

# Seattle Immigrant and Refugee Commission

October 7, 6:00-8:00 PM

City Hall, Room 370

## Meeting Minutes

**Commissioners Present:** Michele Ramirez, Shree Ram Dahal, Susana Mercado Alvarado, Tsegaba Woldehaimanot, Roxana Norouzi, Michael Neguse, Dori Cahn, Farhiya Mohamed, Mindy Au, Riddhi Mukhopadhyay, Jeniffer Calleja, Kianoush Naficy, Simon Khin, Mohamed Adan

**Commissioners Absent:** Veasna Adrian Hoy

**Guests:** Patrice Carroll, Ryan Curren, Lily Rehrmann, Emily Kim, Alex Zimmerman, Jorge Baron, Mauricio Vivero, Michele Frix, Rebekah Fletcher

**OIRA Staff Present:** Cuc Vu, Sahar Fathi

**Call to Order:** 6:11 pm

### **Welcome (Co-Chairs, Lily Rehrmann and Emily Kim)-**

The meeting was opened by Shree. The guest speakers were introduced. The minutes for August were moved by Michael and Roxana seconded. The minutes for September were moved by Shree and Michele seconded. Lily and Emily spoke to the Parks District Oversight Committee. Shree put in a motion to nominate Jen as the representative from the Immigrant and Refugee Commission, it was unanimously approved.

### **Director's Report (Cuc)-**

Cuc spoke to the budget allocation put forth by Mayor Murray. If approved, OIRA will have seven employees by 2015. Sahar updated the Commission on the Refugee Women's Institute.

### **Comprehensive Plan (Patrice Carroll and Ryan Curren)-**

The Commission went into executive session for a feedback session on the City's Comprehensive Plan.

### **Immigration Subcommittee: Special Presentation (Jorge Baron, Mauricio Vivero, Michele Frix, Rebekah Fletcher) -**

The Immigration Subcommittee invited the Seattle International Foundation (SIF), the Northwest Immigrant Rights Project (NWIRP), and Kids in Need of Defense (KIND) to present on their current work with unaccompanied minors and to brainstorm what the commission could do to be

supportive of these youth. SIF indicated that they had begun supporting NWIRP to help the unaccompanied minors fleeing from Central America. They asked that the Commission raise awareness and lead a Strong Seattle response. They also have a youth fund that has been launched to focus on the issues that are driving unaccompanied minors to the US. One staff person is a member of the Women's Commission and would like to support work across both commissions. KIND indicated that there are many issues facing these children crossing the border – including gang violence, trafficking, and extreme poverty. There was an explanation of the process that the children face once they arrive here and how they have leveraged pro bono attorneys to support the legal needs of the children. NWIRP spoke to the increase of cases and noted that there are many families who are also coming over, and who need to be supported as well. NWIRP also spoke to the recent law suit they have been working on and the need to provide representation for the minors.

The presenters felt that the Commission could be most useful in elevating the story and raising awareness. Commissioners agreed that they would like to brainstorm further, and work with the Women's commission, to think about the messaging framework.

### **Emerging Issues and Trends in the Community (All)-**

Mohamed was introduced as the new Get Engaged commissioner.

### **Announcements (All):**

Jeniffer announced that CM Sawant has reached out to the Commission about their letter to the Seattle Housing Authority. She will organize a meeting for commissioners. Michael announced that there was a recent meeting with the new police chief in the East African community. He also announced that SPD has hired their first East African officer.

### **Adjourn**

8:01 pm.