King County Immigrant & Commission Meeting 8/21/2019

Date: Wed, August 21, 2019

Location: King County Library, Boulevard Park Branch – 12015 Roseberg Ave S, Seattle WA 98168

Participants:
Immigrant & Refugee Commissioners; King County Office of Equity and Social Justice Staff;
King County Office of Performance Strategy and Budget Staff; Community Members representing the health care sector (Community Credit Lab – www.communitycreditlab.org)

Agenda:
5:00 PM | Welcome and Public Comment
5:10 PM | Review Agenda and Approve Meeting Minutes
5:20 PM | King County’s Changing Demographics: Presentation on Immigrant and Refugee Statistics
5:40 PM | Update on the Implementation of KC Immigration Ordinance 18665
6:00 PM | KCIRC Communications Policy Discussion
6:30 PM | Break
6:40 PM | Strategic Session Follow Up
7:10 PM | Subcommittee work
7:50 PM | Closing
8:00 PM | Adjourn

Action Items:
- Accept Meeting Minutes for July 17th KCIRC Meeting and August 5th Strategic Planning Session
- Discuss and accept draft KCIRC Communications Plan

Welcome and Public Comment

Immigrant and Refugee Commissioners in Attendance: Nimco Bulale, Fo-Ching Lu, Issa Ndiaye, Hamdi Mohamed, Senayet Negusse, Lalita Uppala, Mohammad Bakr, Monserrat Padilla-Hernandez

On the Phone: Andrew Kritovich, Miguel Angel Duncan-Galvez Bravo

Absent Commissioners: Mohammad Jan Ofuq, Minal Kode Ghassemieh

Other Attendees:
- Hannelore Makhani, King County Equity and Social Justice Office
- Matias Valenzuela, King County Equity and Social Justice Office
• Rebeccah Maskin, King County of Performance Strategy and Budget
• Rich Stolz, OneAmerica

Public Comment: Community Lab folks are helping recertify nurses who’ve been trained abroad. They are offering a program in partnership with Highline College and would like to present about it at next month’s Commission meeting.

Announcements:
- Hannelore Makhani announced that six applications were received to fill KCIRC Commissioner vacancies and asked who might be interested in helping. Commissioners Bulale, Uppala and Negusse expressed interest.
- Ms. Mohamed announced her departure from the Commission as of August 25th. She will be starting a role with the King County Office of Equity and Social Justice.
- Ms. Padilla-Hernandez provided an update on behalf of WAISN. The has been reported ICE activity in Mississippi, with 700 detained. There’s a lot of confusion and WAISN is trying to learn from this experience.
- Ms. Bulale shared that OneAmerica is offering citizenship clinics in Pasco, Renton and Ellensburg on September 23rd.
- Ms. Uppala shared that a citizenship workshop will take place in Redmond on September 17th.

Review Agenda and Approve Meeting Minutes

Approval of July Meeting Minutes and August Strategic Planning Session Notes

Approved: Motion by Ms. Mohamed. Ms. Lu seconded the motion. No oppositions; motion passed. (Mr. Kritovich, Mr. Duncan-Galvez and Ms. Negusse were ineligible to vote)

King County’s Changing Demographics: Presentation on immigrant and Refugee Statistics

Rebeccah Maskin presented on King County growth and demographics (currently 2.3 M people in our County, immigrants are 22% of total population and make up 51% of KC newest residents).

Commission Discussion: Clarification questions and interest in doubling/tripling up in housing, representation in employment across different industries, looking at cross-tabulated data to think strategically about needs and policy priorities. Ms. Maskin’s Presentation slides will be shared with meeting notes.

Update on the Implementation of KC Immigration Ordinance 18665

Matias Valenzuela, along with Ms. Makhani, provided update on their implementation activities plan, including the timeline and opportunities for the Commission to support/inform this work.

Discussion: Commissioners stated that including their voice in this process is very important. They asked how the information shared by King County’s in their implementation assessments would be
used. Training continues to be a huge gap and Commissioners expressed a continued desire to be involved with this.

**Rich Stolz** and **Ms. Padilla-Hernandez** provided an update on a community meeting with the sheriff’s office. There’s interest in working with the Sheriff’s office with a goal of improving community/police relations. Organizing a community event was discussed as an opportunity.

**Ms. Padilla-Hernandez** also shared that advocates at NWIRP is trying to figure out how to work with folks whose information may have been shared with ICE.

**Decision:**

**Ms. Padilla-Hernandez** motioned to have KCIRC coordinate a broader community meeting between the King County Sheriff’s Office and community stakeholders.
- **Ms. Mohamed** seconded motion
- No oppositions; motion passed

**KCIRC Communications Policy Discussion**
The group decided to move up the discussion about KCIRC’s communication plan and to break afterwards.

**Ms. Lu** shared a draft communications plan, which a subset of Commissioners met to develop. After reviewing the document, the following edits were suggested:
- Rotation of empowered spokespeople would happen when someone is no longer interested in serving or someone new is interested in stepping up (rather than having set terms)
- Given that the Commission co-chairs are already spokespeople (stated in their job description), there should be no more than two additional empowered spokespeople that can make a statement at any time
- The OESJ newsletter shall be included as a viable communications channel for disseminating public statements made by the Commission

**Decision:**

After incorporating the suggested edits, **Ms. Lu** motioned to approve the KCIRC communications plan and to appoint herself (**Ms. Lu**) and **Ms. Padilla-Hernandez** as empowered spokespeople for the Commission.
- **Ms. Bulale** seconded motion
- No oppositions; motion passed

The final version of the KCIRC Communications Plan will be shared with the meeting notes.

**BREAK**

**Strategic Session Follow Up**
Given time constraints, the group decided to focus the remainder of the meeting on a follow up discussion to the August 5th strategy conversation and to postpone their subcommittee work.
Ms. Bulale recapped strategic planning session from August 5th, including next steps and questions to discuss as the group moves forward in defining its strategic direction.

Discussion Questions and Answers:

1. **What is power? How does power operate in the public arena and how we define that?**
   - It’s about how we, as Commissioners, wield our influence. How we speak to Councilmembers and others in power as well as how we use social media and other communications avenues to spread our message. It’s about the alliances and coalitions we build/participate in.
   - We are powerful if we can inspire the community and inspire leadership—providing platforms where engagement can happen.
   - Cultural and gender-based challenges play out for us. We must intentionally think about our power, otherwise, that deferential treatment can take over.
   - Sometimes, we are taught to think about power as negative because powerful people can take advantage of their power. But we can use power for good!
   - Power is the ability to do something. That’s our role as commissioners—to share resources and make them accessible to our community. We can issue statements and bring people together. That is influential.
   - As commissioners, we can also empower our communities and offer spaces for them to access government officials and use their voices. They also hold power and can direct it by joining the table.

2. **How do we as a Commission build our power?**
   - We need to think about organizing people, money and other resources. How do we mobilize when something happens?
   - We need to convene people and to create opportunities for different ethnic/cultural communities to create a sense of shared power.
   - There’s symbolic power in the creation of the commission. We need to build the momentum by getting results; otherwise we might lose our power.
   - We need to continue to build relationships to grow our power.

3. **What does meaningful engagement look like?**
   - Systems are in place that helped set up the commission and our work. Results are coming even though it feels right now that we are constantly in response mode. Focus on creating a framework for short-term response and policy solutions for long-term challenges.
   - Think about how we show up to spaces to represent the community in important situations and when big decisions are at stake.
   - Our community may not believe that they have power, and this is a challenge. Education is needed to shift this mindset—can we think about leadership development opportunities that we can support as Commissioners.
   - The community has expectations of us as Commissioners because we were appointed by Council to serve in these roles. This gives us legitimacy! Also, our connection to the Executive Office helps us be strategic.
   - Continue to focus on making connections to folks who can help us increase our access to power.
- Activate folks who are interested in this work and could be brought along and developed to fill vacancies in the future.
- We need to be strategic about providing access—can we be flexible in how we invite community to participate and not expect them to come to us? Can we be actively present in community events—meet the community where they are at and consider spaces that lend themselves to the public attending (i.e. childcare and interpretation considerations, etc.)
- Identify strategic opportunities for Commissioners to serve in an official capacity—join community groups, boards, events planning committees, etc.
- Prioritize outreach to the community so that they know what we are doing.

The group was energized by this discussion. Several commissioners suggested that each of the subcommittees work on an outreach plan as part of their work. There were questions about resources available, but it was discussed that, by having a plan an outlining resource needs in it, the Commission would be better-positioned to make a request. Subcommittees to discuss this outreach work in-person or over-the-phone, at their next meeting.

### Closing and Next Steps

- **Subcommittees** to meet and solidify plans; including a community outreach component.
- **Ms. Bulale and Ms. Ghassemieh** to schedule and plan September 18th meeting agenda

Meeting adjourned at 8:12 PM.