



Seattle Immigrant and Refugee Commission
April 3rd, 2012, 6:00-7:50 PM
City Hall, Boards and Commissions Room-L280

Meeting Minutes

- Commissioners Present:** Devon Abdallah, , Cherry Cayabyab, Shree Ram Dahal, Michael Neguse, Tsegaba Woldhaimanot, Pradeepta Upadhyay, Mohamed Sheikh Hassan
- Commissioners Absent:** Andrea Caupain, Leno Rose-Avila, Yasemin San (resigned)
- Commissioners by Phone:** Jesus Rodriguez, Ashraf Alazadi, Bincy Jacob
- SOCR Staff Present:** Julie Nelson, Ron Ramp
- Guest Speakers:** Emily Murphy, Tenants Union of Washington
- Call to Order:** Call to order at 6:00 PM
- Approval of Minutes:** March minutes approved

SOCR Report; Julie Nelson, Director

Julie Spoke about the draft rules for the paid sick leave ordinance. Julie advised of two upcoming community events, April 12th at the Bertha Landis room, and April 17th in the afternoon at the 2100 Building (Tree House). The rules will affect employers and employees. This ordinance will impact a large part of Seattle's population, and many employers outside the city.

Julie discussed the new Seattle breast feeding ordinance guided by the Seattle Women's Commission. The ordinance is similar to the current Washington State law. It protects breast feeding women in public from being asked to move or cover up.

Julie fielded a question about the LGBT commission and their decision to cancel an event. The event was hosting leaders from the LGBT community in Israel. Julie discussed the background of the issues, the various reactions, and the outcome of the situation.

Healthy Homes Ordinance; Emily Murphy, Washington Tenants Union

Emily Murphy with the Washington Tenants Union gave a presentation about the Healthy Homes Ordinance. It is estimated that approximately 13% of Seattle housing is sub-standard. She mentioned this disproportionately affects Seattle's immigrant and refugee population. The current code compliance system is complaint based. It is known this type of system is problematic for the Immigrant and Refugee

population. They are much less likely to file complaints with DPD than their white counterparts. The reasons can include immigration status, language barriers, fear of retaliation, etc.

A placeholder ordinance was passed 2010 by the city council. Since then stakeholders have been working out the details of a new ordinance. The primary changes will be licensing rental properties, and adding an inspection component. The idea of random sample inspections or inspecting every unit is currently being discussed. The Washington Tenants Union supports inspecting every unit. It is felt to get a true picture of Seattle's rental housing stock every unit must be inspected. The ask from the commission is a letter of support for the healthy homes ordinance.

Jesus requested the commission's support on federal legislation prohibiting racial profiling. Motion passed.

Devon proposed the commission write a letter supporting the healthy homes ordinance. Motion passed. Devon will draft a letter to Diane Sugimara, Director DPD.

Committee Reports

OI Update/Director Selection (covered in this agenda item)

Interviews were conducted this week for the Director's position. The mayor will make the final decision from the candidates selected by the interview panel. It was noted that the interview panelists are required to adhere to complete confidentiality during the selection process.

The Planning and Development position will be advertised shortly. This step does not need to be held until the Director position is filled. The new Director will likely select the person for this position.

Elevate visibility of Immigrant and Refugee Commission

This group has decided to meet weekly every Friday via phone.

Removed Social networking from work plan, and replaced with "creating a database of organizations"

Cherry is currently working on the list of accomplishments. This is going well; Cherry has located many good supporting documents for the accomplishments. It is expected to be completed by the next regular meeting.

There was a discussion around the work plan items listed for this committee. Background information and clarification was discussed.

Creating Protocols

The job description has been updated, and used for the latest recruitment announcement. This committee is continuing to work on other protocols. Again, if anyone has good examples of protocols please share those with this committee.

Tracking & Responding to Key issues That Affect the Immigrant and Refugee Communities

Michael and Pradeepta will lead the low income housing for refugees work plan item.

A town hall meeting was discussed for the new office. It was noted this is on the work plan, but is not due until December. It was felt this should be moved up closer to the establishment of the new office.

Announcements

Allen Sugiyama announced Asian Pacific Islander Heritage Month Celebration. It will be held Sunday May 6th at Seattle Center. Admission is free; the event will have a wide range of music, food, and cultural displays.

It was mentioned the Nepalese will be celebrated April 14th in Redmond. More details to come via listserv.

Cherry has won a national award called unsung heroes. This was for her amazing work creating the first majority minority congressional district in the State of Washington.

The Meeting Adjourned at 7:50 PM