

# Seattle Immigrant and Refugee Commission

November 2nd, 2021 (6:00-8:00 PM)

## Meeting Minutes

**Commissioners Present:** Maria Jimenez-Zepeda, Shelani Vanniasinkam, Emmanuel G. V. Dolo, Karina San Juan, Ankita Patel, Bao-Tram Do, Ilays Aden, Farhiya Mohamed

**Commissioners Absent:** Amanda Sandoval, N. Gina Aaftaab

**Staff Present:** Luanda Arai

**Guests:** Heather Yang Hwalek, Gul Siddiqi, Hajer Al-Faham

**Call to Order:** 6:05 pm

**Welcome (Co-Chairs)** – Shelani opened the meeting, and Karina lead the group in a check-in.

### Action Taken:

- Today is Anika Patel's last meeting. The Commission celebrated Anika and shared positive words with her, and Ankita said her farewell.
- Commissioners approved October 2021 meeting minutes.
- Ankita asked about the outcome of the IRC letter to the mayor and council on the support of Afghan refugees, IRC sent the letter and attended the public comment. Still awaiting response from mayor and council on IRC's recommendations.
- Shelani asked if commission wants to get together for retreat in February. Karina suggested with flu season and COVID-19 to decide about in-person in January but for now plan for the retreat to be virtual.
- ICF has about \$1,500 in funds to spend to support the commission by December 31, 2021. There is interest in using funds for consulting, care packages, or dinner.
- The commission voted to shorten the meeting in December 2021 to one hour.

### OIRA Report

- Luanda shared the city's vaccination policy on contractors.
- Recommended that IRC think about how we want to introduce ourselves to the new mayor and the new administration.
- Seattle Relief Fund applications opened the 25<sup>th</sup> of October to provide financial support given COVID-19. Not a first come first served process. Administered by Scholarship Junkies.
- Luanda shared more information on the parole program for Afghan refugees.

### IRC Committee Structure

- Emmanuel provided a presentation on a proposal for the IRC time commitment and structure.
- IRC has the priority of getting 15 members on the commission to have members on the subcommittee.
- Shelani shared that she will be stepping down from the IRC because she is moving outside of Seattle.
- The IRC will continue to think about how it wants to restructure in the retreat.

**Other Topics**

- Farhiya shared information about the Somali Family Safety Task Force fundraiser on December 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Adjourn**

The commission adjourned at 8:03 pm. There was no executive session.