



Hamilton

**MINUTES**  
**IMMIGRANT & REFUGEE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (I&RC)**  
**Thursday July 12, 2012 - 6:30 pm**  
**City Hall, 71 Main St. W., Room 192**

---

**Present:** Aspy Ayrton, Sumaira Khurshid, Dustin Rouse, Minh Trinh, Dena Honig, Paul Hoang, Zafar Siddiqui, Shuja Qureshi, Abdulkhaliq Herati.

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

**Regrets:** David Hosten, Hana Pinthus Rotchild (leave), Nasir Sarwar (leave), Isaac Acquah (leave), Joana Fejzaj, Thayra Marting, Maher Hamade, Arvind Sahay.

**Absent:**

**1. Welcome and Introductions.**

Both the Chair and vice-chair were unable to attend the meeting. Maxine Carter chaired the meeting as requested. All were welcomed and everyone introduced themselves.

**2. Declaration of Interest.**

None declared.

**3. Approval of Agenda.**

**A. Ayrton/D. Rouse**

To accept the agenda, as presented.

**CARRIED.**

**4. Approval of Minutes of June 14, 2012.**

**D. Honig/S. Qureshi**

To approve the minutes of June 14, 2012, as presented.

**CARRIED.**

**5. Matters Arising from the Minutes of June 14, 2012.**

**5.1 Work Force Census.**

The committee was informed that the Work Force Census has been added to the task list of sub-committee 2.

## **5.2 Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council.**

No update regarding Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council. However some members suggested that the Immigrant & Refugee Advisory Committee should be represented on the Council and should get regular updates regarding Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council initiatives. The committee would like Chair Hosten to send a letter to the Council requesting that the Immigrant & Refugee Advisory Committee, be a part of the process or to receive regular meeting minutes.

## **5.2 Awareness about Immigrant & Refugee Advisory Committee - Outreach.**

Some members raised the questions regarding the goal of outreach of the Immigrant & Refugee Advisory Committee, and what the committee would like to achieve.

D. Honig citing the example of the recently concluded HCCI initiative on mental health mentioned that settlement and employment related issues among newcomers and refugees are affecting their mental health.

The committee discussed developing linkages with service providers and receive regular updates about their programs which should help newcomers to access necessary information.

M. Carter informed the committee that Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) would be happy to make a presentation regarding settlement programs in Hamilton, however they (CIC) would want the committee to send them some draft questions which would help them to source out the information prior to the presentation.

This list of questions was generated:

1. How many newcomers came to Canada last year?
2. How many newcomers settled in Hamilton last year?
3. How many refugees came to Hamilton last year?
4. Can you tell us what plans you (CIC) have for Hamilton? For example, do you plan to bring refugees or business class immigrants over the next few years? What are the criteria used to make this decision?
5. How do you determine where to settle refugees?
6. What kinds of services do you fund settlement services for?
7. What kind of support would CIC need from our committee?

Committee members were asked to send any additional questions to M. Carter no later than July 24, 2012 so that she can prepare a comprehensive list of questions for CIC.

### **5.3 By Law and Policy Review Project.**

M. Carter provided an update on the project and informed the committee that the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of workshops, for staff has been scheduled and the project is on track.

### **6. Presentation.**

No presentation for this meeting.

### **7. Business Items.**

#### **7.1 Work Plan & Priorities Discussion**

The following members joined sub committees.

➤ **Sub-committee: Employment Opportunities**

1. Dena Honig
2. Paul Hoang

➤ **Sub-committee: Partnerships**

1. Zafar Siddiqui

➤ **Sub-committee: Policy and Programs**

1. Sumaira Khurshid
2. Dena Honig

➤ **Sub-committee: Welcome Open House**

1. Shuja Qureshi

➤ **Sub-committee: Refugee Claimant**

1. Paul Hoang

#### **7.1.1 Open House Sub committee:**

M. Carter informed the committee that the recommended dates for the Open house had been booked however the committee must choose one of these dates so that the planning can begin. The committee decided that it will be highly desirable to host the open house on Saturday October 13<sup>th</sup>.

#### **D. Honig/S. Qureshi**

That the Immigrant and Refugee Advisory Committee's Welcome Open House be set for Saturday, October 13, 2012 from 12 noon to 4 p.m.

**CARRIED.**

The committee also decided to add an additional question in the evaluation sheets regarding the preference of the day for the Welcome Open House for 2013.

### **7.1.2 Sub-committee 2: Employment Opportunities**

The sub-committee met on June 27, 2012, to discuss employment opportunities for immigrants.

M. Hamada informed the sub-committee that the Chamber of Commerce will advertise in the near future employment opportunities along with networking events. The sub-committee noted that, there are already many organizations working on resume writing and job preparation hence the advisory committee will be sure to refer immigrants and newcomers to employment agencies.

The sub-committee also shared the following observations:

- The committee must advise and make City Council aware of the issues that are important to immigrants.
- The sub committee suggested changing the wording of the first part of Immigrant and Refugee Advisory Committee's mandate to "Offering help and guidance to immigrants by referring them to agencies that provide employment services" with emphasis towards the benefits of hiring immigrants. The other incentives may include tax exemptions, grants.
- The sub committee suggested changing the job fairs section of the mandate to "Have an updated list of current job fairs in the region." This could be updated every month, for up to six months in advance of the job fair.
- The sub committee suggested that a proper report back mechanism is needed to share the information regarding job fairs with the Immigrants & Refugee Advisory Committee.
- The sub committee also suggested organizing "reverse" job fair, by bringing newcomers who are looking for work to set up a table, and let the employers visit those tables, instead of the other way around. The immigrants could display their resumes on boards for the employers to see and they could also hand out business cards to the potential employers.

### **7.1.3 Sub-committee 5: Barriers regarding newcomers and immigrants, with respect to professions and trades.**

The sub-committee met on June 26, 2012, to discuss issues of newcomers with regards to professions and trades and identified three key professions (Engineers, Doctors/Nurses and Pharmacists.) In the future, the group will also add teachers to this list.

As a first step the sub committee will work on the following areas of concern:

- Assessment of foreign credentials.
- How the credentials are viewed (process that immigrants go through when they have their credentials assessed.)
- Examinations- are there standard courses that immigrants can take to get qualified?
- Operating skills/Advancement
- Mentoring process for new immigrants

In the second step the sub-committee will seek out opinions of various professionals on these issues from the sectors mentioned above. D. Rouse will work on medical regulating bodies and get their contact information, so that the sub-committee can begin a dialogue with them. A. Ayrton will get contact information for the other professions.

The sub-committee will work on specific issues, including:

- Getting representatives from selected professions to come and talk to Immigrant and Refugee Advisory Committee regarding barriers to employment
- Engaging MPs for advocacy on these issues
- Getting guidelines from foreign professionals on how to proceed

## **8. Review and comment on reports, legislation and studies.**

No reports shared.

## **9. Correspondence/Current affairs.**

No correspondence.

## **10. New Business.**

No new business.

## **11. Next Meeting Date.**

There will be no meeting in August. Sub-committee 6 (Open House) will meet in August to develop a work plan and start working on the Open House. The next meeting will be held on September 13, 2012.

**12. Adjournment.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.