



King County Equity and Social Justice

401 5th Ave, Suite 1300

Seattle, WA 98104

www.kingcounty.gov/equity

IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE TASK FORCE

FEBRUARY 22, 2016

5:30-8:30PM

CHINOOK BUILDING, 401 5TH AVE, 8TH FLOOR, KRAKATOA CONFERENCE ROOM

MEETING MINUTES

ATTENDING:

(Members)

Mr. Habtamu Abdi, Community Resident; **Ms. Lupita Ayon**, Para Los Niños; **Mr. Alaric Bien**, Eastside Refugee and Immigrant Coalition; **Ms. Joana Chong**, Korean Chamber of Commerce; **Ms. Mahnaz Eshetu**, Refugee Women's Alliance (ReWA); **Mr. Sameth Mell**, Coalition of Immigrants, Refugees and Communities of Color (CIRCC); **Ms. Denise Perez Lally**, El Centro de la Raza; **Mr. Michael Ramos**, Greater Church Council of Seattle; **Mr. Richard Stolz**, OneAmerica; **Ms. Dinah Wilson**, City of Kent; **Lola Zakharova**, Seattle-Tashkent Sister City Association; Ericka Cox, Office of Equity and Social Justice; Carmela Ennis, Kristina Logsdon, County Council; Bookda Gheisar, Margi McClung, Consultants.

I Welcome

Ericka Cox, Office of Equity and Social Justice Staff

2 min

Ericka handled a few housekeeping items (parking announcement, circulating sign in sheet, announcement of task force website live on County site), and noted that Dwight from the Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget was not available to attend this meeting. He is interested in being a resource for the task force, and can attend a future meeting or we can schedule something separately with him so that task force members can understand the basics of the County budgeting process, and more importantly, ask strategic budget-related questions that may help shape or inform task force recommendations.

II Icebreaker/community building exercise

All

5 min

Bookda led a short ice breaker exercise for each person to share one thing about themselves that most people would be surprised to learn.

III Community forum discussion

Extension & timeline changes

Bookda & King County Staff

20 min

Bookda led a review of the revised roadmap and work plan, and Margi highlighted changes made related to a one month extension of the task force's work, and due date for the final report (now due June 30 instead of May 31 2016). Task force members agreed with the changes.

Bookda also led a review of the community forums planning document, outlining the timeline, geographic target areas, and general approach for the task force to convene small community discussions for input to inform recommendations. The discussion of the document led to a few points for further consideration, including:

- Whether or not to do a community forum in Auburn and/or more rural parts of unincorporated King County. The Place sub-group (chaired by Dinah) will make a recommendation on which unincorporated area should be a target for a community forum.
- Discussion of whether goals for diversity in community discussions (i.e., generational, disability status, sexual orientation, etc.) requires multiple, targeted discussions to establish safe spaces for open conversation. Task force members, who know their communities well, will have to make decisions to balance their capacity to organize multiple meetings with needs of sub-sections of their communities.
- Task force members or other, trusted members of communities should lead community discussions so that community members feel comfortable sharing openly.
- Task force members should be aware of each other's plans for community discussions to avoid duplication, facilitate appropriate coverage of geographic areas and language/ethnic groups, and enable task force member participation in each other's community discussions when possible or desired. Bookda and Carmela have been keeping a spreadsheet to track plans for community discussions, and will share this with the full task force.

In addition to these points, the group discussed in detail what support they needed to begin hosting community discussions, and what materials will help them to facilitate and gather input to feed back to consultants. The group agreed the following materials should be provided by early March so that task force members can use them for community discussions:

- Facilitation guide to include:
 - information on purpose for community discussions
 - language for a brief introduction facilitators can use to kick off discussions and explain what information is being sought and why (who we are, why we're here, and what info we are seeking)
 - final list of questions for community input
 - general do's and don'ts for facilitation
- Information on King County including geographic area covered by County, major services, important contacts, and existing County efforts to meet needs of immigrant and refugee communities
- Template for note takers to ensure consistency in community discussion notes
- Sign in sheet template for community members to share contacts if interested in following task force progress and final report

Ericka also noted that there the County can contract to cover costs of community organizations hosting the discussions. She will follow up with the task force to note the budget cap, and instructions for how to contract with the County.

The group had a brief discussion about whether the broad questions developed at the January retreat need revision. There was consensus to keep the questions broad, but a suggestion to pare the list down to three key questions, and to make sure we are also asking for ideas on solutions.

IV Continuation of visioning discussion
Brainstorming on big picture (social justice, lasting impact) & how to get there
All
40 min

Margi led a brief discussion with King County staff sharing thoughts on what has made other County commissions successful, or have impact. Among the suggestions/examples of good practice were:

- Produce an annual report
- Make presentations to the Council

- Meet with Council caucuses and individual Councilmembers when issues arise
- Produce a report on how the County can improve, and work to get a Councilmember to give it teeth by sponsoring legislations to enact recommendations
- Develop personal relationships with Councilmembers and County staff
- Consider what staffing the commission needs from County
- Hold public meetings regularly at locations in the community (twice a year?) so that there is a regular venue for two-way information sharing
- Consider something like a participatory budgeting process that deliberately seeks public input
- Establish a translation and interpretation plan from the outset so that it is not an after thought
- Composition of the commission should reflect immigrant and refugee communities in County
- Include civic education and engagement in all outreach

V Sub-groups report back & full task force discussion

All

90 min

Each sub-group provided a brief update on their work since the retreat, and some posed questions to the full task force for input on recommendations they are beginning to formulate based on their research and discussion thus far.

Mission/Membership/Scope/Power subgroup: (chaired by Alaric, including Rich, Mahnaz, Habtamu and Ahmed). Subgroup is focused on defining the mission, membership and scope of duties for the Commission, and considering how to ensure the Commission has power/teeth for impact. Rich shared subgroup's thinking so far on an overarching mission, guidelines for commission size and membership, scope of duties, and what could be built into commission recommendations so that the commission has power and is adequately resourced.

Questions discussed with full task force included:

- What is the right balance of commission members between immigrant and refugee representatives?
- Should commission membership be restricted to those coming from immigrant and refugee communities?
- Should there be ex officio (non-voting) seats for members of the philanthropic and/or business community to help connect the commission to folks with wider networks, influence and resources?

Place subgroup: (chaired by Dinah, including Michael, Lupita and Denise). Subgroup is focused on the differing needs of immigrant and refugee communities in urban, suburban, and unincorporated areas. Dinah shared that the subgroup has done some initial research, and has identified a lot of gaps in information on suburban, rural and unincorporated areas, such as:

- What % of levy income is going to these areas?
- How are immigrant and refugee communities' priorities and needs reflected in County data, plans, etc.?
- What is the extent of disparity in resources and services for immigrant and refugee communities in these areas, particularly in terms of housing quality, income, education, etc?
- How can the commission help to address these disparities? For instance, commission membership should deliberately include representatives from those areas, commission should hold meetings in those areas regularly, and commission should have some mandate to advocate for inclusion of these areas in strategic plans, budgets, etc. so that the most marginalized areas are receiving focus and resources.

Questions posed, but not fully discussed due to time constraints, included:

- Should the commission be tasked with filling in data gaps?
- Should the commission focus on the needs of undocumented immigrants?

Alignment/Coordination subgroup: (chaired by Sameth, including Lola, Joana and Mengstab). Subgroup is focused on King County's current efforts and coordination/alignment with other local (cities, state, service

providers, etc.) efforts on immigrant and refugee issues. Sameth's subgroup has reviewed available research resources and begun to conduct interviews and meetings to gather additional information. They are finding that there is a lot of work being done, but it lacks coordination. Funding for immigrant and refugee issues is not increasing year to year, and there is a glaring lack of funding for mental health in particular (a lot of funding is earmarked for ESL).

The subgroup has started to think through priorities for the commission, including:

- Citizenship
- Civic engagement
- Perceptions of immigrants and refugees in suburban areas – commission should undertake research on this question in King County
- Most vulnerable subsections of immigrant and refugee groups, like homeless, those with mental health issues, those experiencing domestic violence, undocumented people, and those who are under and unemployed (without living wage jobs)
- Economic investment opportunities via things like the Communities of Opportunity initiative.

Each subgroup confirmed they are keeping notes of their research and work so that they will have it readily accessible for later discussion, recommendations, etc.

Adjourned at 8:30 pm

Items for follow up:

- Consultants to send Doodle polls to schedule April full task force meeting & May retreat (and cancel April retreat)
- Ericka to provide task force with information on budget cap and contracting process for community discussions
- Carmela to circulate community discussion tracking spreadsheet to task force
- Consultants and County staff to follow up with requested materials for community discussion facilitation and note taking, etc.
- Ericka to work on scheduling County budget discussion with Dwight (either at April task force meeting or separately, depending on availability)
- Task force members to send community discussion notes to Bookda and Margi as soon as available, and no later than May 1. Consultants will process notes on a rolling basis and periodically feedback key findings to task force

Items for future consideration/planning:

- County will ensure Councilmembers are invited to community forums, particularly for ones happening in their districts
- Notes from community meetings should be posted to the task force's website so information is publicly available