



Hamilton

**MINUTES**

**IMMIGRANT & REFUGEE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (I&R)**

**Thursday, April 13, 2017 - 6:30 p.m.**

**City Hall, 71 Main St. W., Room 192**

---

**Present:** Zenaida Roque Cruz, Marie Robbins, Huzaifa Saeed, Ramon Petgrave, Beau Daniels, Yohana Otite, Mane Arratia, Holly McKean, Dena Honig, Coleen Gallant, Suad Badri, Eman Ismail-Elmasri, Leo Johnson, Mir Nazmul Islam, Juanita Maldonado, Ahmed Farah

**Also Present:** Maxine Carter - Human Rights, Access & Equity,  
**Regrets:** Sylvia Gill, Noor Nizam, Aspy Ayrton, Funmi Akiode, Grace Maciak - Ontario Works, Sam Abraham, Councillor Donna Skelly

**Absent:**

**Guests:** Layla Abdulrahim - HIPC, Casimir Boivin - Ryerson University

**Chair Person :** Zenaida Roque Cruz

**1.** The Chair welcomed everyone, calling the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m.

**2. Declaration of Interest**  
No declarations of interest.

**3. Approval of Agenda**

**D. Honig/M. Arratia**

That the Immigrant and Refugee Advisory Committee approve the agenda of April 13, 2017 as presented.

**CARRIED.**

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**  
The minutes of February 9, 2017 were reviewed.

**E. Ismail-Elmasri/B. Daniels**

That the minutes of February 9, 2017 be approved as presented.

**CARRIED.**

## **5. Presentation**

- Casimir Boivin – A journalism student at Ryerson University would like to interview any newcomers who came to Hamilton directly. The focus of C. Boivin's research is about the various stories and experiences of the many newcomers' journeys to their new home. C. Boivin is recording the interviews/documentaries and they will be heard live on podcast radio. Committee members who wish to be interviewed can contact C. Boivin directly.

## **6. Business Items**

**6.1** The committee members reviewed the previous list of ideas for discussion with respect to the work plan for 2017 – 2018. A list of ideas generated were drafted at the previous meetings and members were to add to the list or send additional ideas not covered previously.

**Employability of newcomers** – committee members distilled the list down to the following areas: evaluation of existing employment programs – specifically how many people go through these programs, how many get jobs and how many of the newcomers are working in their field of study or previous work and,

**Housing - specifically rentals** - Committee members felt that many newcomers do not know their legal rights as renters/tenants with respect to the Residential Tenancies Act. Such things as privacy, breaking a lease, repairs, evictions and rental costs. Members noted that this information should be translated into different languages. Questions were raised regarding the number of newcomers living in social housing? Some members recounted stories of newcomer experiences, specifically Syrian newcomers – they had to move to lower cost housing because their financial support was reduced and could no longer afford the current rent. This created some problems for their children who had to change schools and readjust to a new environment again. Some families had to move in together in order to afford the rent after their status changed and they were on OW. They could not afford the original apartment/housing rent.

**The Newcomer Open House** was put back on the work plan – suggestions that it have a focus on youth. The Open House is usually scheduled for late September or early October of each year.

**Accessing Services**, such as disability services

**Newcomer Youth** – 18-29 years. What services are available for this age group? What recreational and study supports are available to the newcomer

community as there are usually no extended family to provide support after 18 years and no income as they are not included in OW

**Educational workshops for parents and students –**

- How to access post-secondary funding for college and university.
- The ABCs about the secondary education system and the differences between applied courses and academic. The pros and cons.

The committee then shortlisted the ideas. What emerged were four strong areas, employability of newcomers, housing rights and responsibilities of newcomers, Education and Welcome Open House. The Committee agreed that the Welcome Open House should have a focus perhaps on youth services and rights and responsibilities.

**H. McKeon/ M. Arratia**

That the Immigrant and Refugee Advisory Committee form the following four working groups on Housing, Employment, Education, Welcome Open House, to work on crafting potential activities for the respective work groups for the 2017-2018 work plan to be presented at a future meeting.

**CARRIED.**

Committee members volunteered to sit on the working groups of choice and to start meeting as soon as possible, to prepare a draft of relevant activities for presentation to the Committee. Members will report back on their progress at the next committee meeting of Immigrant and Refugee Advisory Committee.

**6.2 Committee Communication – key messages**

Committee members were asked to work on a one-minute elevator speech or key message for the I & R committee utilizing the mandate and terms of reference, resulting in a message that is succinct and effective.

**7.0 Correspondence/Current Affairs**

No correspondence.

**8.0 New Business**

No new business.

**9.0 Information Sharing**

**Mental Health Awareness Week May 6, 2017**

The event will be moved to City Hall. Z. Roque Cruz and Y. Ottie will email the Committee with project specifics.

**10.0 Next Meeting Date**

Thursday May 11, 2017

### **11.0 Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.