



Hamilton

MINUTES
IMMIGRANT & REFUGEE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Thursday, November 10, 2011 - 6:30 pm
City Hall, 71 Main St. W., Room 192

Present: Aspy Ayrton, Dena Honig, Minh Trinh, Isaac Acquah, Abdulkhaliq Herati, Thayra Marting, Zafar Siddiqui, Arvind Sahay

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

Regrets: Nasir Sarwar, Joana Fejzaj, Maher Hamade, Mohamed Hamouda, David Hosten, Shuja Qureshi, Hana Pinthus Rotchild, Sumaira Khurshid, Paul Hoang

Absent:

Guests: P. Palmer, Occupation Specific Language Training (OSLT) - Mohawk College

1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST.

None declared.

2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS.

All were welcomed and introduced themselves

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA.

10.2 Community Connection – News Letter

A. Ayrton/Dena Honig

To accept the agenda, as amended.

CARRIED.

4. Approval of minutes of meeting October 13, 2011.

A. Ayrton/A. Sahay

To approve the minutes of October 13, 2011, as presented.

CARRIED.

5. Matters Arising from the Minutes.

5.1 Update on Strengthening New Comers Services event:

A. Ayrton briefed members about the “Strengthening New Comers Services” event on October 21, 2011. More than forty organizations have their tables in the event and I & R members approached them to register for the “I & R Open House” and also encouraged them to invite their clients to participate in the event. Members present were, I. Acquah, P. Honig, G. Maciak, N. Sarwar, M. Hamade and A. Ayrton.

6. Presentations.

6.1 Occupation Specific Language Training (OSLT) - Mohawk College.

P. Palmer, OSLT - Mohawk College delivered a presentation regarding her program.

The OSLT program provides services to new comers, to improve their workplace communication skills and is funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). In Hamilton, Mohawk College has been offering OSLT program since 2008 and, so far, has offered 8 courses. The OSLT program is offered to the individuals who have educational background or training in Human Services, Health Sciences and Business. The participants of the program normally fall under Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) 6-8 and must have done a language assessment within last 6 months. The program duration is 6 months, with two lectures per week.

The graduates of the program receive a certificate of participation from Colleges Ontario and Certificate in Workplace Communication Skills for Health Sciences, Human Services or Business.

Question: What should new immigrants, having good communication skills, do, since this program is not for them?

A. Such people must get help from Settlement Services.

Question: Is this program specific to professionals?

A. The program is specific to the needs of professionals in the area of Early Childhood Education, Child and Youth Work, Nursing, Personal Support Work and Business.

Question: How would you compare it with Test Of English as a Foreign Language (TOFEL)?

A. The program is not focused on the academic language, i.e. no grammar and writing comprehension. It can not be compared with TOFEL and International English Language Testing System (IELTS).

Question: What is the equivalence of this program, as compared to TOFEL/IELTS or CLB?

A. None.

A. Ayrton/T. Marting

To accept the Occupational Specific Language Training Program presentation by P. Palmer, Mohawk College.

CARRIED.

7. Business Items.

7.1 Work Plan & Priorities.

Tabled to the next meeting.

7.2 Discussion and review of work plan including Priority #3 Employment - Discussion.

Tabled to the next meeting.

7.3 Newcomer Welcome Open House – planning.

M. Carter provided an update on the Newcomer Welcome Open House and informed members that the Planning committee, for this event, has held 4-5 meetings and have developed a detailed plan for the logistics of the Open House. She shared the list of participating organizations, brochure, and detailed task list. She encouraged all committee members to invite friends, colleagues, and members of their organizations and community to participate in the event.

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

None

9. Correspondence/Current affairs.

9.1 Housing and Homelessness Action Plan - Community Engagement

M. Carter informed the committee that staff will make a presentation in January 2012.

9.2 Settlement Services Information

Tabled to the next meeting.

10. New Business.

10.1 Information Sharing Protocol

Tabled to a future meeting.

10.2 Community Connection

A. Ayrton shared the current issue of the Community Connection newspaper by the Hamilton Association for Residential

and Recreational Redevelopment Programs (HARRRP), (a Settlement service provider) with the committee. He also recommended that the committee invite staff from HARRRP to come and deliver a presentation on its program and services.

A. Ayrton/D. Honig

To invite Jahan Zeb, from the Hamilton Association for Residential and Recreational Redevelopment Programs, to deliver a presentation to the Immigrant & Refugee Advisory Committee.

CARRIED

11. Next Meeting Date.

The next meeting will be held on December 8, 2011.

12. Adjournment.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.