



WA Community Issues Meeting Minutes

Whittier Park

Monday, March 13th, 2017

6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Attendees: Richard Torvinen, Paulette Will, Linda Martin, Linda Bernin, Rebecca Makayi, Jen Kader, Greg Schmidt, Laura Jean, Felino de la Pena, Jen Braith, Brooke Erickson, Joanna Krause-Johnson, David Schuster, Kevin Beaudin, Kaley Brown, Danielle Robinson Briand, David Bagley, Jesse Oyervides, David W. Schroth, Karl M Schulz, Mark Severtsgaard

WA Staff: Ricardo McCurley, Camilla Jamal, Paul Shanafelt

Presenters: Lindsey Wallace - Ward 10 Council Aide
Paulette Will - Advisory Committee on Aging
Rebecca Makayi - Immigrant Women Coalition USA & Learning in Style
Danielle Robinson Briand - Center for Immigrant Justice

Welcome/Call to Order

Welcome at 6:10pm by Ricardo McCurley. Agenda was reviewed, Introductions are made. Standard of conduct policy was reviewed. **Motion** to approve the Agenda **Carried**. Minutes from 02-13-2017 CI meeting were reviewed. **Motion** to approve 02-13-2017 CI meeting minutes **Carried**. One abstention.

Announcements/Community Comments & Discussion

- Whittier Alliance Annual Meeting will take place on Thursday, March 30 from 5:30-8pm at Whittier International Elementary School. Five at-large seats for the Board and 10 candidates. Inspector Kathy Waite of the 5th Precinct will be guest speaker at the Annual Meeting.
- ESTF meeting taking place on Wednesday, March 29th from 6-7:30pm at Whittier Alliance office.
- Jungle Theater hosting upcoming listening session re: minimum wage.

Advisory Committee on Aging - Paulette Will

-Advisory Committee on Aging is advisory body to city council and mayor's office. Developing set of recommendations for 3-year, age-friendly action plan. There are 3 main areas of focus: housing, transportation, promoting health & wellness.

Q: do you know the percent of senior residents in Minneapolis?

A: Ages 50+ - just over 98,000 residents.

Q: What percentage live in senior housing?

A: MN COMPASS has studies with this statistic - mncompass.org

Ward 10 Updates and Sanctuary City Policies - Lindsey Wallace

-W10 helped organize the first Workers Day at City Hall. Workers given opportunity to talk to mayor and city council members to share perspectives and priorities. Housing, immigration, community safety, and workplace policy were issues that were discussed.

-Public meeting re: bike lane extension held two weeks ago. 26th & 28th Streets - extending west to Hennepin Ave this summer. Meeting saw lots of support for the extensions.

-City's Intergovernmental Relations Committee - held special session in Feb to determine what it means to be a "sanctuary city." Mpls has been since 2003, which prohibits law enforcement from asking people about their immigration status. City cannot use own resources for enforcing immigration. City does not want people afraid to contact police because they are worried about immigration status/fear of being deported.

-City has condemned federal order on immigration.

-City has created Sanctuary City Task Force to better protect and defend immigrant families from unfair deportation.

-City is considering creating a fund for immigrants to access if facing deportation.

-City recommends contacting Immigration Law Center and Rep. Keith Ellison's office if facing deportation.

-Sanctuary City policy applies to anyone living or working in Minneapolis.

-County jurisdiction: Hennepin is not a sanctuary county. County jail can notify ICE.

Q: Does sanctuary city policy discourage police notifying ICE?

A: City policy prohibits city employees asking for that information.

Q: Is Minneapolis working with ACLU?

A: They have been working with many partners, but unsure about ACLU.

Q: If county jail is on city property, how does that work with the City's sanctuary city policy?

A: Unclear.

Rebecca Makayi - Immigrant Women Coalition USA & Learning in Style

-Came to USA seven years ago from Zimbabwe. Notified she had to flee country and had to do so w/in 24 hours; didn't plan to come to America. Left country with only the clothes she was wearing. Didn't know where kids or husband were. Sought asylum once she arrived in USA. Worked with Sisters of St. Joseph to get acclimated and find work. With help of UN was able to locate husband and children. Had difficulty getting a job even with a college degree.

-Rebecca stressed that immigrants are not coming to USA to take jobs from Americans. Unfair to put all immigrants and refugees in a category of terrorism, negativity, etc.

-Rebecca's family was displaced because her husband was an activist who spoke out against the president/regime in Zimbabwe.

Q: Can you tell us more about Immigrant Women Coalition (IWC)?

A: People don't know what it's like to live in a refugee camp. I felt women were most affected by refugee camps; men go off to work while women stay back with the kids. Healing is needed for immigrant women. We also experience culture shock - changing tradition, lifestyle, almost everything to be accepted by Americans. We tend not to realize the implications of things like using credit cards, for example. We host retreats and support each other.

Q: Are members of IWC from different countries?

A: An immigrant woman from any country is welcome.

Q: Are there opportunities for folks in the n'hood to support or lend a hand at IWC or Learning in Style?

A: Sure. People can help tutor for English, citizenship classes, finance, etc. Can also help with therapy, are welcome to meetings, can cry and pray with us...you are always welcome.

Q: When are these meetings?

A: Next meeting coming up in early April.

Danielle Robinson Briand - Center for Immigrant Justice

-Immigration attorney w/practice at Lake and Lyndale.

-New federal mandate to ramp up interior enforcement (dealing w/immigrants inside country).

-Operation in Burnsville, MN recently detained 10 immigrants.

-Dept of Homeland Security is the umbrella organization; ICE is the “police” for Dept. of Homeland Security. Have office at Ft. Snelling locally. Process people they apprehend there and hold in county jails.

-People are eligible to fight deportation in immigration court.

-Customs and Border Control is another branch of Dept of Homeland Security. Conduct border enforcement along borders and international airports.

-City is trying to expand sanctuary city ordinance to bring protection to more people.

-Center for Immigrant Justice is hosting forums to help families plan for potential raids that would separate children from parents (developing plans and determining caregivers).

Q: On a national level, much is talked about the Latino population. With Whittier being so diverse, is it affecting the Latino population more so?

A: Affecting all immigrant communities. Higher number of Latinos here in US that entered w/out status compared to many in the Somali, Cambodian, Hmong communities who entered as refugees.

-Highest increase in immigration enforcement likely to happen in rural MN.

-Churches are coming together in sanctuary movement but being held up by liability risks.

-If someone is a victim of a violent crime in US they can apply for visa that legalizes status in order to work with law enforcement/investigation. Last year St. Paul certified 6 cases while Minneapolis certified over 400 cases. St. Paul has new police chief that may help to increase that number.

-Suggests that immigrants should always carry passport or consular ID card.

Q: Are you aware of community organizations that contribute to this issue?

A: It seems to be a good time for people taking action on this issue, even at City level. Get involved civically. Organizations can help push for “parental powers” bill to get signed that arranges safety measures to take care of children of those facing deportation.

-(Attendee comment): many kids whose parents get deported w/out care plan get stuck in foster care and will stay there until they age out of the system.

Q: Does ICE wear uniforms?

A: Usually dressed in plain-clothes but sometimes wear “ICE Police” gear.

-(Attendee comment): as a Latino immigrant in this country, this situation reminds me of the problems myself and others faced in the 1950s. At that time we didn’t have many people defending immigrants, even if we were here legally. Founded Centro Cultural Chicano with 3 others to help support immigrants at that time. So many parallels to what is happening here now.

Q: Is there an issue w/Somali seniors not renewing immigration papers?

A: There are organizations that are aware of this. Doesn’t necessarily mean seniors are vulnerable to deportation, but it’s recommended to keep papers current.

Q: Do immigrants need to carry naturalized citizenship cards?

A: No. US passport serves as this document, but you should not have to always carry it.

Q: Immigration reform: is there a quota of how many people come from certain countries?

A: Uncertain. Many of Danielle’s clients asking about relocating to Canada.

-(Attendee comment): the stories everyone has shared tonight need to be shared to a wider audience. Narratives can be very powerful.

-(Attendee comment): other side of immigration argument has “dumbed down” the issue so much while eliminating the human element of this issue. Recommends trying to expand reach of these stories.

Meeting adjourned at: 7:54pm

Minutes respectfully submitted by Paul Shanafelt