

## **November 15, 2022 Immigration Advisory Board Meeting Minutes**

### **Welcome [00:00:07]**

Legislative Assistant, Nalini Margaitis opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m. and welcomed participants. Darrow called role and participants introduced themselves.

### **Announcements and follow-up on public comment from the October meeting [00:21:57]**

Liz Darrow stated that Scott Powell had volunteered to work on Federal contact data

### **Welcome and Introduction of new Board members [00:18:28]**

- Darrow gave a brief introduction to the space, the history of the Board, and its purpose.
- One of the presenters was not able to make it in person.
- Darrow invited all participants, including non-members to engage.
- New members Christian Sanchez, Von Ochoa and Sophia Rey, were joining for the first time.
- Non-member participants on Zoom were announced by name.

### **Public Comment/Community Reports [00:22:40]**

- Lisa thanked the Board for the work that went into the presentation to City Council.
- Lisa asked how the translation worked. Translation was only available to Zoom participants. Liz Darrow and others discussed how to make translation available for in-person participants.
  - Member agreed that two interpreters, one for Spanish and one for Punjabi, should be present at the next meeting.
- Members and staff discussed the date change for the next meeting.

### **Subcommittee reports [00:35:56]**

Darrow explained the function of the sub-committees and the rules governing how many members each can have. Australia Tobon gave the name of each committee as well as the names of the members. She also explained that anyone in Whatcom County can apply to be a member.

- Process Subcommittee: Liz Darrow reported for this committee, stating that:
  - They have received one application to be an alternate member.
  - There is still an opening available, and Darrow encouraged interested community members to apply.
  - Members discussed how the appointment process works, special cases, disengagement from the Board, and members' interest in the Immigrant Resource Center.
- Immigrant Resource Center (IRC) Subcommittee:
  - Homero Jose reported that Tara Villalba had given a presentation that gave a clear vision for the form the IRC might take, however it seems that the City Council does not understand that vision.
  - City Council Member and Board member Kristina Michelle Martens described the next steps with the City Council, including presenting on a potential budget and improving communication between the Board and the City Council.
  - Members discussed the difficulties involved in setting out a clear vision for the IRC, communicating that to local governments, and clarifying how it can come to fruition

with the support of those governments. Martens emphasized that Bellingham has never done anything like this before, so communicating all of this into a framework that government officials can understand has been a challenge.

- Martens added that the Mayor has committed to issuing a request for qualifications (RFQ) for a vendor with experience in building a Center like the one they are envisioning.
- Members continued to discuss the IRC including:
  - What actions would be beneficial while the RFQ is being developed.
  - The value of the RFQ itself and the role an RFQ respondent might play.
  - The potential function of the IRC and the organizations that might participate in the IRC or support its creation.
  - The timeline for creation of the IRC could be lengthy even though community members need services immediately. It is important to balance the need to build the Center the right way so that it is able to offer services for years to come with the urgency of offering services as soon as possible.
  - Alternatives to the RFQ, including the possibility of a member of the Board responding to the RFQ and serving as the contractor rather than hiring an outside expert.
  - A community input night may be useful.

#### **Vote on 2023 meeting dates**

*This item was not discussed*

#### **Presentation - Research findings from Municipal Research and Services Center of Washington**

*This item was not discussed*

#### **Old/New Business**

*This item was not discussed*

#### **Adjourn [2:20:13]**

The meeting adjourned at 8:53 p.m.