

**How Can Cambridge Help Refugees?
Neighborhood and Long Term Planning,
Public Facilities, Art, and Celebrations Committee Meeting**

Tuesday, October 20th, 2015
Sullivan Chamber, Cambridge City Hall

Agenda

6:00 - Introduction by Councillor Mazen and other Councillors

6:15 - Comments from Brian Corr Director of Peace Commission

6:25 - Public comment

6:40 - Valerie Vande Panne - *Director of Communications for Massachusetts*

Immigration and Refugee Action Coalition

6:50 - Malika MacDonald-Rushdan - *Director of ICNA Relief MA Field Office and*

National Coordinator for Refugee Services

7:00 - Comment from other organizations in attendance

7:10 - Councillor and Group Discussion

7:30 - Meeting Adjourns

Attachment B

THANK YOU MR. CHAIRMAN. MY NAME IS EMMANUEL ENRICO JOSEPH LUSARDI. I LIVE AT 15 LAMBERT STREET APARTMENT 406, IN E. CAMBRIDGE.

I'M HERE TO TELL A STORY OF ONE IMMIGRANT. MY FATHER, ANTHONY ROCCO LUSARDI. LIKE THE SYRIAN REFUGEE'S TODAY DESPERATELY ESCAPING WAR. MY FATHER CAME TO THIS COUNTRY FROM WAR TORN EUROPE 100 YEARS AGO THIS PAST SPRING. TO ESCAPE FORCED CONSCRIPTION BY THE ITALIAN ARMY. MY FATHER WAS 12 YEARS OLD, PLACED ON A SHIP ALL ALONE TO A COUNTRY HE'D NEVER BEEN, TO LIVE IN THE UNITED STATES WITH FAMILY FRIENDS HE'D NEVER MET. MY UNCLES & GRAND PARENTS CAME TO AMERICA AFTER WWI ENDED.

ALL THROUGH MY CHILDHOOD MY FATHER TOLD MY BROTHERS AND I OF THE STORIES OF HARDSHIP, RACISM & HATRED FELT BY ITALIAN AMERICAN IMMIGRANTS EARLY IN THE LAST CENTURY. STORIES VERY SIMILAR TO WHAT THE REFUGEE'S ARE HEARING AND DEALING WITH TODAY. MY FATHER ALWAYS EMPHASIZED HOW LUCKY WE WERE TO LIVE IN A COUNTRY LIKE THE UNITED STATES.

FROM THAT ONE 12 YEAR OLD IMMIGRANT CAME: A ROCKET SCIENTIST WORKING WITH NASA, A MATH TEACHER WHO TEACHES AT ONE OF THE TOUGHEST AREAS IN THE BRONX, NY, A RETAIL EXECUTIVE (MYSELF) WHO HELPED RUN A SMALL CHAIN OF STORES WHO WAS FORCED TO RETIRE EARLY DUE TO ILLNESS, EMPLOYING HUNDREDS OF AMERICANS. A FAMOUS ITALIAN RESTAURANT NAMED AFTER MY FAMILY IN NEW YORK CITY STILL OPEN TODAY, ONE OF THE LARGEST CONSTRUCTION FIRMS OUT WEST EMPLOYING HUNDREDS OF AMERICANS.

WHILE I AM PROUD OF MY FAMILY AND MY ITALIAN AMERICAN HERITAGE. IF THE SAME NATIONAL & LOCAL FIGURES TODAY WHO ARE SPEAKING OUT AGAINST HELPING THE SYRIAN REFUGEES WERE AROUND DURING THE TIME MY FATHER CAME TO AMERICA, ESCAPING THE SAME HORRORS THE REFUGEE'S ARE FACING TODAY. NOT ONE OF MY FAMILY MEMBERS WOULD BE AROUND TO ADD TO THE SUCCESS OF THIS NATION. ALL FROM ONE 12 YEAR OLD IMMIGRANT ESCAPING WAR.

I AM PROUD OF LIVING IN CAMBRIDGE. A CITY OF MANY FIRST'S. FIRST CITY TO LEGALIZE SAME SEX MARRIAGE, ONE OF THE FIRST TO BE A SANCTUARY CITY HELPING TO PROTECT UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS. WHILE CAMBRIDGE IS NOT ONE OF THE LARGEST CITIES IN AMERICA. RANKED 264TH BY POPULATION, LAST TIME I CHECKED. WE ARE ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT CITIES IN AMERICA. CAMBRIDGE OFTEN HELPS STEER NATIONAL POLICY AND OPINION.

THERE ARE PRACTICLE REASONS TO HELP SUPPORT BRINGING REFUGEE'S ESCAPING WAR TO AMERICA. WHEN SOCIAL ENTITLEMENT PROGRAMS BEGAN UNDER PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT. THERE WERE 43 WORKERS FOR EVERY RETIRED CITIZEN. TODAY IT'S 3 WORKERS FOR EVERY RETIRED PERSON.

AS A CITIZEN OF CAMBRIDGE, I WOULD PERSONALLY VOLUNTEER TO HELP MENTOR AND HELP REFUGEES ASSIMILATE TO AMERICAN LIFE. CAMBRIDGE OWES THE REFUGEE'S THE SAME HELP MANY OF OUR ANCESTORS & FAMILY RECEIVED LONG AGO.