



City of Bellingham
Immigration Advisory Board Meeting
November 2, 2020, 6:30 PM

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM

Board Members

Present:

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

Absent:

Ramon Barba Torres
Jahn Zuniga Escobar

Liaison to the City Council: Councilmember Hannah Stone

Spanish Interpretation: Lorena 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

Discussion of Amnesty International Resolution. [05:08] The Board discussed the content of the Welcoming Refugees Resolution submitted by the local chapter of Amnesty International, and whether they should endorse it. It was noted that the Resolution is a general statement of support and does not contain action items. The Board will continue the discussion at the November 17 meeting and will invite Amnesty International members to attend.

Reports from affected community members [25:00]

- There are concerns about elections and possible violence. Caravans of trucks have been used to intimidate. People are watching to help ensure that immigrants are not targeted for violence or intimidation.
- Residents of Birchwood have been observing ballot drop boxes and will be present on election day. There was one instance of a group of men trying to block someone's access to the Auditor's Office. The County put out a statement on election integrity but it was vague on specifics.
- Board members may craft letters to the City and the County expressing their concerns. A few members of the board could get together to craft some longer-term approaches since the issue will not go away immediately after the election.

Response to questions posed by the public [1:10:04]

- Protecting immigrant communities during COVID. Information is needed in all languages, and outreach is needed. The Board could make recommendations on how to improve outreach to the community. The Opportunity Council has funding available for relief and they are not requiring any information that might implicate immigration status to access this.
- Other questions discussed include how the police work with Sheriff deputies, and what military equipment has been acquired by the Bellingham Police Department. Questions have also arising on the Telecommunications tower—who uses it, and is data secure? These and other questions will be sent to appropriate City officials for answers. Answers to questions will be posted on the Board's web site.
- Members of the public have questions about how the dispatch system interacts with various law enforcement agencies. A representative of WHAT-COMM will be invited to speak at an upcoming meeting.
- A letter was sent from Homeland Security to immigrant students as well as other organizations nationally. It indicated that membership in an organization advocating communism could jeopardize a persons' immigration status. The concern is that this could be used as a form of intimidation to keep people from engaging in political activity. The Board will continue to monitor this and similar incidents.

Public Comment [1:58]

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

1. Funding is available through the end of 2020 from Northwest Youth Services to assist undocumented youth ages 18 to 24 to pay past due rent. To follow up contact mariob@NWYS.org

2. Can the board bring forward the research of the Promotoras in documenting police and ICE violence?

Meeting Adjourned at 8:37 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>