



City of Bellingham Immigration Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

March 16, 2021, 6:30 PM

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM

Board Members

Present:

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

Absent:

Ramon Barba Torres

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 February 16, 2021 meeting were approved as written.

Ordinance and Vacancies Update [06:00].

Council adopted the ordinance on 3/08/2021, which included the following changes:

- to allow alternates
- to allow members to reside anywhere in the County and
- to have co-facilitators of this group (instead of Chair, Vicechair, etc.)

The Mayor can now proceed with appointments (3 vacancies and 2 alternates (which will come forward on 4/12/2021)).

Identify Co-Facilitators [8:31]

Table to following meeting (4/20/2021)

Reports from Impacted Community Members [11:01]

Marciano Sanchez Lopez voiced concerns of farmworkers:

- Unequal distribution of vaccines with inaccessible locations
- Requesting accessible locations where farmworkers have fair access and fair treatment (similar to *C2C Promotoras*, ensuring adequate vaccine supply)
- Marciano will reach out directly to Hannah to set up meeting with Health Department (meeting: Ramon, Marciano and DOH)

Hannah Stone

- Director of Health has stated that there is a mobile health unit

Jahn Zuniga Escobar [20:33]

- In agreement with the statements regarding the Resource Center and would like to thank the *Mount Vernon Promotoras* (for the ability to receive access to the vaccine)
- In case I cannot make it to the next meeting, can someone come on my behalf? (Reply: Yes, an alternate is possible and if you have someone specific in mind, please have them fill out an application).

Report from Committees [25:05]

Danielle Siedlecki [25:24]

- List of organizations
- Outreach resources: difficulty to locate (if not on the list, please contact Danielle to add)
- Census data reflects immigrant community
- Next month: permission to continue to work?

Liz Darrow [29:05]

- Worked with Joaquin Uy, Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs, City of Seattle (who connected with Vanessa Saldivar, Cities for Action)
- Cities for Action: working on a nationwide template to establish immigrant resource centers and would like to work with the Board on best practices and pilot project
- Board has established networks
- Next step: meeting with Vanessa on Friday (3/19) and expand opportunities for community input (e.g.: a public forum (remote) relating to immigration)

Hannah Stone [32:00]

- World Relief reached out to the Council – exploring new locations for refugee resettlement and they are holding stakeholder meetings to consider Whatcom County or Bellingham for a new location (encourage to reach out)

Discussion and Approval of IAB Letter to City Council [34:00]

Ada Rumford

- Reading of the letter [35:20-49:03]

Bridget Reeves [49:53]

- Two comments received regarding the third request
- Need for clarification on how a point person with BPD would be beneficial (not to participate in the meeting or to be a part of the Board, instead the intention was to promote greater transparency in situations like this)
- [59:02] Better to move forward quicker than to stall process entirely
- Possible to remove requests and instead ask Council for response?

Ada Rumford [51:36]

- Purpose to include third request: to answer questions to simplify communication/front of mind for Board and community while also having a barrier so people would not feel targeted
- [1:03:55] Acceptable not to have 100% consensus and would like everyone's feedback

Liz Darrow Question [52:55]

- We already have an avenue for communication with Police: they work for us
- Information that was sent to us was false
- Opposed to using language like "liaison" and "collaboration"; it alienates the community that is not yet trusting of this Board to maintain community relationships
- Pro: discrepancy vs communicated portion of the letter (but oppose last section)
- Cannot proceed with this letter with the current Board makeup

Hannah Stone [56:11]

- Letter should be addressed to the Mayor and the Council (issues are administrative as well as policy-based)
- Share Liz's concern: not moving forward swiftly
- Request: call out inaccuracies (caution Board to solve, ask City for response)

Monika Cassidy [1:01:02]

- We should address the issue, because we work with the immigrant community
- Possible to create a "sanctuary City"?

Maria Isabel Cortes-Zamora [1:04:45]

- Move forward with the parts that we're in agreement with
- Response: as Board, our responsibility is to offer recommendations to the Mayor
- Need a response from Mayor and Council, but not sure how to move forward on what to recommend

Marciano Sanchez Lopez [1:06:55]

- Will CBP be taking part in the meeting?
- (Hannah clarified that the letter is an objection to CBP's participation in an event and one suggestion was to work with BPD, not CBP)

Hannah Stone [1:09:18]

- Proceed: end of letter could change to say: *in response to this incident, we ask the Mayor and the City Council to take action to build trust*

Liz Darrow: [1:11:37]

- Could the City respond with a policy that is in line with the Keep WA working Act?
- (Hannah clarified that this letter is a way to put Council and the Mayor on notice of the incident: *this happened, you lied about it, and we're upset* with follow-up communication and Ada Rumford followed up stating that this was the intention of the letter. Monika Cassidy suggested a Liaison for collaboration.)
- Requests removal of words “liaison” and “collaborate” (followed by discussion surrounding the communication designation referenced in the third request of the letter)

Bridget Reeves [1:18:22]

- Possible to revise and update letter, send it out and receive final go ahead via email?
- (Hannah: acceptable, as long as there is not a huge change from tonight's discussion)

Ada Rumford [1:19:23]

- Consensus to remove third request and keep first two?
- (Bridget Reeves clarified that the consensus was to remove all three and keep it open to how Council and Mayor want to respond. Hannah Stone added that this also included the option to revisit those points at a later point and time. And Monika Cassidy stated that the most important part is to let Council and Mayor know that we noticed, and we know what's going on. Hannah Stone ended the discussion by stating that the edits will be made via email).

The Militarization of Policing, A National and Local Concern: presented by Associate Professor Dr. Josh Cerretti [1:22:19]

- A presentation on militarized policing both at the national and local levels, discussing the relationship between militarism and policing, the invention of SWAT, the 1033 program (including increased militarized policing in recent decades), the history of militarization in Bellingham, the contemporary status of these issues, and common defenses made of these problems. Contact for questions: imagineNokages@gmail.com
- Hannah Stone added that questions may be emailed to: immigrationboard@cob.org
- Questions [1:55:38] 1) regarding City and County banning 1033 programs and if this has been discussed by Bellingham and Whatcom? (Dr. Cerretti: not aware of a current effort apart from the state level) and 2) material serves as example that reformation language is stifling to real change and any attempt at collaboration folds into the status quo and doesn't push back against the harm that has been caused by the Police and ICE.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Recordings of this meeting with additional details of discussion is posted at:
<https://cob.org/gov/public/bc/immigration-advisory-board-materials>