Cabo Verdean Cultural Center Commission

Meeting Minutes
Date: Thursday, October 29, 2026
Time: 4:00 PM – 5:00 PM
Location: Microsoft Teams
Recording: https://malegislature.gov/Events/Hearings/Detail/5798

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1. Call to Order & Roll Call

The meeting began with a roll call. A quorum of 13 commissioners was established.

Commissioners Present:

- Senator Liz Miranda- Yes
- Senator Patrick M. O'Connor - No
- Senator Michael D. Brady - Yes
- Senator Dylan A. Fernandes -No
- Representative Antonio F. D. Cabral - Yes
- Representative Kip A. Diggs - Yes
- Representative Rita A. Mendes - Yes
- Representative David T. Vieira - No
- Manuel Lopes - No
- Monica Veiga - Yes
- John Cruz III - Yes
- Senator Virato "Vinny" deMacedo - No
- Angelo Lopes Barbosa - No
- Tanya Lobo - Yes
- Josephine "Djofa" Tavares - Yes
- Dr. Abel Djassi Amado - No
- Representative Evandro Carvalho - Yes
- Barbara Monteiro Burgo - Yes
- Councilor Tina Cardoso - Yes
- Tchintcia Barros - No
- Dina Dray - Yes
- Ana Fidalgo - No
- Jeanne Maria Costa - Yes
- Dr. Aminah Pilgrim - Yes

Staff Present:

- Irondina “Dina” Reis Abreu - Representative Cabral
- Tobias Cowans - Senator Brady
- Rashelle Centeio, Nadia Monteiro - Senator Miranda
- Grigsby Lovaas - Rep Diggs
- Colin Schweitzer - Sen Fernandes

2. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

The Commission reviewed the July 13, 2026 meeting minutes, which included updates on President José Maria Neves' visit, initial subcommittee activities, site visits, and the $125,000 allocated for the Commission's work.

- **Motion:** Councilor Tina Cardoso
- **Second:** Tanya Lobo

A motion to approve the minutes was made and seconded.

3. Site Visit Debrief: Toussaint Louverture Cultural Center

Commissioners reflected on the October 23 site visit to the Toussaint Louverture Cultural Center in Boston and discussed lessons that could inform the development of a Cabo Verdean Cultural Center. The Toussaint Louverture Cultural Center secured a 25-year rent-free lease through a competitive proposal process, along with $50,000 for renovations.

Key Takeaways:

- **Naming and Identity:** Consider naming the center after a prominent Cabo Verdean figure or honoring individuals through designated spaces within the center.
- **Location and Accessibility:** The benefits of a downtown location were discussed, including increased visibility and opportunities to educate broader audiences. Parking and community accessibility remain important considerations.
- **Funding and Sustainability:** Commissioners emphasized the importance of securing substantial initial funding, developing long-term revenue streams, and exploring philanthropic support, bequests, and legacy giving.
- **Organizational Structure:** The center could be supported by a nonprofit organization with a broader mission of connecting Cabo Verdean communities throughout Massachusetts.
- **Programming and Outreach:** A multipurpose space could accommodate exhibitions, educational programming, cultural events, and fundraising activities. Community awareness and engagement will be essential.
- **Long-Term Commitment:** The center's development demonstrated the importance of sustained leadership, partnerships, and commitment over time.

Additional Site Visits: Commissioners discussed arranging visits to Irish, Italian, and Jewish cultural institutions, as well as additional cultural sites in New Bedford. Representative Cabral and Jeanne Maria Costa were asked to assist with coordinating a New Bedford visit, potentially on a Saturday in November.

4. Commission Timeline and Legislative Updates

Senator Miranda provided an update on efforts to extend the Commission's reporting deadline from December 31, 2026, to December 31, 2027, through an amendment to an upcoming supplemental budget.
The extension would provide additional time to conduct site visits, organize community listening sessions, and complete the feasibility report.
The Senator also discussed reviewing Commission membership and addressing vacancies or continued nonparticipation. Updates will be shared following legislative action.

5. Subcommittee Updates

Communications & Outreach

The subcommittee continues developing outreach materials, including an informational flyer and the Commission's social media presence.

- Instagram: @CaboVerdeanccc
- Linktree: Cabo Verdean Cultural Center

Commissioners were reminded to submit their biographies and headshots and join the Commission's WhatsApp group.

Senator Miranda also discussed the need for legislative staff or elected official involvement in managing official Commission communications to ensure appropriate oversight.

Survey & Data Collection

The subcommittee presented an updated community survey designed to gather public input on the proposed cultural center.

An introductory description was added to provide respondents with background information on the Commission and the survey's purpose.

- **Motion to approve the survey:** Jeanne Maria Costa
- **Second:** Representative Kip Diggs

A motion was made and seconded to approve the survey for distribution.

Organizational Development

The subcommittee is developing a master document outlining five areas of work:

1. Potential locations for the cultural center.
2. Establishment of a nonprofit organization.
3. Naming options for the center.
4. Funding opportunities and a potential feasibility study RFP.
5. Opportunities to engage existing Cabo Verdean organizations in advisory or supporting roles.

Naming Discussion: Commissioners discussed several possible names, including variations of the Cabo Verdean Cultural Center of Massachusetts and the Cabo Verdean Cultural Center and Museum.

Additional suggestions included honoring prominent Cabo Verdean historical figures, considering names that represent the broader community, and distinguishing between the nonprofit's legal name and the center's public name.

The subcommittee will prepare a document with proposed names and supporting explanations for commissioners to review before a future meeting. Any formal naming decision will be made during a Commission meeting in accordance with Open Meeting Law requirements.

The subcommittee is also exploring an RFP for a feasibility study while preserving available funding for listening sessions and other Commission activities.

History & Culture

The subcommittee discussed developing a mission statement that reflects the preservation, celebration, and education of Cabo Verdean history and culture.
A preliminary draft has been developed and will be shared with the Commission for further discussion.

6. New Business & Public Comment

Commissioners were encouraged to share upcoming community events for inclusion in future meeting agendas and communications.

Upcoming Events:

- **October 13 – November 17:** Songs, Sounds, and Rhythms of Cabo Verde, New Bedford.
- **October 22 – November 6:** Cabo Verdean Dance Through the Decades, Zeiterion, New Bedford.
- **October 30:** Project Health CV Annual Fundraising Gala, UMass Club Boston.
- **November 1:** Miss Universe Cabo Verde Send-Off Brunch, Restaurante Cesaria, Boston, 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM.
- **November 12:** 3rd Annual Cabo Verdean 40 Under 40 Gala Mérito, Venezia Waterfront Restaurant & Ballroom, Boston, 7:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- **November 14:** Cabo Verdean Veterans Association 80th Anniversary Celebration, Verdean Veterans Memorial Hall (Cape Verdean Vets Hall), 561 Purchase St., New Bedford, MA 02740, 6:00 PM to Midnight

7. Adjournment

With no additional business, a motion to adjourn was made.

- **Motion:** Representative Evandro Carvalho
- **Second:** Dina Dray

The meeting adjourned at approximately 5:00 PM.