

Belong Steering Group (BSG) Meeting Minutes

Date:	January 27, 2020	Location:	Conestoga Room, Kitchener City Hall
Time:	1:00-3:00 pm		
Present:	Pamela Albrecht (City of Waterloo), Kelly Steiss (City of Kitchener), Sue Weare (City of Cambridge), Shannon Markle (Idea Exchange), Aleksandra Petrovic (Social Development Centre), Stephen Lavigne (KW Art Gallery), Brittney Emslie (KW Multicultural Centre), Kristen Bustamante (Region of Waterloo), Jess Thier (Carizon), Chris Hussey (Reception House), Muriel Vandepol (Region of Waterloo), Sarah Shafiq (Interfaith Grand River / Coalition of Muslim Women), Gabrielle Laurin (Conseil Scolaire Viamonde), Marie-Pierre Daoust (CSC MonAvenir), Dina Ayad (Community member), Elba Martinez (community member), Brice Balmer (Interfaith Grand River)		
Absent/ Regrets:	Dianne Boston-Nyp (Volunteer Action Centre), Kelly Kipfer (Waterloo Libraries), Vanessa Lopak (City of Cambridge), Asha Abubaker (Community Member), Sanjay Govindaraj (Region of Waterloo), Jonathan Moyer (House of Friendship)		
Guests:	N/A		
Staff:	Diana Palmerin		

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1. Welcome, Introductions (Pam)

- Regrets shared. Dianne Boston-Nyp (Chair) is on holidays and as we haven’t formally elected a Vice-Chair, Diana asked Pam to chair this meeting.

2. Review Agenda and Approve Past Minutes (Pam)

- Reviewed Agenda – last item on the agenda will be addressed via email
- No conflict of interest declared
- Approved November 2019 BSG minutes

3. Motion to approve BSG Vice-Chair (Pam)

Pam proposed the motion to approve Brittney Emslie as the new Vice-Chair of the BSG. No other nominations were received. The motion was seconded by: Kelly Steiss, Sue Weare and Jess Thier.

4. IP Updates – Recap November Retreat and Community Action Plan 2020-2025 (Diana)

The Immigration Partnership is in the process of putting together the new Community Action Plan (CAP) 2020 – 2025. In November, IP hosted a retreat where Council and Steering Groups discussed what the priorities of our work should be for the next five years. Previous to the retreat, registered participants received an immigration primer based on data we have collected

<https://www.immigrationwaterlooregion.ca/immigrationprimer> that summarizes what we currently know about immigration in Waterloo Region.

At the retreat, Tara Bedard (Executive Director of the Immigration Partnership) highlighted some of the achievements of the Partnership in the past 10 years and mentioned some of the limits we have seen to our work. Participants were encouraged to think about different ways to re-frame, re-focus and re-brand the work we do in this community to be more effective.

A draft of the new CAP has been prepared by Immigration Partnership staff. This draft is based on the data we have, what members of each of the Steering Groups suggested at the retreat and the work we have done in the past ten years. The proposed actions for the BSG 2020 -2025 are:

- Increase immigrant influence policy making and social connectedness by building connections, capacity and civic engagement among ethno-cultural groups. (Social Inclusion Working Group)
- Strengthen immigrant welcoming, inclusion and engagement by working with municipalities and other public sector partners as leaders and advocates. (Welcoming and Inclusive Municipalities Working Group)
- Increase public support for immigration, address racism and discrimination and foster immigrant belonging through campaigns and other initiatives. (Public Education Working Group)

5. CAP 2020-2025 BSG Actions Review (All)

Round table discussions were organized to discuss each of the proposed BSG actions for the CAP 2020 – 2025. Each of the groups provided feedback that will be incorporated into the new CAP. Implementation and evaluation of each of these actions will be discussed at the next meeting in March. The group is also interested in finding ways to be more integrated with the other Steering Groups and the IP Council.

6. Final CAP 2020 – 2025 Discussion (All)

IP Council will be approving the CAP 2020-2025 in April. There will still be a chance for the BSG to provide feedback on minor details at the March meeting.

One of the goals proposed for the BSG in the new CAP states: “Immigration is widely supported and racism and discrimination are addressed through a regional Anti-Racism strategy. The group agrees this should be a priority for the Immigration Partnership given the increase in hate and harassment some racialized populations are experiencing in Waterloo Region.

Meeting Adjourned at 3 pm

Next Meeting: March 30, 1-3 pm, Location: Kitchener City Hall (Conestoga Room)

Belong Steering Group (BSG) Meeting Minutes

Date:	April 27, 2020	Location:	Virtual Zoom Meeting
Time:	1:00-3:00 pm		
Present:	Dianne Boston-Nyp (Chair, Volunteer Action Centre), Brittney Emslie (Vice Chair, KW Multicultural Centre), Kelly Kipfer (Waterloo Libraries), Sanjay Govindaraj (Region of Waterloo), Pamela Albrecht (City of Waterloo), Kelly Steiss (City of Kitchener), Sue Weare (City of Cambridge), Shannon Markle (Idea Exchange), Brice Balmer (Interfaith Grand River), Sarah Shafiq (Interfaith Grand River / Coalition of Muslim Women), Gabrielle Laurin (Conseil Scolaire Viamonde), Marie-Pierre Daoust (CSC MonAvenir),		
Absent/ Regrets:	Elba Martinez (community member), Aleksandra Petrovic (Social Development Centre), Stephen Lavigne (KW Art Gallery), Vanessa Lopak (City of Cambridge), Asha Abubaker (Community Member), Jonathan Moyer (House of Friendship), Kristen Bustamante (Region of Waterloo), Jessica Thier (Carizon), Chris Hussey (Reception House), Muriel Vandepol (Region of Waterloo), Dina Ayad (Community member), Anna Barth (Community member), Jim Bowman (City of Waterloo), Julie Sudds (Waterloo Region Police Service), Lee Ann Wetzel (Region of Waterloo), Marla Pender (City of Kitchener), Melissa Strachan (Carizon), Rebecca Florence (City of Kitchener)		
Guests:	N/A		
Staff:	Abiha Syed, Tara Bedard		

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1. Welcome, Introductions (Dianne)

- Dianne Boston-Nyp welcomed everyone to the meeting. Regrets were shared.
- Dianne welcomed new Immigration Partnership staff: Abiha Syed as Belong Pillar Community Engagement Coordinator. Abiha said a few words about herself.

2. Review Agenda and Approve Past Minutes (Dianne)

The group:

- Reviewed Agenda. No changes were proposed.
- No conflict of interest declared.
- Approved the minutes from the January 2020 BSG meeting.

3. Community Action Plan 2020-2025 Review and Approve (Tara Bedard)

Tara Bedard provided an update on progress with the CAP since the last BSG meeting. All changes suggested by the BSG, IP Council and the other steering groups have been made. In early April the IP Council leadership team decided to proceed with finalization of the CAP,

despite the COVID-19 pandemic, stating that the collaborative work of IP is as important now as it ever was, and it was built to be responsive to changing conditions which is certainly the case with COVID-19. The IP Council approved the final version of the CAP at its April meeting, pending final agreement by all Steering Groups. It sets up a strong foundation for our collaborative work moving forward.

Dianne proposed the motion to approve the Community Action Plan 2020-2025. The motion was brought forward by: Sarah Shafiq and Sanjay Govindaraj. Everyone else voted in favour of approving the CAP as presented.

4. BSG Action Group Updates and Planning

The BSG agreed that the three existing action groups will continue to be the right fit given COVID-19 situation and beyond. Namely, Social Isolation, Public Education and Welcoming and Inclusive Municipalities. The group looked at current membership and agreed that each action group would meet soon to review their membership and plan upcoming actions in light of the new CAP being approved. Several BSG members expressed interest in joining with action groups.

Social Inclusion Working Group

- Social isolation continues to be the big concern in the community. There are many connections between the work of the BSG and others in the community like Wellbeing WR and more.
- Faith communities are working to fill the gaps and reach individuals who are totally isolated.
- Various online help groups are not accessed as intended. Possible reasons could be that they lack the safety features, privacy and trust issues. Another reason discussed was the absence of technology, devices and internet by the isolated population.
- Sanjay Govindaraj expressed interest to join Social Inclusion Working Group.

Public Education Working Group

- The group discussed the ongoing need for the regular positive messaging and communication about the value and contribution of immigrants in our community.
- COVID-19 raised new challenges and perceptions that need to be addressed for the current uncertain times and for the next few years.
- More awareness towards the sensitivity concerns for the East Asian population
- Noticeable lack of information in multiple languages for dealing with isolation, pandemic community support, and business recovery.
- There is interest among other collaboratives (i.e., Wellbeing WR, Children and Youth Planning Table, Crime Prevention Council) to achieve the goal of realizing a regional Anti-Racism Strategy in the next 5 years.

Welcoming and Inclusive Municipalities Working Group

- All municipality websites are updated with COVID-19 related information.
- Racism issue and strategies to tackle it need to be addressed
- Awareness of antiracism is needed in regards with education system and in the workforce.
- There was a suggestion for Waterloo Region District School Board to join Welcoming and Inclusive Municipalities Working Group.
- Gabrielle Laurin expressed interest to join Welcoming and Inclusive Municipalities Working Group and continue to be on Public Education Working Group.

5. Global Skills Conference and March 21 Campaign Updates (Brittney and Tara)

The BSG's March 21 Campaign aims to bring awareness to racial discrimination and actions to end it. The group decided to proceed with the campaign this year, although the COVID-19 pandemic hit just when the campaign was launched. Tara presented the results of the 2020 campaign, noting that they were surprisingly good compared to 2019 given everything happening with the pandemic in the week it took place.



(Please double click on the icon to view the presentation)

2020 Belong
Together WR Campaign

Brittney provided an update on the 2020 Global Skills Conference, which was extremely well received by participants and others.

Action: Abiha Syed to schedule meetings with the Action Working Groups

Meeting Adjourned at 2:50 pm

Next meeting: Monday, May 25, 2020. 1 to 3 pm.

Location: Zoom

Belong Steering Group (BSG) Meeting Minutes

Date:	May 25, 2020	Location:	Virtual Zoom Meeting
Time:	1:00-3:00 pm		
Present:	Dianne Boston-Nyp (Chair, Volunteer Action Centre), Brittney Emslie (Vice Chair, KW Multicultural Centre), Pamela Albrecht (City of Waterloo), Kelly Steiss (City of Kitchener), Shannon Markle (Idea Exchange), Brice Balmer (Interfaith Grand River), Sarah Shafiq (Interfaith Grand River / Coalition of Muslim Women), Gabrielle Laurin (Conseil Scolaire Viamonde), Chris Hussey (Reception House), Aleksandra Petrovic (Social Development Centre), Stephen Lavigne (KW Art Gallery), Vanessa Lopak (City of Cambridge), Pamela Rojas (Community Member), Faith Musasa (Region of Waterloo)		
Absent/ Regrets:	Elba Martinez (community member), Asha Abubaker (Community Member), Jonathan Moyer (House of Friendship), Kristen Bustamante (Region of Waterloo), Jessica Thier (Carizon), Muriel Vandepol (Region of Waterloo), Dina Ayad (Community member), Anna Barth (Community member), Jim Bowman (City of Waterloo), Julie Sudds (Waterloo Region Police Service), Lee Ann Wetzel (Region of Waterloo), Marla Pender (City of Kitchener), Melissa Strachan (Carizon), Rebecca Florence (City of Kitchener), Sanjay Govindaraj (Region of Waterloo), Kelly Kipfer (Waterloo Libraries), Sue Weare (City of Cambridge), Marie-Pierre Daoust (CSC MonAvenir)		
Guests:	N/A		
Staff:	Abiha Syed, Tara Bedard, Dan Vandebelt		

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1. Welcome, Introductions (Dianne)

- Dianne Boston-Nyp welcomed everyone to the meeting. Regrets were shared.
- All introduced themselves.
- Faith was representing Muriel Vandepol from the Region of Waterloo, as Muriel has been assigned a different role.

2. Review Agenda and Approve Past Minutes (Dianne)

The group:

- Reviewed Agenda. No changes were proposed.
- No conflict of interest declared.
- Approved the minutes from the April 2020 BSG meeting.

3. BSG Working Group Updates and Action Items

- Members discussed the possibility and benefits to join the three Working Groups.

- Janet Howitt to stay on Social Isolation (SIWG) and Public Education Working Group (PEWG) but not in the broader BSG
- Brice and Sarah are going to join the SIWG and PEWG, after discussing with Fauzia Mazhar (Coalition of Muslim Women KW). They are to let Abiha know who will be joining which working group.

3.1 Social Inclusion Working Group

- Dianne Boston-Nyp provided an overview of the SIWG meeting's discussion points: SIWG discussed the importance of taking direction from ethnocultural groups as to what we do next to help fill gaps and address their needs/wishes. Also, the need for check-ins on their Covid-19 handling strategies, what are they offering to the community, and what they would like BSG to do next to bring the previous work forward.
- BSG members discussed different ways to approach the ethnocultural groups and to build that relationship so they are seen as partners more than clients. Additionally, learn and acknowledge their adaptive informal support system. More emphasize was given to the isolation piece.
- The group discussed ways/methods for gathering input from ethnocultural leaders about what we should do next. It was agreed that Abiha to check-in with ethnocultural leaders, invite them to join the working group, and share her finding with the broader BSG. SIWG members offered to help if Abiha needed help.
- Abiha to report back to SIWG and set up a meeting after all the phone calls are made to the ethnocultural groups.
- The Friendly Voice Program, a pandemic call program has recently been launched.
- KW Multicultural Centre received funding to use interpreters to make reassurance calls to seniors who might be isolated. They are working in collaboration with YMCA immigrant services and Reception house to reach different language groups.

3.2 Public Education Working Group

- Brittney Emslie provided an overview of the PEWG meeting's discussion points:
Global Migration Film Festival: will go ahead, Nov 28-Dec 18 2020. Planning to start in late summer. IP to circulate the International Organization for Migration's (IOM) call for films (open till June 21). This year it will be virtual screening.

The need for the public education campaign is to be addressed sooner rather than later, i.e., this year: to normalize immigration and address backlash against immigrants, and reduce hate crimes.

Anti-racism strategy – BSG's goals of seeing regional strategies for antiracism has been shared with other collaborative (Wellbeing WR, Children and Youth Planning Table, Crime Prevention Council) and there is interest in joining this effort. Groups need to discuss how to bring this forward in the region.

- Laurelwood racist/vandalism attacks were discussed. Abiha connected with the family. They are overwhelmed by all the positive messages (flowers, gifts, cards, neighbours helped clean/paint). It was agreed that a postcard with positive messaging will be mailed to the family by Abiha. Members were open to the idea for IP to decide if the BSG members' names could be added to the postcard.
- Antiracism campaign ideas were discussed: lawn signs, to revive belongtogetherWR messages, educational messages to empower people to not be bystanders, educational messages to encourage people to walk with people who are disempowered, Record newspaper to feature a full-page, partner with block parents, etc.

3.3 Welcoming and Inclusive Municipalities Working Group

- Abiha provided the update with the group that Sue Weare from the City of Cambridge has a new role, hence Vanessa Lopak will be representing the City of Cambridge. The representation for the City of Kitchener is being addressed. Pamela Albrecht will continue to represent the City of Waterloo.
- Pamela Albrecht provided an overview of the WIMWG meeting's discussion points:
The interpretation/translation services continue to be more widely used and promoted in the community. It was recognized that some municipal websites don't have the translate feature (most townships as well). This was brought to the respective municipalities' attention and now they are working on it.
The importance of interpretation and translation services and the availability of key messages in other languages in all sectors of service providers should be an ongoing conversation at all tables.

Similar to the TTY number, a consistent message that interpretation is available should be visible on municipal websites (where available).

All municipal staff should know of all the available translations and interpretations of resources and policies. Promoting outside and inside

- The top languages in the Waterloo Region and the language accessibility recommendations were shared by Dan Vandebelt.
 - The group agreed to treat language lens with similar importance as the gender lens or physical accessibility lens.
4. Dianne Boston-Nyp term as Chair comes to an end. Tara Bedard thanked and acknowledged Dianne's time, effort, dedication, exceptional leadership qualities and her hard work with Immigration Partnership. Dianne was a strong connector within the BSG and beyond, including newcomers. Dianne has done an outstanding job of representing BSG to other groups and the IP Council.
 5. Tara welcomed the new Chair Brittney Emslie.

6. Nominations for the next vice-chair will be through email. All BSG members can email Abiha with their nominations. BSG members can nominate themselves. If multiple people are nominated, then there will be a formal voting process in the next BSG meeting. Any questions can be addressed to Abiha, Brittney or Dianne.

7. Coming up soon events

- KW Multicultural Festival from June 20-27, 2020. A virtual celebration of diversity: highlighting food vendors, music, etc. Possibly PEWG and IP to organize an online event to address racism and positive ways to address antiracism.
- World Refugee Day on June 20, 2020.
- Neighbourhood Day on September 19, 2020 organized by the City of Kitchener.

8. Action Items

- Abiha to check-in with ethno-cultural leaders, report back to SIWG and set up a meeting with SIWG after all the phone calls are made.
- Abiha to mail the solidarity post card to the Laurelwood family.
- Abiha to set up PEWG meeting to discuss antiracism campaign and send the invite to the broader BSG members. Possibly before the KW Multicultural Festival.

Meeting Adjourned at 2:50 pm

Next meeting: Tentative dates September 28, 2020 and November 30, 2020. On Mondays at 1 to 3 pm.

Location: TBA

Belong Steering Group (BSG) Meeting Minutes

Chair: Brittney Emslie

Minutes: Abiha Syed

Date:	September 28, 2020	Location:	Virtual Zoom Meeting
Time:	1:00-2:30 pm		
Present:	Brittney Emslie (Chair, KW Multicultural Centre), Vanessa Lopak (City of Cambridge), Dianne Boston-Nyp (Volunteer Action Centre), Shannon Markle (Idea Exchange), Brice Balmer (Interfaith Grand River), Sarah Shafiq (Interfaith Grand River / Coalition of Muslim Women), Gabrielle Laurin (Conseil Scolaire Viamonde), Chris Hussey (Reception House), Aleksandra Petrovic (Social Development Centre), Jessica Thier (Carizon), Kristen Bustamante (Region of Waterloo), Kelly Kipfer (Waterloo Libraries), Marie-Pierre Daoust (CSC MonAvenir), Fadhilah Balogun (CCORIC & AWIOWR), Jonathan Moyer (House of Friendship)		
Absent/ Regrets:	Pamela Albrecht (City of Waterloo), Kelly Steiss (City of Kitchener), Pamela Rojas (Community Member), Stephen Lavigne (KW Art Gallery), Elba Martinez (community member), Asha Abubaker (Community Member), Muriel Vandepol (Region of Waterloo), Dina Ayad (Community member), Anna Barth (Community member), Jim Bowman (City of Waterloo), Julie Sudds (Waterloo Region Police Service), Lee Ann Wetzel (Region of Waterloo), Marla Pender (City of Kitchener), Melissa Strachan (Carizon), Rebecca Florence (City of Kitchener), Sanjay Govindaraj (Region of Waterloo), Sue Weare (City of Cambridge)		
Guests:	N/A		
Staff:	Abiha Syed		

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1. Welcome (Brittney)

- Brittney welcomed everyone to the meeting. Regrets were shared.

2. Review Agenda and Approve Past Minutes (Brittney)

The group:

- Reviewed Agenda. No changes were proposed.
- No conflict of interest declared.
- Approved the minutes from the May 25, 2020 BSG meeting.

3. Introductions & Round Table Updates (Brittney)

- All introduced themselves and shared the work their organizations are working on.

4. IP Council Updates (June and September) (Updated by Brittney)

- **Working Steering Group (WSG)** - The Workforce Planning Board’s new FindyourJob.ca job site has launched as a one stop for employers and job-seekers, and the WSG is supporting it. They have paused their virtual employment hub discussions and are partnering with Workforce Planning Board and offering 3 virtual job fairs.

- **Settle Steering Group (SSG)** - Since the beginning of COVID-19 support has been given to the Regional pandemic response, especially working with Public Health and others to secure improvements to pandemic communications to better reach immigrants, residents that do not understand English and low income families. They have also been focused on Newcomer Landlord Award nominations throughout the summer.
- **Belong Steering Group (BSG)**
 - **May and September council meeting update** - Brittney requested on behalf of the BSG that IP Council endorse an anti-racism statement. There was good discussion at that meeting and they decided that IP staff would create a statement, building on what Chris had created and other partner/other statements with a focus on accountability within the IP. Abiha has sent the statement to the BSG a few months ago.

The new Community Action Plan was discussed, which includes a goal supporting the development of a regional anti-racism strategy. Council is looking at ways to focus our efforts over the next 5 years, and what the next steps should be. This was brought forward to Regional Council, for its direction and for Council to be engaged. Pari Kareem (Chair) and Tara were to present this to Council in August. The IP Council leadership team got together over the summer to plan a process around a broader strategy of engagement on anti-racism.

Pari presented IP's Community Action Plan to Regional Council in August and brought forward four recommendations, all of which Regional Council unanimously approved. The recommendations were to endorse the CAP, undertake and be informed advocates and leaders in welcoming, including and engaging immigrants, reaffirm their ongoing investment in the work of IP and consider additional investments as needed, and commit to partner with groups like the IP in the development of an Anti-Racism strategy for Waterloo Region.

Tara noted that a lot has changed since COVID started. She did a small presentation that was an overview of what we know so far about immigration and the impacts of COVID 19 in Canada and Waterloo Region, in order to ground our thinking and work.

The police chief Bryan Larkin has joined IP council and spoke about the work of WRPS: the launch of their first Equity Diversity and Inclusion Plan. WRPS Equity Diversity and Inclusion Plan for your information, [click here](#).

Anti-Racism Commitment - The tangible steps IP council will take are: at a high level, examine our own biases, review Governance Document, and internal processes, with the anti racism lens. Brittney has volunteered to join this Evaluation Advisory Committee and be the bridge between the BSG and council as this work moves forward.

Evaluation Advisory Committee (EAC) - Based on discussion with IP Council's leadership team, the EAC will be leveraged to build evaluation strategy from an anti-

racism perspective. EAC will minimally try to evaluate where we stand on an annual basis and gather our data and use the disaggregated and aggregate results to inform ourselves and others in the community. It will measure movement in the community and the impact of our anti-racism work on changes within IP partners and their abilities to take anti-racism action. We will also be looking at opportunities for training IP Council and Steering Group members on anti-racism and anti-bias. EAC is currently looking for volunteers to join the Evaluation Advisory Committee. If anyone is interested in joining, please let Abiha and Brittney know. Kelly Kipfer (Waterloo Libraries) volunteered to join the EAC.

5. BSG Working Group Updates and Action Items

5.1 Social Isolation Working Group (SIWG) (Updated by Abiha)

SIWG last met on August 10. Connections with Ethno-cultural Group leaders are ongoing via phone/zoom meetings to check-in on their Covid-19 strategies, gather input and take direction as to how to help fill gaps and address their needs/wishes. It has been a challenge to connect during Covid-19, as they are extremely busy trying to regulate and follow Covid-19 regulations and opening of Faith organizations. The connections have also been made and are on going with groups/organizations/individuals who are making reassurance phone calls to address isolation and offer help and support on the need basis. Ongoing work to update, sort and develop the previous ethno cultural groups contact list. Successfully made connections with most members of the Cambridge Mobilization Team.

Abiha is hoping to plan in person Multicultural Connections event in the new years if possible and the Covid-19 regulations permit.

5.2 Public Education Working Group (PEWG) (Updated by Chris)

PEWG has met three times since May 2020. The topic of racial discrimination was predominantly discussed at the PEWG as to how PEWG can combat racial, ethnic, gender and religious discrimination personally and in our community. PEWG agreed that public education is required to address and reduce hate crimes and help in the efforts to create a more welcoming community. There is a strong need in bringing community together for this ‘collaborative project’ and asking groups/individuals to help shape it.

PEWG hopes to launch #RacialEquityWR campaign to engage residents of Waterloo Region in conversations that will encourage co-existence and respect. It is a campaign to collect and compile all resources related to antiracism in the WR on one webpage. It will be a living page. As of now the suggestion is to house it on IP website. The next part to this campaign is to print lawn signs with #RacialEquityWR messages and the link to the webpage. Pamela Rojas is the artist who designed the lawn sign. She is the Waterloo Region resident, BSG and PEWG member. The issue

of funds required to print the lawn signs is unresolved; however, Tara is looking for ways to apply for grants.

Abiha has consulted with contacts from ACB (Lang Ncube), Project UP (Shama Saleh), Coalition of Muslim Women-KW (Fauzia Mazhar), Spectrum, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, London's IP Huda Hussain and a constable who is also from Wellbeing Waterloo Region/First National Metis and Inuit Advocacy/Advisory Circle. All of them thought that lawn signs could have a positive effect to spread the message of condemning racism; however, the lawn sign campaign should be connected to an action plan and the campaign goals.

5.3 Welcoming and Inclusion Municipalities Working Group (WIMWG) (Updated by Vanessa)
WIMWG last met on September 14th. The WIMWG discussed having local municipalities hosting annual citizenship ceremonies. We are currently waiting for direction from Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada on how municipalities can support virtual ceremonies.

The WIMWG also discussed translation and interpretation policies, identifying that, while some municipal websites have translation features, not all sites do. The group identified the need to promote the use of the translation features available to newcomer groups and services. Similarly, while some municipalities are currently exploring telephone interpretation options, those that have telephone interpretation available are aware of the need to promote the service.

Welcome Cambridge, known last year as Newcomer Day, is moving forward this year with a virtual event. The event will include a map of newcomer services that serve the Cambridge newcomer community, and are exploring options for performances. Welcome Cambridge will be held in early November this year.

The Cambridge Newcomer Outreach Program, a new program funded by the IRCC settlement grant, is a partnership between the City of Cambridge and Kinbridge Community Association, with the goal to support newcomer youth and newcomer seniors, increase their sense of belonging, and create linkages to other programs and services. Recruitment for community Engagers are currently underway, and it is project that virtual service offerings will begin in November. Vanessa asked the group for those interested in serving on the selection panel to contact her as soon as possible.

6 First Response Information Session (WRPS) (Updated by Abiha)

WRPS launched its inclusion unit to address racism, discrimination, and systemic barriers two years ago. In March 2020, WRPS launched its first Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Plan, which looks at policing and racism. WRPS wants diverse members of the community to feel safe with the police. They have an ambassador program for

different diverse groups within the region to bring the positive change. One of this initiative is the First Response Information session. It is geared towards new immigrant population and Constable Jaskirat Gill is leading this project. This project will be in partnership with EMTS and the Fire department. It is work in progress and more details will be shared in the next BSG meeting. IP Council agreed to support WRPS to make positive changes to strengthen and build that connection with the community, BSG members agreed to support this initiative.

7 Global Migration Film Festival Update (Updated by Abiha)

Global Migration Film Festival (GMFF)/ International Organization for Migration (IOM): will go ahead, Nov 28-Dec 18 2020. The planning process is delayed due to the COVID-19. UN migration, and IOM are in midst of changes in funding and their team. The work on the selection of the film list is in progress, but the list will not be ready by the end of October 2020.

8 Anishnabeg Outreach (Info shared by Dianne)

Dianne, Brittney and Abiha attended Anishnabeg Outreach Centres' tour in person. They provide Aboriginal people with access to culturally appropriate services and strive to support individuals with direction and assistance to overcome barriers by extending employment, education and training services. They also host training session so a person can heal verses to feel resentment.

9 Vice Chair Nominations (Updated by Abiha)

Vanessa Lopak (City of Cambridge) and Pamela Albrecht (City of Waterloo) were nominated for the position of Vice-Chair of BSG. Pamela Albrecht declined and Vanessa Lopak gracious accepted the position. BSG members unanimously agreed that if Vanessa's role with the City of Cambridge changes in the future, BSG will review the Vice Chair position at that time. BSG welcomed Vanessa Lopak warmly.

10. Meeting Adjourned at 2:30 pm
Next Meeting: 30 Nov 2020, 1:00-2:30pm
Location: Zoom

Belong Steering Group (BSG) Meeting Minutes

Chair: Brittney Emslie

Minutes: Abiha Syed

Date:	November 30, 2020	Location:	Virtual Zoom Meeting
Time:	1:00-3:00 pm		
Present:	Brittney Emslie (Chair, KW Multicultural Centre), Dianne Boston-Nyp (Volunteer Action Centre), Shannon Markle (Idea Exchange), Brice Balmer (Interfaith Grand River), Sarah Shafiq (Interfaith Grand River / Coalition of Muslim Women), Sophia Stanberry (Region of Waterloo), Jessica Thier (Carizon), Kelly Kipfer (Waterloo Libraries), Marie-Pierre Daoust (CSC MonAvenir), Kelly Steiss (City of Kitchener), Stephen Lavigne (KW Art Gallery), Kelly Kipfer (Waterloo Libraries), Rihanat EL-Alawa (Kinbridge Community Association)		
Absent/ Regrets:	Pamela Albrecht (City of Waterloo), Pamela Rojas (Community Member), Elba Martinez (community member), Asha Abubaker (Community Member), Muriel Vandepol (Region of Waterloo), Dina Ayad (Community member), Anna Barth (Community member), Jim Bowman (City of Waterloo), Julie Sudds (Waterloo Region Police Service), Lee Ann Wetzel (Region of Waterloo), Marla Pender (City of Kitchener), Melissa Strachan (Carizon), Rebecca Florence (City of Kitchener), Vanessa Lopak (City of Cambridge), Gabrielle Laurin (Conseil Scolaire Viamonde), Aleksandra Petrovic (Social Development Centre), Kristen Bustamante (Region of Waterloo),		
Guests:	Maya Bastian		
Staff:	Abiha Syed		

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1. GMFF screening the film Air Show

- Land acknowledgment (Brittney)
- Welcome & GMFF info/background (Brittney)
- Intro of the film Air Show – (Stephen)
 Film Screening on Zoom Webinar
- Intro of the filmmaker Maya Bastian – Short Presentation – (Stephen)
- Q & A and open discussion (Brittney, Stephen and Abiha)
- Closing remarks – (Brittney)

2. Welcome (Brittney)

- Brittney welcomed everyone to the meeting. Regrets were shared.

3. Review Agenda and Approve Past Minutes (Brittney)

The group:

- Reviewed Agenda. No changes were proposed.
- No conflict of interest declared.
- Approved the minutes from the September 28, 2020 BSG meeting.

4. Introductions & Round Table Updates (Brittney)

- All introduced themselves and shared the work their organizations are working on. All shared their feedback about the BSG film screening. The feedback was positive and the discussion after the film screening was helpful and thought provoking.

5. Indigenous Communities and the BSG (Brittney)

- Land acknowledgement is good; however, there is a strong need to have a conversation about the importance around it. The members shared the importance to understand the longstanding history that has brought us to reside on the land, and seek to understand our place within that history. Land acknowledgements do not exist in a past tense, or historical context: it is a current ongoing process. There should be a conscious mindfulness of our present participation. To be aware that land acknowledgement does not become a mundane-mandatory check box.
- Land acknowledgment discussion should be taken to school system. BSG can work in the new years on the collaboration with WRDSB
- New comers don't have the education about indigenous people and the history of Canada. What is reconciliation and who should be part of this discussion? Truth and reconciliation, people and history of Canada should be part of discussion with new immigrants.
- Invite an Indigenous elder to BSG's next meeting. Discussion points could be 'what belonging means to indigenous people. Many are not comfortable to acknowledge that they are indigenous. Not all want to register'. Therefore, BSG journey aligns with the indigenous journey in the coming years.
- Another suggestion was to have Virtual tour of the residential school for the BSG.

6. RacialEquityWR Campaign & GMFF – Update (Abiha)

- RacialEquity WR Campaign's resource page stage-one is complete and has been housed on the IP webpage. Please click on [racialequitywr](#) to visit the page. The feedback by the BSG members is welcome.
The lawn sign printing matter will be revisited in the spring of 2021, due to lack of funding (to print the lawn signs).
- Global Migration Film Festival (GMFF)/International Organization for Migration (IOM): GMFF is going well and much better than anticipated (due to the pandemic and moving it on the digital platform). November 24 to December 18 is the film festival in the Waterloo Region. All screenings are on the virtual platform. There are 14 screenings by 10 hosts of seven films. Most of the film hosts were able to invite and have the filmmakers and the people featured in the films to be on the panel. This was the highpoint of GMFF 2020 and was possible due to the digital platform that we had to embrace.



- PEWG has collaborated with Waterloo Public Library to be the technical support for the two BSG film screenings: Nov 30th and Dec 18th.

7. The Year 2020 & BSG and Welcome 2021 – (Brittney)

- The members shared the highlights of 2020.
- The key highlights of BSG work were:
 - Initiating the Anti-Racism statement and commitments for the entire Immigration Partnership and the council, #RacialEquityWR resource webpage and GMFF.
- BSG will look into its strategic planning in the 2021.

8. Meeting Adjourned at 3:00 pm

Next Meeting: January 25, 2021, 1:00 – 3:00pm

Location: Zoom