



Hamilton

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

Present: Aspy Ayrton, David Hosten, Dena Honig, Minh Trinh, Zafar Siddiqui, Shuja Qureshi, Paul Hoang, Abdulkhaliq Herati, Joana Fejzaj, Thayra Marting.

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

Regrets: Hana Pinthus Rotchild (leave), Nasir Sarwar (leave), Isaac Acquah, (leave) Mohamed Hamouda, Sumaira Khurshid, Maher Hamade

Absent: Arvind Sahay, Dustin Rouse,

Guests: Muhammad Shabbir, Housing Help Centre

1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST.

None declared.

2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS.

All were welcomed and everyone introduced themselves.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA.

A. Ayrton/S. Qureshi

To accept the agenda, as presented.

CARRIED.

4. Approval of minutes of March 8, 2012.

A. Ayrton/Z. Siddiqui

To approve the minutes of Mar 8, 2012, as presented.

CARRIED.

5. Matters Arising from the Minutes of March 8, 2012.

5.1 Roger Cameron – Committee Against Racism Chairperson

M. Carter informed the committee that R. Cameron, Chairperson for the Committee Against Racism will update committee regarding the "Resource Centre" in a future meeting.

5.2 Workforce Census

The committee continued its discussion on the Work Force Census. Members agreed that it is important to know the statistics of immigrants working for the City of Hamilton. A. Ayrton mentioned that according to his knowledge immigrants are struggling to find jobs within Hamilton, despite the fact that some of them speak very good English.

In the ensuing discussion it was recommended to develop an inventory of the employment opportunities within the City of Hamilton to find which jobs that have the biggest turnover and how to target them.

It was also mentioned that the availability of the City's website only in one language is also a challenge for people, who want to access information about the City and have difficulty in understanding English language. This is the experience of newcomers and those who are migrating to Canada and are looking at Hamilton as a possible destination.

6. Presentation.

Mr. Mohammad Shabbir of Housing Help Centre delivered a presentation about the Bedbug Program. Salient points of the presentation were as follows;

- The bug is nocturnal in nature and is almost of the size of an apple seed
- Nymphs: can bite soon after hatching and feed on human blood.
- Most common hiding places are walls, furniture, mattresses and carpets
- The parasite hitch hikes and travels with the luggage and cloths
- It sucks blood from the victims and leaves a distinct mark on the body of victims
- Parasite does not spread any disease but may cause anxiety
- Vulnerable communities are mostly affected
- There may not be any specific reason for parasitic infestations and it has nothing to do with the social status of victims
- In case of bites, many victims do not need any treatment

Precautions:

- Avoid clutter and littering of the floor since it will provide bugs with a place to hide
- Always be careful when buying used articles and furniture because it may harbour parasites

- Do not use synthetic chemicals or over the counter chemicals to eradicate infestation since it will increase the resistance against other natural chemicals
- Always use Integrated Pest Management, which is a long term sustainable method to eradicate the parasite
- Carry out regular inspections of your home and vacuum mattresses often

Question: How would you detect bed bugs?

Answer: Use a hair dryer, thin knife or playing card to force them out of hiding places and cracks.

Question: Which ones are the most vulnerable communities?

Answer: The new comers, since they sometime buy used articles, persons having issues with mobility and travellers by carrying infected luggage.

Question: Can you do the treatment yourself?

Answer: Yes! Anyone can do the treatment, but avoid using artificial chemicals.

Question: What are tenants supposed to do if they have bed bugs?

Answer: The tenant needs to inform the landlord, building manager and local public health unit.

Question: How much does the treatment cost?

Answer: It may vary with the size of dwelling but starting from \$500 for a single unit apartment.

Question: How do you find information for the service providers?

Answer: To find a licensed company near you visit, www.spmao.ca or www.pestworld.org.

7. Business Items.

7.1 Work Plan & Priorities.

A fuller discussion on work plan and priorities took place in the meeting. The committee discussed items one by one in the list of priorities.

Item 1: Education

The committee agreed to continue its work on the newcomer's education and skill training by working with service providers.

- **Access to education for immigrants to enhance current skills**
- **Language training – LINK, ESL, job specific**
- **Promotion of educational and professional development programs at community events - outreach**

Item 2: Job Fairs and Employment Opportunities

The committee agreed to link job fair with its advocacy campaigns and make it part of item 3.

- **Offering help and guidance with finding immigrants employment, and helping them with resume and cover letters.**
- **Provide opportunities to network, promote and showcase jobs companies that are hiring (for example in the IRC welcome open house)**

Item 3: Partnerships between ethnic groups and settlement services providers

The committee agreed to move forward on this to improve the networking and communication with new comers in Hamilton and must organize open house every year.

Item 4: Meetings with Community Leaders

Perhaps have open forms or individual meeting.

Item 5: To Do List

The committee agreed to develop a list of things to be discussed with City Council and staff. It was also agreed upon to develop a list of accomplishments to share with stakeholders and presentations to Council.

Item 6: Employment

Members agreed that this is one of the main areas of their work and I & RC must work with the Human Resources to increase the number of newcomer immigrants working with City of Hamilton.

Item 7: To invite Professional regulating bodies to have them hear concerns and issues of the newcomer and immigrants with respect to professions and trade.

Committee agreed that it must work on this item by planning better events and also by giving the new comers the opportunity to speak about their issues regarding the certification and accreditation with regulatory bodies. M. Carter will add the Fairness Commissioner into the list of invitees.

- **Accreditation issue for foreign trained professionals**

The accreditation is one of the key issues, affecting the employment opportunities of new immigrants. M. Carter will invite Sara Waling from HTAB to make a presentation regarding her recently released report. It was also decided to invite Anthony Hanes from OW program to brief committee

regarding how the accreditation program for foreign trained medical professionals is working.

Item 8: To discuss #4 of the term of Reference further.

“To make presentations, host workshops and/or open houses to educate service providers, Police Services, Ontario Works, School Boards, settlement agencies, employment agencies, professional regulating bodies and other relevant services and programs about immigrant and refugee issues.”

Item 9: Review with Local Immigration Partnership Council

The committee was apprised of the Local Immigration Partnership Council (LIPC) and was informed that Mr. Rees made two presentations to I & RC during 2010. It was recommended to invite a representative from LIPC to come to the future meeting of I & RC.

Item 10: Information regarding new settlements services providers.

Members agreed to develop a list of all the service providers and include the names of relatively new players like HARRRP and St. Joseph Women Centre in the list.

➤ **Helping immigrants to integrate more easily into the Canadian society**

The committee agreed to the fact that City of Hamilton organises a number of events throughout the year and these events are very important to connect people especially the new comers. J. Fejzaj recommended finding ways to connect new comers with the organisations and City's programs.

➤ **Finding affordable accommodation and transportation arrangements for the new immigrants**

It was recommended that committee must advocate and make recommendations to the City Council that subsidized bus passes, and affordable and social housing must be easily made available for new comers.

Item 11: Refugee Claimant

Some members highlighted the plight of refugees and the changes in the Health Care system and recommended I & RC to work on it.

7.1.1 Establishment of Work Group.

Tabled to the next meeting.

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

No reports shared.

9. Correspondence/Current affairs.

9.1 Settlement Services Information - Invitation to Citizenship & Immigration Canada.

10. New Business.

10.1 Leave of absence for Isaac Acquah

Committee granted four months leave of absence to Isaac Acquah.

A. Ayrton/D. Honig

To accept 4 months leave of absence for Isaac Acquah.

CARRIED.

11. Next Meeting Date.

The next meeting will be held on May 10, 2012.

12. Adjournment.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.