

Minutes

Fraser Valley Diversity and Immigration Partnership Council

September 23, 2014 • 2pm to 4pm
Approved Dec. 4th, 2014 DN

Danica opened the meeting with an introduction of the agenda. The Agenda was approved.

1. Roundtable Introductions:

Danica Denommé (Secretariat) – Chair
Danielle Nazarewich (Secretariat) – Minutes
Manpreet Grewal (Secretariat)
Med Manzanal (Project Consultant)

Ruth Meehan, *Realty Sector*
Here to give back to the community; Vybe Realty

Andy Sidhu, *Media Sector*
Bilingual newspaper publisher; Punjabi Patrika

Danielle Richard, *Public Health Sector*
Her role at Fraser Health is to make community connections and improve services
Is coordinating the Healthy Abbotsford initiative

Sue Federspiel, *Municipal Government Sector – Park,s Recreation and Culture*
Has worked on neighbourhood community building initiatives; City of Abbotsford

Tina Stewart, *Business Sector*
Interested in bringing more diverse customers to local businesses; Abbotsford Downtown
Business Association

Hardeep Sidhu, *Business Sector – Agriculture*
Has professional and educational background in urban and community planning; previously
at District of Mission
Business management experience at Blue Bell Farms

Varinder Dhese, *Business Sector – Export*
Company, Fraser Valley Packers, ships fruit produce globally; experience in international
business

Regrets: Allan Asaph, Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce; George Murray, City of Abbotsford; John
Potts, University of the Fraser Valley; Marion Keys, Abbotsford Hospice; Kanta Naik, Abbotsford
School District.

2. Introduction - Immigration Partnerships in British Columbia

- a. Purpose
 - i. To create and act on a strategic vision for newcomer integration locally; and further the objective of successful economic and social outcomes related to immigrant integration

- b. Goals
 - i. Build knowledge on needs of newcomers
 - ii. Locally based research and planning
 - iii. Improve accessibility and coordination of services
- c. Structure and Function
 - i. Citizenship and Immigration Canada funds ACS to roll out program, led by Partnership Council, driven by local priorities
- d. Successful Outcomes of Other Local immigration Partnerships
 - i. Examples: mentorship programs in Guelph, re-organization of transportation so newcomers could access language services.

3. Fraser Valley Diversity and Immigration Partnership Council

- a. Role of the Secretariat: ACS is the Secretariat, responsible for delivering the program and reporting to Citizenship and Immigration Canada; provides leadership and support to Partnership Council, coordinate activities.
- b. Membership and Roles of Members:
 - i. Membership has been designed to be cross-sectoral with broad representation and key players; members are a liaison between their organization/industry/sector and the Partnership Council
- c. Review Draft Terms of Reference
 - i. Document was distributed and viewed by members, with an overview. Members are responsible to create Local Settlement Strategy for Abbotsford and surrounding areas.
 - ii. Manpreet: described how immigration impacts all sectors in both directions
 - iii. Med: Welcoming Communities initiative was precursor, this table requires members to represent their organization yet also form a unified body, leverage resources of group, calibration and partnerships
 - iv. Danielle R: collective impact can be a model
 - v. Danica clarified: strategy building starts now, identify key priorities and annual action plans, 2 year period, ending march 2016
 - vi. ACTION ITEM: Members will review Terms of Reference in order to approve them at next meeting
- d. Chairpersons
 - i. Call for chairperson and vice chair to come forward by the next meeting

4. Identifying the Issues – Discussion

- a. Group discussion of issues based on 17 characteristics of a welcoming community (Handout - Appendix A)
Which of these are most relevant to you in your work? In this region, which are areas of potential focus and opportunity for work?
 - i. Sue: Employment opportunities are central, should be highly prioritized, Educational opportunities affects long term health of the community.

- ii. Danielle R.: health care and access to spaces for physical activities, supportive services
- iii. Hardeep: everything is important, fostering of social capital is key, some immigrants come with sponsorship and others do not, if no social capital is available then it can cripple lots of things, social capital not easily achieved
- iv. Tina: Downtown Abby would like to be more welcoming and be diverse, wants to address pockets of segregation
- v. Varinder: Education highly needed, many new immigrants work labour jobs when they arrive, sometimes their education is not recognized, some get stuck in their labour positions without further opportunities
- vi. Manpreet: perhaps we need to know what assets we have so therefore we will help identify gaps
- vii. Andy: we will each pick what is important to ourselves, we need to do an assessment of services provided and compare with those that are not some services we used to have available are not anymore. Abbotsford used to get government assisted refugees, they were retrieved from the airport and had all immediate needs met
- viii. Ruth: needs to know what is being provided community wide for newcomers
- ix. Andy: It is important to make connections and use existing media to reach a wider audience, for example, businesses can provide information to the Patrika newspaper.
- x. Manpreet: social engagement is a priority for Abbotsford; need to address ethno-cultural divide, for example, the neighborhood connections that Sue has worked on
- xi. Andy: South Asian community, especially seniors, has a visible presence in parks and gathering places; this is important to note when talking about neighbourhood and community development
- xii. Danica: summarized discussion; when we are networked together, we can achieve more successful outcomes

5. Next Steps

- a. Members request more information on what is being offered in terms of settlement services in our community, and more understanding of issues in order for each to contribute. (Aim is to have a coordinated approach to service delivery rather than provide more services)
 - i. Manpreet: what are your challenges in your industry? What initiatives have you taken to address these? Bring these to the table next time. Are new immigrants interested in opening business downtown? Quick asset mapping as a starting place
 - ii. ACTION ITEM: Secretariat will bring more examples from councils nationally
 - iii. ACTION ITEM: Med Manzanal will prepare presentation on local current research on immigration.
 - iv. ACTION ITEM: Secretariat will send information in advance of next meeting. Including draft agenda; will connect with members to prepare for information on each sector's asset mapping

- b. Draft Agenda for next meeting
 - i. Information on existing services of ACS; presentation on scoping
 - ii. Challenges and Opportunities members are facing in their fields

6. Next Meetings

- Tuesday, October 28, 2014 2:30pm – 4:30pm
- Thursday, December, 4th 2014 2:30-4:30
- Thursday, February 12, 2015 2:30
- Thursday, April 9th 2015 2:30

Handout – Appendix A

What are the characteristics of a welcoming community?

Esses et al. (2010) identifies the following 17 characteristics for a welcoming community.

1. Employment Opportunities
2. Fostering of Social Capital
3. Affordable and Suitable Housing
4. Positive Attitudes Toward Immigrants, Cultural Diversity, and the Presence of Newcomers in the Community
5. Presence of Newcomer-Serving Agencies that Can Successfully Meet the Needs of Newcomers
6. Links Between Main Actors Working toward Welcoming Communities
7. Municipal Features and Services Sensitive to the Presence and Needs of Newcomers
8. Educational Opportunities
9. Accessible and Suitable Healthcare
10. Available and Accessible Public Transit
11. Presence of Diverse Religious Organizations
12. Social Engagement Opportunities
13. Political Participation Opportunities
14. Positive Relationships with the Police and the Justice System
15. Safety
16. Opportunities for Use of Public Space and Recreation Facilities
17. Favorable Media Coverage and Representation