

Mayors International Affairs Advisory Commission Meeting Minutes May 21, 2021

Location: Zoom Virtual Meeting
Time: 11:00-1:17 p.m.
Present: Diana Queen, Dr. Nkongolo Kalala, Adrian Wallace, Charles Baesler, Camilo Quintana, Dr. Huajing Maske, Innocent Akwa, CM Jennifer Reynolds, Marilyn Daniel, Karen Slaymaker, CM Liz Sheehan, Melissa McCartt-Smyth, Dr. Rania Belmadani, Yolanda Pinilla, Isabel Gereda Taylor

Not Present: Dr. Nadia Rasheed, David Carpenter, Dr. Christel Broady

Guests: Laura Hatfield (LFUCG/Parks, for Director Conrad), Dr. Basel Touchan, Deborah Winslow, Mary Cobb (Director KRM), Sarah Hesler (UK Health Care), Angene Wilson, ret Prof; Jean Sabharwal (founder LFUCG's Family Care Center), Kaizar Mahuwala (community Businessman); Mihir Kale (Global Lex Intern, seconded to Commissioner Daniel and Immigration Committee)

Agenda items

3. **Call to Order:** Recording Begins
4. **Roll Call:** 11 Commissioners present for quorum
5. **Introductions of Commissioners and Guests and Brief Comments**
6. **KRM's Mary Cobb Update:** Pres Biden opened ceiling for refugees late, past the March deadline which meant locally 30 people were cancelled due to the late ceiling announcement. Folks approved for March, now cancelled, could have a two-year wait period to reunite with their families. This FY, 49 people were received by KRM; some 100 other entrants came to Lexington on their own. Projections for this FY are for 24 more people to arrive in June. Oct 1st starts the new FY and approximately 400 arrivals are expected, but some may go to other counties. KRM expects a caseload diversification due to the lifting of the Muslim ban (Syrians). Large Congolese and Ukrainian (Woodford Cty) case load as well. Expecting asylum seekers: Venezuelans, Guatemalans, Rohingya. Language access implications. Additional programs now available at KRM: free therapy for survivors of torture for all immigrants, including undocumented and citizens. KRM has 3 full time immigration attorneys (legal service in many areas, need not be refugee). Continue to have citizenship classes and now have a new small asylum case scholarship fund, a limited program. Unaccompanied minors served projected to be 10-15 border cases per year. KRM is moving to the Plantory from Alexandria Rd.
Q & A followed, Dr. Touchan requested KRM advise FCPS and others of newest arrivals. Ms Cobb reported KRM has 2-3 weeks' notice for resettlement cases, but secondary arrivals come from other cities. KRM is given no notice on those arrivals.
7. **Diana Queen reported on conversations held between Co-Chairs & Council Members Sheehan and Reynolds regarding more direct communications with City Council and its committees.** CM Sheehan also mentioned Civic Lex is collecting data on connecting with local government administration.
8. **Approval of 2/19/21 meeting minutes:** Ms Queen commented on the new format. Motion to approve made by Charles Baesler, 2nd moved by Marilyn Daniel, unanimous approval.
9. **Old Business:**

A. On behalf of the MIAAC and the Co-chairs, D. Queen thanked Mr. Bill Enright (founding member), Dr. Rezkalla Butros, and Dr. Carlos Palomino for their service to the MIAAC over the past 2-5 years.

B. Council has approved 5 new international region representatives, one for each area, so now each will have 3 representatives. I Taylor explained that the Commission had asked for 1 more to be approved for Asia in trying to bring India into the Commission. Marilyn Daniel clarified that we have one European “old” seat to fill in addition to 5 new ones. Two other current place candidates, for the Americas (Rosa Martin) and the Middle East (Dr. Touchan) have been approved by the Mayor and await Council approval.

10. **Ambassador Program PPT Presentation by Dr. Huajing Maske:** explaining the purpose and goals of the program, (including the draft description: “The purpose of the MIAAC Ambassador Program is to develop strong working relationships with representatives from Lexington’s international community. Ambassadors will allow less represented communities from different regions, countries, languages, and cultures, to have a “voice” in the International Commission. Persons appointed as Ambassadors to the Commission will undertake to build a multilingual 2-way information network with their community for the Commission and the Mayor’s Office. Such a network will be especially beneficial for our limited English-speaking communities currently underrepresented in the Commission. MIAAC Ambassadors will: help identify communities in need of representation; provide an important link between the Commission and individual communities; help the regional MIAAC Commissioner understand and prioritize issues affecting specific communities so that they represent community needs and values; explain commission recommendations and resolutions to the communities in the most appropriate language; disseminate important public announcement from the Mayor’s office to their communities; provide assistance in understanding regional perspectives and opinions; and promote mutual understanding.” The draft plan also includes recommendations on candidate qualifications, recruitment, and training. The draft Ambassador Program Report is ready for review by all Commissioners with stated urgency to move forward to implementation.

Comment from Commissioner Daniel: allow all immigrants to represent the diverse communities from different regions and countries, etc. do not limit the scope of representation to limited English speaking groups.

11. **Committee Reports:** Commissioner Akwa was no longer present to provide a report on behalf of the **Emergencies and Public Health Committee**. Dr. Touchan and I Taylor were present at 2 committee meetings to discuss committee goals and the Children’s Art project with FCPS to encourage LEP vaccination for Covid-19.

Commissioner Daniel, chair of the Immigration Committee, stated she had sent in a report describing a google spreadsheet that lays out the different areas of immigration laws, rulings and regulations that are currently and rapidly changing. The various areas covered in that spreadsheet by C. Daniel, C. Baesler and C. Slaymaker, as well as Emily Jones (KRM) other volunteer attorneys from KRM, Maxwell Street Legal Clinic, and other experts in the diverse areas of immigration law which include: international student regulations, business related visas and other matters, refugees, asylees, DACA, temporary protected status and more.

Adjournment: 1:17 p.m. C. Daniel moved, C Baesler 2nded, all present voted in favor.

Action items	Owner(s)	Deadline	Status
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| 1. Hosting a MIAAC orientation session in June, sending Agenda for that to Commissioners | Co-Chairs Kalala & Queen | 7/30/221 | |
| 2. Continued dialogue with city Council | Co-Chairs | | |
| 3. Commissioners to help recommend new regional Commissioner candidates. | All Commissioners | | |
| 4. Ambassador Program to be sent out for review and approval | Co-Chairs and all Commissioners | | |

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