



City of Bellingham
Immigration Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
June 21, 2022, 6:30 PM

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM

Board Members

Present:

Danielle Siedlecki
Ada Rumford
Holly Pai
Homero Israel Jose Garrido
Liz Darrow
Bridget Reeves
Australia Tobon
Alfredo Juarez
Monika Cassidy

Absent:

Tarnjot "TJ" Brar

Russian Interpretation: Alfia Logunova

Spanish Interpretation: Martha Sabalsa

Punjabi Interpretation: Piku Dillion

City Council Legislative Staff: Nalini Margaitis

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.

To submit an application to serve on a City Board or Commission, please visit the following webpage: <https://cob.org/gov/public/bc/Boards-and-Commissions-Application-Process>

Welcome [0:12]

- Nalini Margaitis welcomed the group.
- Nalini Margaitis and tri-facilitators facilitated this meeting.
- Minutes for the May 17, 2022 meeting were approved as written

Announcements [4:44]

- A community member notified the Board of a new sector chief for Blaine CBP

- Australia requested a tour of the CBP Blaine facility, and it is scheduled for – July 27th 9:00AM-11:00AM & is trying to schedule a tour of the Port of Entry at the Peace Arch (Border patrol: green uniforms, port of entry: blue uniforms) – TBD (possibly 2nd week of August). Email Australia if you plan to attend. Border patrol chief for Blaine sector for the 7/27 Tour requested a brief description of Board members attending to be sent to the chief prior to the tour (why you're on the Board, etc.) & reciprocated information will be provided to the IAB (the Board will receive information and background of the border patrol staff present during the tour).
- Monika Cassidy shared that she responded to students who requested information about the IAB & spoke with a journalist for Salish Current regarding the ACLU, the situation in Ukraine and opportunities for immigrants in the community.
- Homero Garrido shared with the Board that he spoke with Kai, a reporter from the Salish Current, who had asked Garrido to report on the Immigrant Resource Center & Garrido provided the reporter with a brief description of who the Board is, what the Board does, and what they hope to accomplish with the IRC.
- Australia Tobon shared that she too had a similar interview with the same reporter.
- Holly Pai shared that she too spoke with the same reporter who was inquiring about legal service those seeking information on immigration law in Bellingham and what the IRC might be offering.
- Danielle Siedlecki shared that the IRC was mentioned in the Bellingham Herald and the Cascadia

Public Comment and Community Reports [16:27]

- MB shared that they were happy to see that the Racial Equity Commission was on the agenda for today [6/21] & followed up on comments from CM Hannah Stone and Mayor Fleetwood that there may be some redundancy between the Racial Equity Commission and the work that the IAB is doing. MB shared that both groups are doing work that is distinct and complementary to each other & looks forward to the presentation to see how both organizations can strengthen each other's work. MB urged that the IRC be led by the immigrant community that the center is going to be serving.
- The board then discussed strategies to encourage broader input on what the IRC should initially be comprised of – outreach, etc. Public may also email: immigrationboard@cob.org to provide input. The city will present their proposal during the July IAB meeting [7/29]. Suggestions from the board included: satellite offices, reaching out to Northwest Immigrant Rights Project (NIRP) [<https://www.nwirp.org/>], local immigration attorneys holding free clinics, presentations, citizenship clinics, health resources, assisting people to integrate into the school system, etc.
- Maddi was encouraged by the Board's unified vision of the IRC, but there needs to be push at the Mayor's Office (Maddi suggested to email and call the Mayor's Office to

move the IRC forward in a way that is equitable, led by community members, and funded by the City & oversight with the IAB.

Presentation – Whatcom Racial Equity Commission (Shu Ling Zhao) [30:36-50:25]

- Zhao provided a presentation on developing a Whatcom Racial Equity Commission, including an overview of the planning and preparation. Zhao works with the Chuckanut Health Foundation as the Project Team Lead. CHF awarded a grant to Kristina Michele Martens and Zhao to explore the development of a local racial equity commission. So far, the planning has exceeded 22 months. For more information on the ongoing project, please visit: www.chuckanuthealthfoundation.org or email: shu@chuckanuthealthfoundation.org
- Following the presentation, Board and community members asked questions [50:29-1:10:08]

Follow-up on the ACLU presentation from the May 17, 2022 meeting [1:10:27]

- The ACLU has received responses from the county and the city in relation to the letter that was sent (e.g. Whatcom County prosecuting attorney admitted there were violations and took the allegations seriously).
- Pai shared that she and Reeves had a follow-up meeting with Brian Heinrich re the ACLU presentation. Heinrich responded via email (changing policy and language in the WhatComm manual, changing the language in the interlocal agreement – replacing calling Sumas and CBP for services, stop using CBP for interpretation services. Heinrich’s email also stated that the City disagreed on the ACLU’s interpretation of KWW in regard to calling CBP on criminal matters). Pai and Reeves conducted FOIA requests and were able to bring up specific information from April-May contacts that could potentially put people at risk for their involvement/engagement with CBP. Heinrich responded that he will bring back this topic with the BPD and the City and admitted that he did see a potential problem with the examples cited from April-May. Reeves and Pai will follow-up with Heinrich prior to the July meeting for a potential report out. The next layer of conversation will include WhatComm.
- Australia asked is the Board would be able to request the training manuals that WhatComm is using (Reeves and Pai have FOIAed the BPD policy manuals to see if they have formally incorporated KWWA model policies). Pai responded that she and Reeves received different manuals through their FOIA requests & that it appears no one wants to take ownership of WhatComm. Tobon also asked Reeves and Pai if any recordings of the meeting took place. Tobon also requested that the Board have funding and access to funding needed to obtain dispatch records. Reeves says she will look into that. Pai added that it is \$9 for an audio transcript.

Federal Contact Data Review [1:34:28]

- IAB members outlined concerns in the federal contact data that were in violation of the KWWA. The board agreed to proceed with an “outcomes” column for a handful of monthly items (a monthly report).

Process Subcommittee [1:48:30]

- Holly Pai shared that the process subcommittee has been interviewing prospective IAB candidates and that it has been going really well.

Old/New Business [1:52:06]

- Board member's thanked Danielle Siedlecki for her dedication to the IAB during her last meeting
- Darrow announced there is an opportunity to table the Birchwood international market in July

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 PM

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