewide hub with strong ties to New Bedford, Cape Cod/Falmouth, Brockton, Taunton, etc. Parallel cultural-center efforts in **New Bedford** noted.

4) Membership Structure (per statute)

- **Voting members:**
 - 3 Senators (Senate President appointees; districts with significant Cape Verdean population)
 - 1 Senator (Senate Minority Leader appointee)
 - 3 Representatives (Speaker appointees; districts with significant Cape Verdean population)
 - 1 Representative (House Minority Leader appointee)
 - 1 Mayor of Boston appointee
 - 1 Governor appointee
- **Leadership:** Commission **elects 2 co-chairs** from among members.
- **Expansion:** With majority approval, co-chairs may add **up to 15 additional members** (residing in/representing municipalities with significant Cape Verdean residents/heritage).

5) Discussion — Leadership (Co-Chairs)

- **Options discussed:**
 1. **Legislative co-chairs** (one House + one Senate).
 2. **Executive appointee co-chairs** (Governor + Mayor appointees).
 3. **Hybrid** (one legislator + one executive appointee).
- **Open Meeting Law/process:** Rep. **Cabral** emphasized adherence to public-meeting procedures (posting, agendas, minutes). Offered some **staff support** from his office to help with compliance and coordination.
- **Interest:** Rep. **Diggs** expressed interest but flagged capacity limits; open to robust participation even if not serving as co-chair. **Monica Veiga** open to a hybrid model.

6) Composition Priorities for Additional Members

- Seek breadth across **arts, culture, music, education, history, community building, philanthropy**, and **building/development** expertise.
- Prioritize **Boston** affiliation and ensure **regional** and **gender** diversity.

- Consider forming an **external advisory group** of presidents/leads from Cape Verdean associations statewide to ensure broad input without over-weighting membership.

7) Materials Shared

- Link to [statute](#), [agenda](#), and [preliminary list of suggested commissioners](#) (with mini-bios).
- Request to **email** the list/bios to all members for those who joined while in transit.

8) Motions & Actions

1. **Motion:** Reconvene in **two weeks** to:
 - Elect **co-chairs** (and potentially **vice-chairs**);
 - Vote on **up to 15 additional members** (after reviewing suggestions and gaps);
2. **Motion to Adjourn:** Seconded and **approved** (voice vote).

9) Action Items

- **All Commissioners:**
 - Review the suggested candidates list + bios; **submit additional names or feedback** (additions/gaps/concerns) to **Rashelle** (rashelle.centeio@masenate.gov) within **5–7 days**.
- **Sen. Miranda's Office:**
 - Email **materials/links** and a **summary** of next steps.
 - Send a **Doodle poll** offering **morning/afternoon/early evening** options (not just lunchtime) to accommodate schedules (per **Monica Veiga** request).
 - **Confirm seed-funding amount** (75k vs. 100k) ahead of next meeting.
- **Rep. Cabral's Office:**
 - Coordinate with other offices to **provide staff support** for open-meeting compliance and logistics.
- **Next Meeting (Target): ~2 weeks from today;** calendar invite forthcoming. Aim to finalize leadership and proceed with appointments so a **full-body meeting** can occur before the late-November delegation trip to Cabo Verde.