



City of Bellingham
Immigration Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
April 19, 2022, 6:30 PM

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM

Board Members

Present:

Danielle Siedlecki

Holly Pai

Homero Israel Jose Garrido

Liz Darrow

Monika Cassidy

Tarnjot "TJ" Brar

Bridget Reeves

Australia Tobon

Alfredo Juarez

Absent:

Ada Rumford (excused)

Russian Interpretation: Alfia Logunova

Spanish Interpretation: Martha Sabalsa

Punjabi Interpretation: S. Mahood

City Council Legislative Staff: Nalini Margaitis

City Council Staff: Hannah Stone

There is an audio/ video recording of this meeting. Times in brackets [] indicate the start time on the recording for each section. See <https://cob.org/gov/public/bc/immigration-advisory-board-materials> to listen to the recording.

Welcome, and New Board Member Introduction [0:08]

- Nalini Margaitis welcomed the group.
- Nalini Margaitis and tri-facilitators facilitated this meeting.
- Minutes for the March 15, 2022 meeting were approved as written

Announcements [5:58]

- Two Board openings: Maria Isabel Cortes Zamora and Jagwinder Gill both resigned
- The Board welcomed back Australia Tobon

Public Comment and Community Reports [7:05]

- Lelo Juarez shared that on March 22, 2022, a tulip worker stopped working because there was a a lot of harassment on-site, often working without water and proper gloves (the company spoke to a select a number of employees) – the employees went on strike in order to negotiate their situation. The outcome: the company agreed to provide gloves, restrooms, and water.
- Lelo Juarez also shared that there will be a Marche Campesina on May 1, 2022: gathering at 9AM at Edgewater Park (600 Behrens Millett Rd Mount Vernon)
- MB asked CM Stone if there has been any progress on the IAB’s request for better data. Stone responded that there has not been but that there has been movement to bring this item to the Council’s agenda on the first meeting in May (May 9, 2022) during the Public Health, Safety, and Justice Committee as two separate agenda items: one for the IRC and the other for the ordinance updates. The latter item would like be presented at a subsequent meeting before the Committee of the Whole.
- Von Ochoa shared that children would benefit from the IRC

Commitment Process Regarding Public Comment [22:32]

- Holly Pai shared that the Board has been receiving emails from the public that go unanswered. An active participant suggested that the Board make a commitment to take action regarding public comment.
- The Board members held a discussion related to answering public comments. Suggestions included: taking time during the following meeting to answer questions from the previous month, Board members to volunteer to respond to specific questions, stick to the community outreach liaison system. The outcome: the Board decided to continue with the monthly liaison position. Email: immigrationboard@cob.org
- Monika Cassidy shared that she had a lunch with the Mayor where she expressed frustration that there is no support for the Immigration Resource Center, that the IRC should be accessible by bus, discussed the IAB flyer that she, Danielle, and Ada created. Overall, Cassidy expressed that she would like to see better communication and connection with the Council and the Mayor.

Process Subcommittee [54:14]

- The Mayor will be present at the May 17, 2022 meeting. Please send questions to Brooksana Raney by May 11, 2022: braney@cob.org
- Hannah Stone suggested to update the draft ordinance based on the outcome of the May 17, 2022 meeting – there was disconnect between the Mayor and the Board and she hopes to have a conversation to have some clarity on the direction of the Board.
- Holly Pai screen shared the ordinance and stated that she did not receive and edit suggestions from any Board members. Liz Darrow outlined the changes clarifying that replacement appointees shall serve a two-year term on the Board (beginning the date they are appointed) and that the applications are sent to the Board members. Hannah Stone added that, after speaking with Tracy Lewis, she learned that all Boards and

Commissions are appointed in a similar fashion. The newest Board members stated that they were not informed of their term limits. Liz Darrow requested that the Board view any updates to the ordinance prior to the ordinance being presented to the Mayor.

- **ACTION ITEM:**

**Holly Pai/ Monika Cassidy moved to approve the ordinance as presented
Motion carried 9-0, Ada Rumford excused.**

- The process subcommittee removed the country of origin from the matrix & Hannah Stone reminded the Board that, as an advisory Board to the City, to ensure that the questions asked in the matrix are permissible with city standards (equal protection) and that she would be happy to take that to Legal.

IAB webpage updates [1:35:57]

- Danielle Siedlecki presented Ada Rumford's updates to the city webpage: the addition of the banner on the IAB page and to group information into drop down sections of accordions. The subcommittee is looking for approval from the Board. In addition to English, the city has agreed to provide translations of the website into the following languages: Spanish, Punjabi, Vietnamese, and Russian. There was consensus on the Board to proceed with the image depicting the raised hands.

Immigrant Resource Center update [1:42:14]

- Lelo shared that, on April 4, 2022, Liz, Homero, Danielle, and Lelo met with CM Dan Hammill, where they explained why the immigrant community needs a resource center: immigrant families do not have access to a lot of the government services that are offered. The group asked CM Hammill what steps they can take to speed this up and create the IRC. CM Hammill liked the idea of creating the resource center and requested that the IAB present him with a draft ordinance of what they want and then he will present it to his fellow CMS.
- Lelo presented the following change in the ordinance: *WHEREAS, for many immigrants, a sense of place and belonging will foster positive interactions with government and build trust*
- Liz Darrow shared that the Racial and Equity Commission provided feedback on the wage provided in the ordinance, stating that it was too low
- Hannah Stone added that the City would likely not be employ someone who is not authorized to work in the US

Federal Contact data review [2:04:02]

- Bridget Reeves drew attention to the incident on March 31, 2022 PR lieutenant telephoned HSI as well as an increase in CBP dispatch initiating contact
- Liz Darrow drew attention to CBP request of Blaine PD to assist with a juvenile that illegally crossed over from Canada to US and observed that the federal system and the courts were not kept separately

- Bridget Reeves requested Board members to join the federal contacts subcommittee – Holly Pai volunteered to participate in this subcommittee
- Bridget Reeves looked into the Keep WA Working Act and there is a list of law enforcement agencies that have submitted their own policies (Bellingham is not on the list nor has the City adopted the AG's policies)

Old/New Business [2:17:01]

- Liz Darrow shared that the CDC will be ending Title 42 effective May 23, 2022
- Holly Pai and Liz Darrow suggested obtaining information from other City agencies (in addition to WhatComm) for immigration related data
- Town Hall on Public Safety: May 16, 2022 at 6PM via Zoom
- Lelo Juarez asked if the Board is able to meet in-person for the next meeting (at the moment, all Boards and Commissions remain remote); Subcommittees are able to meet in-person

The meeting adjourned at 8:53 PM

Recordings of this meeting with additional details of discussion is posted at:

<https://cob.org/gov/public/bc/immigration-advisory-board-materials>