



Hamilton

MINUTES
IMMIGRANT & REFUGEE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Thursday, October 13, 2011 - 6:30 p.m.
City Hall, 71 Main St. W., Room 192

Present: Aspy Ayrton, Joana Fejzaj, Maher Hamade, Mohamed Hamouda, Dena Honig, David Hosten, Shuja Qureshi, Hana Pinthus Rotchild, Minh Trinh, Sumaira Khurshid, Paul Hoang, Isaac Acquah.

Also Present: Maxine Carter, Jaffar Hayat - Access & Equity Division, and Grace Maciak, Ontario Works, City of Hamilton.

Regrets: Nasir Sarwar, Abdulkhaliq Herati, Thayra Marting, Dustin Rouse, Teresa Simms-Obidi, Rita Giancarlo, Zafar Siddiqui, Arvind Sahay.

Absent:

1. Declaration of Interest.
None declared

2. Welcome and Introductions.
The meeting started at 6:40 p.m.

3. Approval of Agenda.
Addition of item # 8.3 Leave of absence for members
Addition of item # 8.4 Invitation to speakers

A. Ayrton/D. Honig
To accept the agenda, as amended.

CARRIED.

4. Approval of minutes of meeting September 8, 2011.
Review of minutes

A. Ayrton/S. Qureshi
To approve the minutes of September 8, 2011, as presented.

CARRIED.

5. Matters Arising from the Minutes.
None at this time

5.1 Wesley Urban Ministries presentation:

An explanation regarding the reporting mechanism of Government Assisted Refugees Program that YMCA- Hamilton and 5 other sites around the province reports to YMCA in Toronto.

D. Honig will do further follow-up with staff from Wesley Urban Ministries

6. Business Items.

6.1.1 Work Plan & Priorities.

M. Hamouda requested members discuss the priority items one by one.

Priority 1: Employment Recruitment.

D. Hosten informed members that the employment recruitment initiative was the top priority of the previous committee; however the committee still had outstanding issues to address.

The Immigrant & Refugee Advisory Committee members unanimously decided to remove this item from the list

Priority 2: Employment.

The I & R Advisory Committee members unanimously decided to remove it from the list

Priority 3: Employment.

M. Hamouda asked to merge priorities 1, 2 and 3 and then address it as a single item

P. Honig asked to have a strategy to work on this issue

M. Hamade requested members to take more time in deciding about item 3 and have a fuller discussion at the next meeting

Priority 4: Outreach.

Committee members agreed that this is a priority area.

M. Hamade updated members about the upcoming "Open House" on November 26, 2011, which is being organized by the I & R Committee. He also informed members that the planning committee for this event is, meeting on weekly basis

Priority 5: Regulating Bodies.

D. Hosten stated that it is too broad and it needs to be modified for future work of the committee

Priority 6: Working with PED.

D. Hosten informed the committee that, last year (2010) Planning & Economic Development made a presentation to the I & R Committee and, later on, a sub-committee worked on this issue and presented a report to the I & R Committee. He highlighted the salient features of the report and asked new members to read it. The report highlighted the recruitment strategy of Kitchener & Mississauga regions as a best practice, with easy to access website and information

M. Hamade suggested bringing the President of the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce to the committee, for a presentation

Priority 7: Antiracism Training.

The I & R Committee members decided to remove it from the list

Priority 8: Newcomers Guide.

D. Honig asked to update the guide. Staff informed that the guide was updated last year. Members agreed that the guide be updated once every year

Priority 9: School Boards.

S. Khurshid asked that if the committee look into some of the issues related to curriculum and the quality of education
Discussion included - the present curriculum does not work well for all students,

Priority 10: Dissemination of Information.

P. Hoang suggested the use emerging media and asked the committee to have programs on the McMaster Radio Station
Some members suggested having programs on Cable 14
M. Hamade wrapped up discussion on the work plan and asked the team members to bring their top three priorities to the next meeting.

6.1.2 Newcomer Guide.

Some Committee members have provided information to the staff. The guide is being finalized and will be ready for the Open House.

6.1.3. Newcomer Welcome Open House – planning.

The Planning committee presented a report to Committee. Following suggestions/ issues were highlighted by the committee members

The Committee members will participate in other similar events to spread the message. I. Acquah, P. Honig, Grace Maciak, N. Sarwar and A. Ayrton volunteered to participate in “Strengthening New Comers Services” event on October 21, 2011 where they will share the information about our upcoming event.

Organizations must be invited on the basis of services they provide to newcomers in Hamilton including international schools and libraries. The event will be advertised in the ethnic media.

I. Acquah and Y. Fezaj also requested that their names be added on the Planning committee. M Carter will e-mail members regarding the upcoming dates for the planning committee. M. Carter will also prepare letters, application form and brochure

A. Ayrton/I. Acquah

That staff register for the Hamilton Training Board Open House to share information about the committee and promote the November 26, 2011 event.

CARRIED.

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

- Deferred

8. Correspondence/Current affairs.

8.1 Housing and Homelessness Action Plan - Community Engagement.

M. Trinh/M Hamouda

To invite the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan Staff to the December I & R Committee meeting.

CARRIED.

8.2 Settlement Services Information.

Tabled to the next meeting.

8.3 Leave of absence.

D. Honig/S. Qureshi

That a leave of absence be granted to for Dustin Rouse, Teresa Simms-Obidi and Hana Pinthus for the period of three months.

CARRIED.

8.4 Invitation to speakers.

A.Ayrton/D. Hosten

That Marvin Ryder of the DeGroot School of Business be invited to a future committee meeting to make a presentation on issues related to the business of the committee.

CARRIED.

M. Hamade/A. Ayrton

That Beatrice Palmer, Program Coordinator, Occupationally Specific Language Training, Mohawk College be invited to the November meeting, to discuss the program.

CARRIED.

9. New Business.

9.1 Information Sharing Protocol.

Tabled till the next meeting

10. Next Meeting Date.

The next meeting will be held on November 10, 2011

11. Adjournment.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.