



Hamilton

MINUTES
IMMIGRANT & REFUGEE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Thursday, June 9, 2011 - 6:30 pm
City Hall, 71 Main St. W., Room 192

Present: Aspy Ayrton, Shuja Qureshi, Zafar Siddiqui, Maher Hamade, Arvind Sahay, Minh Trinh, Hana Rotchild, Dena Honig, Mohamed Hamouda, Paul Hoang, Isaac Acquah, David Hosten, Teresa Simms-Obidi, Dustin Rouse, Thayra Marting

Also Present: Maxine Carter, Dan Sadler - Access & Equity Division, City of Hamilton

Regrets: Nasir Sarwar, Joana Fejzaj, Sumaira Khurshid, Abdulkhaliq Herati

Absent: Rita Giancarlo

1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST.

None declared.

2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS.

- All were welcomed and introduced themselves

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA.

The agenda was approved as presented.

S. Qureshi/A. Ayrton

To accept the agenda as approved.

CARRIED.

4. Approval of minutes of meeting May 12, 2011

A. Ayrton/S. Qureshi

To approve the minutes of May 12, 2011 as presented.

CARRIED.

Matters Arising from the Minutes

- 4.1.1 A discussion of item # 5.4 of December 09, 2010 meeting regarding Iraqi Refugees in Hamilton took place. M. Carter provided an overview of the context of this item. There was a concern that a significant number of Iraqi newcomers and refugees will be arriving in Hamilton and there is no organized settlement support available to help them especially since SISO closed. The Iraqi community

was concerned about the negative repercussion that this gap (lack of coordinated comprehensive settlement services) has on newcomers and refugees and hence planned a series of discussions with government and community agencies to problem solve. They felt that the Immigrant and Refugee Committee should be one of the consulted groups.

4.1.2 M. Carter informed the committee that in the previous month a community agency was contacted by a Federal Agency stating that there was a plan to bring a large number of new refugees to Hamilton, over the next few years. This agency initiated a meeting with other service providers to critically review the capacity of Hamilton in its' current state to help these newly arriving refugees to settle and to map out a support system. The situation did not materialize however the agencies are continuing to meet to ensure they do have a coordinated plan should Hamilton be presented with this situation in the future. Committee members expressed concern regarding this harsh reality of not having a capable and well organized settlement structure in Hamilton. In addition, committee members noted that Wesley Urban Ministry and YMCA will provide some services to newcomers similar to what Settlement and Integration Services Organization used to provide however these services are not settlement services.

5.0 Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

5.1 Position of Chair:

Nominations were declared open for the position of Chair. Two members were nominated however only one member accepted the nomination. The new chair for 2011- 2012 in by acclamation is David Hosten.

5.2 Position of Vice-Chair:

Only one member was nominated for the position of Vice-Chair. He accepted the nomination. The new vice-chair for 2011-2012 in by acclamation is Mahar Hamade.

Congratulations to both David Hosten and Mahar Hamade.

6. Business Items.

6.1 Work Plan & Priorities.

Discussion and review of work plan

The Chair put the question to committee members regarding what goals they would like to see the committee achieve and what policy advice would they want to provide to Council regarding immigrants and refugees?

D. Rouse presented a list of 7 ideas that he wanted the committee to consider including a request to discuss the strategic objectives of the previous committee.

Other committee members had the same concerns and supported many of the recommendations that D. Rouse put forward. The area of greatest agreement involved lack of employment opportunities and the barriers that prevents immigrants and refugees from accessing employment.

Committee would like to have some of the settlement agencies, Ontario Works and professional associations at the table to discuss the issue of employment and access to trades and professions. Other priority areas were housing and transportation.

The committee has tabled the discussion and selection of sub-committees for next meeting.

7. Review and comment on reports, legislation, studies.

No reports.

8. Correspondence/Current affairs

No correspondence.

9. New Business.

- 9.1 Resignation of current members
- 9.2 Community committees to consider
- 9.3 Other resource people at the table

10. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting will be held on July 14, 2011.

11. Adjournment.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.