



City of Seattle
Seattle Department of Neighborhoods
Stella Chao, Director

Immigrant and Refugee Advisory Board
August Meeting Minutes

Venue: City Hall Room 370
Date: August 4, 2010
Time: 6:00 to 8:00 PM

Attendance:

- *Board Members:* Alaric Bien, Andrea Caupain, Lesley Irizarry-Hougan, Paulina Lopez Bermudez, Muhamed Qatrani, Jesus Y. Rodriguez, Magdalena Rose-Avila, Yasemin San, Mengstab Tzegai, Shankar Narayan.
- *City Staff:* Stella Chao, Yemane Gebremicael, Kimberly Hollins
- *Guest Observers:* Valerie Taung (Institute for Community Peace), Amineh Ayyad (Adapt International).

Next Meeting Info: September 1st, 2010 South Park; Muy Macho Restaurant
August Action Items

Date Assigned	Item	Who	Due On	Comments
8/4/10	Meeting with Mayor about Arizona Meeting date.	Yemane	08/16/10	Briefing letter and background information prepared and forwarded to the Mayor's office. Yemane will follow up with the Mayor's scheduler to set the date for the meeting.
8/4/10	Board celebration	Jesus Yemane	08/20/10	1-Board appointed Jesus and the guest Amineh Ayyad to volunteer to draft a proposal for the event. 2- Yemane to enquire size of City support also to see if a poster with pictures of Board members could be put together.
8/4/10	Board input to the City's Legislative Agenda.	Stella		Stella will Submit the Board's suggestions via DON
8/04/10	Clarify boards ask of the Seattle Police	Jesus & Alaric		Jesus to provide information
8/4/10	Board to show support to the South Park Agenda	Paulina		Arrange for Board to hold Sept. meeting in South Park Also put together points for the board's letter in support of South Park
8/4/10	I & R work plan	Jesus		Jesus assisted by Yemane to format Work Plan



Update on July Action Items:

Item	Who	Completed	Comments
I & R work plan and talking points for I & R board.	Leno and Jesus	Pending	Leno and Jesus have already developed the Work Plan Summary.
Board members to send preliminary list of contacts to add to directory	Jesus	Pending	Yemane will forward the immigrant listings to Jesus
Prepare budget presentations for committees	Leno, Cherry, Jesus, Alaric, Stella & Yemane	Pending	The reason for this meeting has to be clarified.

Brief Summary: The meeting convenes with the board establishing quorum and voting was completed for July and prior meeting dates. The status of the July action items has been updated and the board members checked in on several issues. The I&R talking points were reviewed along with the legislative agenda. Recent pending Bills and Initiatives that may affect immigrant and refugee funding were briefly discussed (specific Bills and Initiatives attached). The subcommittee addressed the efforts of state lobbyists and Stella mentioned the importance of having the federal interests explored as well since they have sole governance over state issues. Stella discussed the importance of following up on the Seattle Community Colleges budget cuts because part of the funding supports ESL/Bilingual programs. The board is also interested in collaborating with the new Police Chief Diaz to discuss key objectives that are inherent in the Seattle community and how they might go about meeting with him. Jesus and guest observer Amineh Ayyad will volunteer to organize the board celebration and a meeting date with the mayor is still pending.

Agenda Items:

Housekeeping

- Board celebration planning will be underway and Jesus and Guest Amineh Ayyad from Adapt International volunteered to organize the event.
 - *A draft for the proposal has been suggested by the board to submit to Stella Chao for approval.*
 - *Yemane will confer with the City about the level of financial support available for the celebration.*

Announcements

- The next Board meeting will be held in South Park. The restaurant location is not yet confirmed. Paulina will find out and inform the board. Yemane has compiled a list of immigrant and refugee organizations and will forward this along with the retreat notices of committee successes to the board.
- August meeting guests included Valerie Taung from the Institute for Community Peace and Amineh Ayyad from Adapt International. Amineh is Palestinian refugee from Syria

and she said she had been nominated by her organization to be a part of the City of Seattle Immigrant and Refugee Advisory Board (According to Yemane the City has not received any application or recommendation on her behalf).

July Action Items Update

- See above

South Park Community: Follow up on meeting the needs of the Immigrant business owners

- Shankar and Paulina reiterated information to absent board members about the businesses in the South Park area that are owned by Immigrants. New plans are being developed by the City to improve the local economy in order for them survive. Paulina mentioned that the City of Seattle is helping to sponsor free Movies every Saturday in August and some movies will have Spanish subtitles.
- Stella reiterated from the last meeting that funding for the South Park area is still lacking and the CDBG stimulus allocation went to the environmental works funding after it went to the council for voting.
- A suggestion was made to write a letter on behalf of the board to help support the South Park Community in addressing their economic needs and strategies for attracting more consumers into their business districts. Paulina will put together points to mention in the letter.

Board input towards City's Legislative Agenda:

Board letter to Mayor:

- Yemane reported that this letter had not been sent to the Mayor Nickels. The August 31st draft was reviewed by the Policy subcommittee and additional points were recommended. However it was reported that because Mayor Nickels was in transition the letter may not be given attention and the process was halted.

Discussion on Confirmation of Police Chief Diaz

- The board had discussed pros and cons of Diaz's appointment as Seattle's new police chief. Several board members commented on the need to have more equitable training of Seattle's police department employees in order to tackle the systematic challenges that are experienced by minorities in the communities.
- In addition to the above discussion, the guest observer Amineh gave feedback regarding de-escalation and cultural competency training. The board agreed that ongoing training for the police department was viewed as a major component in handling any new incidences in the community that could use better police education and protocol procedures.
- Shankar had mentioned that the Seattle Police department does not participate in RJSI meetings and this was something the board viewed as necessary in handling the multi-ethnic community that resides in Seattle.

- The board is interested in having a meeting the new police chief in order to collaborate on more effective ways to train police officers regarding de-escalation protocols and race relations. The board agreed to compile suggestions for the police chief and would like to meet with him to address concerns in order to better serve the community.

New Legislative Bills on the Agenda:

- Currently there is an 8 month limit for immigrant health benefits and extending this limit is critical for elderly whose SSI benefits are the only wage they are making a living on.
- The extension for Elderly and Disabled Refugees Act (HR 4035 and S2623) would allow eligible seniors and persons with disabilities to receive subsistence benefits for up to 2 additional years. Work is needed to advocate for the expansion of immigrant health benefits and new initiatives may impede on funding efforts.

Seattle Community College Budget Cuts: Impact on Immigrants

- Stella requested the need monitor the status of Seattle Comm. College funding in regard to proposed education cuts and its impact on ESL /bilingual funding programs. Stella will put together a draft and send to IOR board.

I&R Work Plan

- Photo copy of the Work Plan summary that Leno and Jesus had prepared was distributed to the board members. Jesus stated that summary represented what the board had put together during the retreat and the Work Plan should be considered complete. Yemane suggested assisting in putting it in the format that the 2009 had been prepared.

I & R Roles and Responsibilities:

- Stella Chao reiterated that her role with the Immigration and Refugee Advisory Board is very important and that her time will be limited due to the budget concerns that she is proactively working on in her department. Yemane will be primary contact for any support that is needed in order for the board to reach its objectives effectively and Andres Mantilla will be available for matters related to South Park. Stella will continue to be at meetings when her schedule and other commitments allow. If any training or additional support is needed by the board she advised that they email her and Fabiola.

Request for feedback regarding staff

- Yemane inquired if the various e-mail messages forwarding Council agenda and decision and also the various e-mail and telephone enquiries and reminder he was sending out to the board members where causing inconvenience or if they were useful to the board members. The response of the board members was that the information and reminders were very helpful and useful and he should maintain what he was doing.

Meeting Adjourned