

**Community Issues Meeting Minutes**  
**Monday, March 11th, 2019— 6:30--8:00pm — Whittier Park**

**Attendees: (No sign-in sheet)**

**Staff: Fartun Ismail, Kaley Brown, Marcus VanderSanden**

**Welcome**

Welcome at 6:35pm by Kaley Brown, Whittier Alliance Executive Director.

**Agenda & Standard of Conduct is reviewed.**

**Motion to Approve Agenda. Seconded. Approved.**

**Motion to approve January Minutes. Seconded. Approved.**

**Announcements/Community Comments & Discussion**

Kaley

Introductions

**Community Updates**

- Whittier Alliance Updates, Kaley Brown:
  - Annual Meeting- 5:30-8:00pm March 26th, will be at MCAD for the first time due to space
  - 5:30pm-6:30pm-
  - New Board members- 6 seats up for election, 5-year Strategic Plan, Funding reallocations
  
- Whittier Park Updates, Becky Lewis:
  - Spring break first week of April
  - Youth Violence prevention 3-3 basketball tournament
    - Open to matching teams together
    - 2-6pm
    - 12-16, and 16-18
  - Meal and Snacks everyday
  - Looking to find a way to encourage tech driven students

**Immigration Panel Discussion**

- **Ukasha Dakane, Frayeo (Fortune Relief and Youth Empowerment Organization)**
  - Works primarily with East African youth and women
  - Focus on newly resettled refugees to
  - Refugee Process
    - Had a conversation with neighbor that frustrated him with misconceptions of the refugee process and shares a poem written by a refugee ending with the line, a refugee only leaves home when their home forces them out

- 5 step process before a refugee can enter another country

#### 1. Registration and Data Collection

- The initial step of data collection and the referral to different agencies

#### 2. Security Checks

- FBI, DHS, DOD will do screening, conduct interview in home country to find out more about an individual
- Biometrics

#### 3. Cultural Orientation and Medical Check

- The refugee applicant will take courses introducing them to American culture
- Can be denied due to medical records

#### 4. Assignment to Domestic Resettlement

- The moment they are notified they have a place to go, this is the moment when people will begin to have hope. A hope they can start new.

#### 5. Arrival in the U.S

Frayeo helps them with this process, striving to help them find stable housing, work and community. This is actually the beginning, they are starting here at poverty level, survival instincts are still active and it is starting from nothing.

- **Marion Greene, Hennepin County Commissioner;**

- Hennepin County's goal is maintaining family stability
- How can Hennepin County be a safe place for immigrants?
- Immigrants are a vital element of our economy
- Hennepin County's work includes:
  - Welcoming proclamation, pronounce HC a sanctuary county
  - Previous HC Sheriff was not conducive to these policies and worked closely with ICE
  - Immigration Legal Defense Fund- continuing to expand and work on this
    - Worked closely with VERA institute, national org based in NY
  - Set aside money that so that the sheriff bookings did not have to announce their country of birth/origin
  - They ask them in informal setting to determine eligibility for funding
  - Have worked with judges to change the kinds of questions that they ask in court
  - Wants to take "offensive" approach to the benefits of immigration
  - Salt Lake City has interesting approach on Economic Development and the immigrant community

- **Mari - Minnesota Immigrant Rights Action Community**

- Whittier resident of 3 years, MIRAC
- MIRAC is volunteer based community
  - Some immigrants, some not
- Work currently being done by MIRAC
  - Deportation Defense
    - Get calls on people who have family members who have been detained by ICE
    - Will get people set up with trustworthy lawyer, help with fees and provide court support; when you have more people show up it is often better for treatment.
  - Sanctuary Now Platform
    - 13 specific points that will make our city a sanctuary city
  - “U” Visas- if you are a person who has a crime committed against you can safely apply for a visa
  - Municipal ID- Identification that is available to all people
    - Might have multiple function as library card and other
  - Legal Defense Fund
  - Influential in getting plaque of rights posted in police vehicles
  - Know your rights training
  - Border Delegation- sending 13 people to Mexican border in Arizona to get a better sense of what is happening and meeting with other activists
    - Minors are still being separated at the border
  - Abolish ICE- Do not think that Immigrations and Customs Enforcement should continue as Government Organization
  - MIRAC Youth Organization- working to engage immigrant as a family unit
    - Ethnic Studies recognized as history credits not electives
    - “Our” history is history
    - “The idea of people being different starts in school”
  - Follow @MIRACMN on all platforms
    - Fundraisers, Marches, Events, Bi-weekly banner drops
- **Mustafa Jumale - Black Immigrants Collective**
  - Volunteer based- Leadership is mostly black women
  - Formed in 2016 in reaction to Muslim ban
  - Policy centric working with lawmakers and
  - Currently working with campaign Liberian DED Liberians in Minnesota facing deportation
  - Black Immigrants represent 9% of immigrant community with 20% facing potential deportation
  - They are more likely to be deported
  - Temporary Protected Status
    - Historically this status has been renewed under previous administrations
    - This status may be revoked
    - Dream/TPS legislation being challenged

- Local work has been working at State Legislature on getting drivers license for all
  - Cars are crucial to living a healthy safe lifestyle
- Legal Clinics
- Connect people to pro-bono services
- **Iris Ramos, Immigration Lawyer based in Whittier**
  - Work being done by Iris and immigration lawyers
    - Affirmative Filing- You are searching
    - Defensive- You are in removal proceedings and you have to play defense including asylum seeking
    - If you fear if you go back you will be killed
    - Credible Fear Interview
    - Reinstatement Cases- If you have been deported before or you miss a court case if you get caught again you are gone with no court proceedings even if you've been here for 2 months or 20 years
    - Preparing USCIS, help them through that process
  - Feels passionately
  - Sometimes you can't do things the right way because there is no way, common misconception is that one can simply work hard and do the right thing
    - There is no way to do it right at the moment, you have to be eligible
    - Nobody here is purposefully undocumented
    - Process is extremely complicated even for a lawyer
    - Can take years
  - If you are a victim of any criminal activity you are eligible for visa
  - Anti-Immigration Policies
    - As of Late 2018 If you submit an application with documents missing you can be denied without a chance to rectify the mistake
    - If you are denied you can be put into deportation proceedings
  - Thinks a lot of the ignorance is a lack of empathy or understanding, isolation
  - People need to know their rights- right to have attorneys present at Immigration court, however Immigration attorneys will not be provided by government
  - Public Charge

Hennepin County is concerned about this because they want people to be able to get the help they need without affecting their immigration status

USDIS Form I64

### **Q&A and Comments**

United States requires a lot of documentation- how does it work if there is lacking documentation?

A:Iris- Sometimes they will be do DNA testing, two affidavits from people who existing. Burden is on you.

A:Ukasha- They will cross reference with the data collection, refugee system

A:Osman- There is no way to prove if you lost everything

A:Mustafa- can be dependent on the whims of judges and other factors out of your control. Spoke to his experience.

How can you help?

A: Pay attention and be involved! This isn't inherently a democratic/republican issue it is a human issue. Get involved.

A: Mari- misinformation is intentional. It is meant to be confusing, it's expensive and meant to be complicated. Status versus a chance to live here.

A: Iris- Advocates for people to sit down with an immigrant. People don't come here for fun. Go to immigration court, they are open to public.

Is it as difficult for European immigrants?

A:The system is rigged against brown people and it is more difficult.

A: Marion Greene - City does not want to issue Municipal IDs until data collected to make them are protected from other, primarily law enforcement, entities.

**Motion to adjourn. Seconded. Approved.**

**Minutes submitted by Marcus VanderSanden.**