



City of Bellingham
Immigration Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
February 16, 2021, 6:30 PM

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM

Board Members

Present:

Liz Darrow
Maria Isabel Cortes-Zamora
Bridget Reeves
Ada Rumford
Danielle Siedlecki
Katie Winkelman
Monika Cassidy

Absent:

Ramon Barba Torres
Jahn Zuniga Escobar

Liaison to the City Council: Councilmember Hannah Stone

Spanish Interpretation: Marcela Rey

City staff: Mark Gardner, City Council Legislative Analyst and Nalini Margaitis, City Council Legislative Assistant

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 Board Business [00:00]

- Councilmember Hannah Stone welcomed the group.
- Hannah Stone facilitated this meeting.
- Minutes for the January 19 meeting were approved as written.

Ordinance Revision and Filling the Board Vacancies [02:47].

Recently, the City issued a notice with Board openings but the IAB was not listed on that. However, there are three vacancies. Filling the vacancies was on hold until the ordinance updates were approved by Council. There are 6 applications currently under review (in addition, four applications that had been previously rejected because they lived outside of City

limits) and 6 applicants that were not appointed during the first round of the application review. The ordinance is set to go to Council at the next meeting on the 22nd of February at 7PM. This evening: review the proposed changes with the Board.

Proposed changes:

- Membership and appointment, Terms, Residency, Organization and Meetings
- The Mayor and City Attorney have both signed off on that change.
- There are no separate requirements tied to residence or employment with the City of Bellingham.
- The intent of the Board is to serve the City (anticipate the new application to ask about connections to Bellingham and why individuals are interested in serving on this Board)

Reports from Impacted Community Members [21:11]

Marciano Sanchez Lopez discussed concerns from the immigrant farmworker community and proposed COVID vaccine sites with location sites easily accessible for farmworkers.

Main message: *There are still farmworkers and immigrant families that don't have confidence in the vaccine, and those that do want to go get vaccinated, go to clinics where those vaccines are no longer available, or because of the time that they get off of work, the clinics aren't open. We saw what we've been saying all this time, which was that the police and border patrol constantly work with each other, and we'd like to know what's something the Board would do about this, because there is constant fear from farm workers from the border patrol.*

Responses from Border Patrol regarding January 29, 2021 events: presented by Legislative Analyst, Mark Gardner [32:29] [Screenshare beings 33:52]

- Encampment Removal: Total cost to City: \$74,000; Labor cost (primarily police): \$29,000; Public works: \$45,000
- City statement on Border Patrol and operational involvement between Bellingham Police and Custom and Border Protection (CBP)

Discussion [44:47]

- Liz Darrow expressed concern regarding the police answering for their own behavior and urged the Board to compose a letter to Council, with a copy to the Attorney General re violation of the Keep Washington Working Act. Liz Darrow received permission from the photographer , Bodie Hallett, and displayed three photos. The photos included library lawn with BPD and CBP (with a camera).
- Bridget Reeves, Ada Rumford and Monika Cassidy agreed to compose a joint letter to Council on behalf of the Board.

Follow Up Discussion Re Policing Issues and Engagement with Federal Agencies [1:17:12]

- Updates provided in previous section

Continued discussion on improving Immigration Services in Bellingham [1:18:06]

- Presented by Danielle Siedlecki, sharing a list of potential needs including the resource center, navigating health care, and addressing hate crime concerns, with follow-up questions from the Board regarding budget availability.
- Goal: *I am hoping for feedback going forward in the next month – thinking about reaching out to these partner organization – mentioning that we are part of IAB, that we’re looking at idea of immigration resource center but that we’re in initial stages and in research for potential partners they came up, if they would potentially be interested in working with us, if they know of any needs or other organizations, provide information on IAB and invite them to listen in on our meetings and longer term (for work now and in the future): we would like to research our immigrant and refugee demographic, we’re like to keep growing and specifying the needs , we’d like to begin to write a proposal for City Council, and start to get an idea for a budget proposal.*

Review of the Federal Contacts Data [1:30:37]

- Bridget Reeves had a question regarding the Jan 13th conference call with representatives’ regional congressional offices to discuss City issues. Is the fact that this is included on the sheet evidence that CBP was involved in that call?
- Councilmember Hannah Stone will follow-up with response.

Old/New Business [1:33:14]

- Introduction of Legislative Assistant, Nalini Margaitis (this Board will be transitioning to her, but Mark will still be assisting)
- Request from community member, Josh Cerretti (Professor at Western), he would like to give a presentation to the Board regarding militarized police and the connections with federal immigration. (~20-30 minutes presentation in March?)

Public Comment Period [1:38:05]

- Comment 1 (Bodie Hallett): *Photographer from photos shared by Liz Darrow earlier in the meeting. I was there all day and saw; to be told that people were not armed is completely false; I would be willing to certify that these photos were taken when they did.*
- Comment 2 (Carmen Gilmore): *Regarding Board’s response to Camp 210 sweep; Wondering if this advisory board is going to include what they wished the City would have done differently and also if they will be requesting of the City a promise of what they will do or not do next time; I looked at your potential partners for the immigration resource center and thinking that you could consider the BPS family resource center as a potential partner – the resource center offers translation services and basic needs assistance to refugees and immigrants.*
- Councilmember Hannah Stone added that the Family Resource Center and Goodwill are additional resources
- Comment 3 (Sara De Roy): *Having lived and worked on the US/Mexico border (and worked with few families coming to Bellingham), I have concerns about the level of*

control those agencies are given and how that can impact people who are in Bellingham and that may not be able to be documented.

Feedback regarding agenda for next meeting [1:50:34]:

- Follow-up in small groups work can continue in between meetings.
- Mark Gardner and Nalini Margaitis will follow up on some questions that were raised in the meeting this evening.
- If there are additional agenda items for next month, please send to Mark Gardner or Nalini Margaitis via email.
- Liz Darrow to extend invitation to Josh or pass along his information as contact for next month's presentation.
- Councilmember Hannah Stone: Extended appreciation for the Board's continued work and persistence
- Board to reach out to Ramon Torres and Jahn Escobar to decide alternates.
- Liz Darrow: Ramon Torres would like to nominate Marciano Lopez.
- Councilmember Hannah Stone requested that Marciano Lopez complete an application so that we can formally have his name in the queue for nomination of an appointment.
- Next meeting: final ordinance in place and three vacancies filled.

The meeting adjourned at 8:26 PM.

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

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