



City of Bellingham Immigration Advisory Board Meeting

October 20, 2020, 6:30 PM

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 PM

Board Members

Present:

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

Absent:

Katie Winkelman
Ramon Barba Torres
Jahn Zuniga Escobar

Liaison to the City Council: Councilmember Hannah Stone

Spanish Interpretation: Alex Perez

City staff: Mark Gardner, City Council Legislative Analyst

There is an audio 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
- Proxies. We have been informed by the City Attorney that the City Charter does not allow proxies for Board members. An alternative approach, used by the Mayor's Neighborhood Advisory Council (MNAC), is to have alternates who are selected through the City appointment process. Board members expressed a desire to add additional representation such that communities rather than individuals can be represented on the Board.
- Minutes for the September 15 meeting were approved as written.

- Board vacancies. There have been two resignations and there is one other vacancy. Rick Qualls and Seth Thomas are no longer on the Board. Liz Darrow reported that Rev. Seth Thomas supports the work of the board and will identify other faith community members who may be able to serve on the board.
- Members discussed the challenges of helping to launch a new board that has never met in person and noted that it takes time to develop common understandings and practices needed to advance the work of the board. Patience is important. One goal is to create a space where all members of the immigrant community feel safe to express their concerns.
- Revisions to the ordinance creating the IAB. Language from MNAC was presented regarding the appointment and function of alternates. Board members expressed a preference for community rather than individual representation. Since this is a Bellingham board the IAB has most influence over the City's jurisdiction, so it makes sense to start by working to improve practices in Bellingham. However, the Charter does not require that all members of a board reside in Bellingham.

Reports from affected community members [55:30]

- Marciano Sanchez reported that farmworkers and community members are impacted by the Police and ICE, as well as by COVID. Often members live in Bellingham but work in Skagit. Many people have lost jobs and some have had to get loans to pay rent. People lack medical coverage to pay for COVID testing.
- People worry about getting stopped for minor incidents, are concerned about racial profiling by the police, and express fears that information is being shared with the Border Patrol or ICE. There is fear of deportation. What can the board do so that families don't have to live in fear?
- It is important to have community members come forward and with clear information regarding any incidents—where, when, and other details. This allows for investigation and provides information that could improve policies. Past reports indicated that BPD was using Border Patrol as interpreters, so a policy was put in place to change that practice. Information about incidents could be brought to the board. One question is whether police stops that don't result in some action get recorded in any way. The Board could work toward creating a form or set of procedures to bring forward reports of profiling. Currently, the police respond to any complaints against them and they end up investigating themselves.

Other Business [1:38:57]

- The Board will have an interim meeting in November to continue discussion of items from the Oct. 20 agenda.

- It would be valuable to have a representative from WHAT-COMM at an upcoming meeting to explain how the dispatch system works. There is also a need to discuss profiling concerns with law enforcement before deciding how to move forward.

Public Comment [1:45:35]

Members of the public provided comment and posed questions to the board. Questions and comments were:

1. It was reported that Debra Lekanoff made a statement in support of the IAB, and a recording was shared.
2. Ruby Castenada is a co-founder of Raid Relief to Reunite Families and is an affected community member. She applied for the board but lived outside of city limits. She can fill in to represent the impacted community.
3. Who is using the Sehome Hill communications towers? Is the data transmitted through these towers secure and encrypted?
4. Amnesty International has sent a report on policing practices to Chief Doll
5. The City should turn to community member applicants to fill the board.
6. What are the steps that need to be taken to know the outcomes from the federal contact data?
7. What is the City's plan to stop militia backlash against community members?
8. There is police collaboration with ICE and people in the community are collecting data. The Board should use this information.
9. How is the board being funded?

Responses to questions from members of the public will be posted on the IAB web site.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:34 p.m.

A recording of this meeting with additional details of discussion is posted at:

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