King County Immigrant & Commission Meeting 5/15/2019

Date: Wed, May 15, 2019

Location: YMCA Building, 14230 Bel-Red Rd, Bellevue, WA 98007 (Tarteel School)

Participants: Immigrant & Refugee Commissioners; Bookda Gheisar, Hannelore Makhani

Agenda

5:00PM | Introductions of each other and Hannelore Makhani, new staff at OESJ
5:30PM | Accept meeting minutes from April Meeting
5:40PM | Updates and Census 2020

Action Items:
- April minutes need to be amended to state that Mohammad Jan Ofuq was present
- Invite speakers from Census 2020, demographer

Attendance & Introductions
5:00PM-5:25PM

Immigrant and Refugee Commissioners in Attendance:
Senayet Negusse, Miguel Angel Duncan-Galvez Bravo, Hamdi Mohamed, Minal Ghassemieh, Mohamed Bakr, Mohammad Jan Ofuq, Issa Ndiaye, Fo-Ching Lu, Lalita Uppala, Andrew Kritovich

Absent Commissioners: Nimco Bulale, Monserrat Padilla, Medard Ngueita

Other Attendees:
- Bookda Gheisar, King County Immigrant and Refugee Policy Analyst
- Hannelore Makhani, King County Language Equity & Community Engagement
**Introductions**  
**5:25PM-5:30PM**  
Hannelore Makhani introduced herself and shared scope of her role coordinating language equity efforts across King County’s departments. She will also staff the Immigrant and Refugee Commission.

**Approve Meeting Minutes**  
**5:30PM-5:40PM**  
**Approval of April Meeting Minutes**  
There was an error in the meeting minutes. Mohammad did in fact attend the meeting. This will need to be corrected before the meeting minutes can be approved.

**Updates**  
**5:40PM-END**  
**Census 2020**  
Miguel shared that he is participating in a grant review process for organizations interested in engaging with the Census 2020 work (Seattle Foundation, in collaboration with another agencies King County and City funding). Commission agreed that it would be useful to have a representative from the state to come to share information on the Washington state fund, the $15 million allocated for Census outreach.

**Questions around communications from the Commission**  
Commissioners asked for clarification regarding their role in making official political statements. How can we express the problematic nature of hiring or bringing speakers that spread anti-immigration and hateful rhetoric? What is the commissions influence? Can we send out letters or a press releases on behalf of the commission? (The Seattle City Club as an example).

Also around communications, Commissioners expressed an interest in having official materials that identify them, such as nametags/ business cards. Hanne will work with King County staff to design/purchase these items.

**Congressional Review**  
After reflecting on our visit with Congressman Adam Smith, Commissioners agreed that it would be best to draft up questions around specific bills and work that they are working on as well as to have a clear set of priorities or policy agenda that they could share out.

**Possibility of creating a King County office dedicated to Immigrant and Refugee rights**  
Commission needs to find and/or aggregate an assessment of barriers immigrants and refugees are experiencing. What data do we currently have? Possibly reach out to ESJ Director, Gossett’s and Dembowski’s chief of staff. Ask questions about the pros and cons of an office of immigration, including the restrictions and opportunities an Office of Immigrants and Refugees would create. Invite someone to share, what is the typical process of creating an office in a county?

Also invite a demographer to share information about King County.
**Subcommittees**

The structure for subcommittees was discussed.

How they are supposed to function (HUB concept)? Commissions will create subcommittees, invite people in these next several months. Where is the bandwidth? What are the restrictions?

How do we expand and mobilize people? And get more organizations behind us. The County has HUBs. A huge number of organizations will be funded and are working with the county.