



Hamilton

Minutes

IMMIGRANT & REFUGEE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Thursday July 12, 2018

City Hall, 71 Main St. W., Room 192/193, 6:30pm

Present: Zenaida Roque Cruz, Eman Ismail-Elmasri, Holly McKean, Marie Robbins, Sam Abraham, Beau Daniels, Yohana Otite, Dena Honig, Mané Arratia

Also Present: Nadia Olivieri, Human

Regrets: N/A

Absent: Leo Johnson, Suad Badri, Mir Islam

Chair: Zenaida Roque Cruz

Welcome and Introductions (6:40 pm)

1. Approval of the Agenda

(B. Daniels/E. Elmasri)

Approve the minutes as changed

- 5.2 Eman to create I&R signs Beau to deliver

CARRIED

2. Declarations of Interest – None declared

3. Approval of Minutes

(D. Hong/ M. Mane)

Immigrant and Refugee Meeting Minutes – June14, 2014

CARRIED

4. Presentations

4.1 *Scott Jones from Micah House*

Capacity: +/-12 people depending in number of children

Funding: They rely on some grants from the City and more heavily on funding from religious groups and private donations; no funding available from the federal government.

One of the benefits is that Micah House does a good job of assisting immigrants and refugees into housing. Micah House typically working with asylum seekers who are usually people coming through Toronto or Montreal airports. Word of mouth and referrals from other agencies are also a big part of client referrals.

Micah House is seeing more "irregular arrivals"- arriving in Montreal through an unauthorized border crossing.

They have seen more large Nigerian families that are harder to place. Looking to communities in the periphery like Caledonia but those communities don't have the infra structure to support new immigrants or refugees.

By the end of 2018 Micah House has seen over 900 people since 2006. About 85% of those that they are still in contact are thriving.

It is what is being done at doing at Micah house that facilitates people success. In particular residents at Micah House are provided with much needed advice outside of legal advice. They had to turn away over 500 people last year due to space availability.

We would like to be able to establish a housing placement service. Barrier is there is a waning housing availability. Want property owners that are sympathetic in that they don't require tenants to provide credit checks or enormous security deposit.

Micah House accesses Legal Aid to help refugee claimants. Any government cuts that impact this is going to have significant impact to the number of people they can assist.

Average time in Micah House is about 2 months

However, they are now returned to the long waiting time for those requiring permanent status. The wait time for a refugee hearing has jumped from 3 months to 1 to 3 years. This means that people won't have Canadian Status over that period. This may hamper a family's ability to secure housing because property managers may not look upon their non-status as a secure investment for a lease.

Summary of trends:

- 506 individuals were turned away in 2018.*
- Over 400 individuals were turned away in 2017.*
- Between 2009 and 2016 on average 200 individuals were turned away/year.*
- Between 2006 and 2008 over 1000 individuals were turned away/year.*

Wish list:

- 200 short term beds for refugee claimants in a setting that is balanced toward warmth and away from an institutional environment.*
- See a pathway for housing in the City of Hamilton plans.*
- Adjust downward fee for builders who offer reasonable housing.*

Guest #2: Dwayne Ali form Everpixel

Dwayne is involved with a project to preserve history and heritage of immigrants and newcomers, specifically pictures.

Now high Speed digitization scanner (that didn't exist 2 years ago) can now do 500 photos in 1 hour. Digitization has sparked telling the stories of heritage. This has lead "Our Back Stories" project. This helps to promote the sharing of experiences that occurs across cultures and people. Inspire other people by learning that others have experienced the same trepidation.

Digitized photography is used with Alzheimer/Dementia/ mildly cognitively impaired individuals for memory therapy.

5. Business / Discussion Items

- 5.1 Attendance /Membership Status –Chair will likely need a medical leave of absence
- 5.2 Open House Working Group Update (July 27, 2018) (completed post meeting –as quorum lost at 8:00pm)
 - 5.2.1.1 Reviewed participant list.
29 participant tables /7 participants have been waitlisted
 - 5.2.1.2 Review Workshop set up.
Open rooms 192/193 for tables? Need to confirm table placement in first floor and second floor foyer.
Move workshops to rooms 171 and 264 (Need signage)
 - 5.2.1.3 Volunteers –Beau supervising rotation of volunteer
Eman will create schedule.

Outstanding items for Newcomer day identified and list provided to the group. Beau, Marie, Mane, Yohana, Zenaida, Eman, Dena will meet again to review flow prior to the September 27th, 2018 event

- 5.3 Housing Working Group Update – Deferred
- 5.4 Employment Working Group Update – Deferred
- 5.5 Education Working Group Update – Deferred
- 5.6 Presenting to Council - Deferred
- 5.7 Outstanding Business Items – Deferred

6. Other Business – n/a

7. Adjournment

(S. Abraham/ B. Daniels)

That the July 15, 2018 I & R meeting adjourned at 8:00pm.

Next Meeting: Thursday, September 13, 2018 6:30 pm