

Seattle Immigrant and Refugee Commission

August 6, 2013, 6:00-8:00 PM

City Hall, Room 360

Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present: Shree Ram Dahal, Tsegaba Woldehaimanot, Maru Mora-Villalpando, Jeniffer Calleja, Roxana Norouzi, Mohamed Sheikh Hassan, Mariya Kochubey, Habtamu Abdi, Michael Neguse, Simon Khin,

Commissioners Absent: Dori Cahn, Devon Abdallah, Natasha Savage

OIRA Staff Present: Sahar Fathi

Guests: Katherine Barr, Garry Owens, Vicky Yuki, Irene Gomez

Call to Order: 6:05 pm

Welcome and Housekeeping (Co-Chairs)

Tsegaba temporarily called meeting to order. Shree arrived a few minutes late and Devon was absent.

South East Seattle Education Coalition (SESEC) Presentation (Katherine Barr)-

Katherine began with a general overview of Community Based Organizations (CBOs) who are doing good work in the community. SESEC wants to support the CBOs – wants to support programming already going on and to help people share resources and collaborate. SESEC is looking to make changes that will have a larger impact in the lower performing schools.

Shree asked about performance versus school access – Katherine clarified that it is about what schools kids have access to for their education. Over the last year, SESEC has been trying to bring all schools in Seattle up in quality and they have been growing partnerships between schools and community based organizations. SESEC has five areas of focus in 2013 – strengthening ELL, increasing access, growing partnership, expanding case management and increasing family engagement.

Guest asked how folks were funded – Katherine announced a number of funding sources including a Gates Foundation grant, Neighbor to Neighbor, Social Venture Partners, United Way, Washington Women's Foundation, and the DoIT Technology Matching Fund.

Mohamed made commentary on the levy process and how schools are picking organizations in the East African population.

Katherine noted that CBOs have to fill out an RFQ, need to be approved, provide a one-pager with their services, and then the principal chooses from those programs and uses it to bid for funding.

Shree asked if there has been any progress since 2009. Katherine noted that the community has come together more and this has given SESEC some strong policy traction. Last year they wrote a strong letter to Superintendent Banda and partly as a result of that letter, Banda is launching a pilot this fall in the South East neighborhoods of Seattle.

Mohamed noted that the city has realized that they are not doing appropriate outreach. Now in the levy they are giving a second thought about this. Big organizations are asking smaller organizations for help. He noted that he is a member of SESEC.

Habtamu asked if SESEC/School District can influence the schools to choose ethnic-based organizations. Katherine said that there are a couple things that can be done – they helped Wing Luke write their levy application. The more that SESEC can develop relationships, the more they believe they can get a change in behavior.

Roxana noted that OFE is pushing schools to write applications based on data.

Matching Grants: DOIT, DON, OACA (Vicky, Garry, Irene)

Department of Neighborhoods (DON) (Garry Owens):

Matching fund for DON is in its 25th year. City decided many years ago that to leverage more community involvement there should be a good balance. They accordingly ask people for core values that make up what the matching fund is about – leadership, self help, etc. They have funded a diverse group of projects across the board – schools, CBOs, grassroots organizations, public arts, etc. Garry referred to the first slide of the NMF power point. Some things they look for are legitimacy, etc. He spoke about small sparks, simple projects, and large projects. He discussed the maximum amount of money one can and then talked about some projects that have received funding. Garry also talked about challenges of physical improvement projects i.e. it takes more money to build something. DON does not fund individuals, only groups. These are manifestations of the community doing something – not one person. He also spoke about the challenges for a community to apply for a grant – for example, what if they cannot write? What does a paperless organization look like?

Jeniffer asked for ideas – she tried to apply for a small sparks grant, and her organization declined to be fiscal sponsor. She still believes in the value of this – wanted to know if Garry had suggestions. Gary noted that they have people who would be fiscal sponsors and DON has the ability to assist. Sometimes projects need liability assistance – DON can help with that too.

Michael said that he works with seniors and would love to have Garry to come talk to him. DON would like to take community members on a tour. Sahar will follow up.

Office of Arts and Culture (OAC) – Irene:

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OAC has funding opportunities for organizations and individual artists. They support any art form. Individuals can apply for funds and create new work. There is also a youth arts program – organizations/artists/groups of artists/service agencies can apply. Usually the artist teaches the kids their art form. It is an annual program and you can apply for anything from \$1,000-\$10,000. The funds are earmarked to pay for the artist's time. You can also apply to pay for guest artists.

OAC has had a seven-year partnership with Seattle schools. The applications for their grants are usually available in December, with a deadline in February. In-between there is a workshop. They also have computers in their office in case someone needs a computer. All the applications are unfortunately online but OAC gives a lot of technical assistance.

The SmART ventures grant would be useful for pre-teens. Neighborhood and Community Arts Grants will support annual festivals in the neighborhood. You have to have a history of having the festival for three years. Irene did a high-level summary of program components for application – they have deadlines and award amounts, they are all online, they must be a project, they must be completed within a year. There is an Arts organization that can help be a fiscal sponsor.

Department of Information Technology (DoIT) (Vicky Yuki):

All of the grants are on seattle.gov/grants. The next cycle for DoIT is January of 2014. Grants are awarded up to \$20,000 – the idea behind these is to help increase digital literacy. Approximately 18/24 grants awarded this year are serving immigrant and refugee communities. The recipients have a large reach – up to 3000 immigrants and the average award is \$13,000. Technology Matching Fund does a lot of workshops, people find out through word of mouth, and DoIT asks people to send out to their networks. DoIT believes that people in the community are the best conduit to the populations that DOIT would like to reach. DoIT also has a citizen review board through their technology advisory board. David Keyes has asked that a volunteer come forward from Immigrant and Refugee Commission to participate in review board if wanted.

Habtamu wanted to know how to receive feedback about rejected applications. Vicky agreed to look into it to see if there was a miscommunication or something.

Michael asked what civic engagement looks like with technology. Vicki responded with an example – if you are a community organization and you want to improve the walkability of your neighborhood – applications have been developed to do this. DOIT visits the projects, offers workshops to community. These are one-year projects.

DOIT also has a free cable modem program if you provide public access to the community. DOIT does an “indicators” project – takes a pulse with city and see where they are with technology. Private businesses are not eligible for free internet – contract is with Comcast and wave broadband. They decide the terms and one has to be a nonprofit.

Jeniffer – ACA can only sign up online, so these grants are good for community organizations. Vicki mentioned “Get Online Seattle” – October they are focusing on Health, Wellness and the Web.

Approval of July Minutes (ALL)

Approve July Minutes – Shree moved to approve, Michael seconded.

Ayes: Shree, Tsegaba, Maru, Jeniffer, Roxana, Mohamed, Mariya, Habtamu, Michael.

No nays.

Abstain: Simon Khin.

OIRA Report (Sahar)

Sahar reported on the recent DACA/Dreamers policy announced by the Mayor/Seattle City Light. She described the RFP for Interpretation and Translation contracts that will be coming out. She mentioned the first training for the ethnic media institute that would take place in the end of August. She spoke about a new immigration 101 training and a recent presentation to the regional reentry conference on this topic. She noted that OIRA was preparing its 2014 state legislative agenda submittal to OIR and reminded commissioners that departments are busy because the budget process will start soon. Then she spoke to the financial fitness grant next steps.

She passed out announcements from various departments to commissioners.

Procedural Discussion (All)

Maru brought up some procedural issues that had come up in the Comprehensive Immigration Reform letter. In particular, she noted that the letter seemed to have comments from One America. Maru wanted to know if the commission was okay with outside organizations seeing internal documents. It was explained that comments that appeared from One America were actually from another commissioner who was employed with One America from another commission. Shree said that if the input was valuable, he does not see any harm. Jeniffer said that she was not okay with it, people feel vulnerable. Simon stated that it depends on the document, especially if there is a document with outside input. He felt that it depends on the stage of a document. Sahar will put ½ hour on September agenda for this.

Commissioners Update (All)

Shree gave an update on his meeting with CM Rasmussen. Shree noted CM Rasmussen was more curious about his personal topics, fortunately Shree felt he had followed transportation issues enough to provide commentary. Sahar will follow up with CM Rasmussen and Shree via email, the meeting went well.

Tsegaba and Mariya met with Mayor’s Office Senior Advisor and King County Public Health for outreach and engagement on the Affordable Care Act. Part of the committee’s work plan was to create a one-pager. It was a good meeting because they learned about what organizations King

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County is partnering with and the committee will work with King County to host some kind of enrollment meeting. King County is going to give feedback.

Maru reported that the Comprehensive Immigration Reform letter is almost done. Five commissions looked at it, chairs will sign. Maru will send to everyone by Friday.

Announcements (All)

Mariya reminded the commission of the Equal Pay Forum.

Mohamed announced end of Ramadan on August 7.

Adjournment

8:01 pm.