

Immigration Partnership Council Meeting Minutes

Date:	18 February 2021
Time:	12:30pm – 2:00pm
Location:	Zoom
Present:	Pari Karem (Chair), Tracey Hare Connell (Vice Chair), Karen Spencer (Past Chair), Laura Stoutenburg (SSG Chair), Ian McLean (WSG Chair), Brittney Emslie (BSG Chair), Margaret Walton-Roberts, James Bond, Lucia Harrison, Ernest Osei
Regrets:	Conal Vaughan, Brian Kamm
Absent	Douglas Bartholomew-Saunders, Elaine Ranney, Bryan Larkin, Sonja Erstic
Guest:	Rich Janzen (Centre for Community Based Research)
Staff:	Tara Bedard, Pauline Peng, Nora Whittington, Dan Vandebelt, Abiha Syed, Alejandra Amez, Bedri Unal (placement student)

1. Welcome, Instructions, Regrets, Introductions

Meeting started at 12:34pm once quorum was reached. Pari Karem welcomed everyone to the IP Council's fifth zoom meeting and the first meeting of 2021. She offered a Territorial Acknowledgement, gave voting instructions to meeting attendees, and introduced Rich Janzen from the Centre for Community Based Research as a guest.

2. Review of the Meeting Agenda and Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Council reviewed the agenda. Agenda approved. No conflicts of interest were declared.

3. Items for Approval

3.1 Consent Agenda

Tracey Hare Connell invited Council to review the Consent Agenda, which includes the 18 November 2020 Council Meeting Minutes, the Nov 2020 – Feb 2021 CAP Progress Report and the ED's Report.

Motion: That the Immigration Partnership Council approve the consent agenda in its entirety.

- Tracey brought forward the motion.
- Ernest Osei seconded the motion.
- No members opposed or abstained from vote. Motion carried.

3.2 Updated Governance Document

Tracey invited Council to review the recommended changes to IPs Governance Document. The last update was in November 2018. Tracey, Pari, Ernest, Brittney Emslie, Bedri Unal and Tara Bedard were on the review committee and met four times between November 2020 and January 2021 and worked together to do a line-by-line review using IP's [Anti-Racism Commitment](#) as a foundation. The primary focus of this update was to intentionally embed anti-racism in IP governance, but the committee did a full review that included structural and other content updates.

Key changes:

- Intentional reference to anti-racism throughout.
- Full inclusion of the anti-racism commitment.

- Clear intention around transparent recruitment, strong immigrant and racial representation in leadership and throughout IP.
- Introduction of a territorial acknowledgment.
- Alignment with renewed CAP directions, vision and mission
- Structural updates moving process oriented contents into expanded appendices.
- Recognition of the dynamic nature of IPs staff team and their strategic and operational roles.

Tracey invited comments and questions regarding the document, and Council agreed with the direction of the changes.

Motion: That the Immigration Partnership Council approve the updated Governance Document as recommended.

- Tracey brought forward the motion.
- Lucia Harrison seconded the motion.
- No members opposed or abstained from vote. Motion carried.

Karen Spencer joined the meeting at 12:54pm.

4. Grounding our work: What we know about immigration and executive update

Tara shared her appreciation and excitement for work of the governance committee and the updates to IPs governance. She noted that as IP Council moves to recruitment soon, we will action this work.

She provided a high-level update on immigration:

- Permanent immigrant arrivals down 36% in Waterloo Region in 2020 compared to previous year.
- Federal government announced the 2021-2023 immigration levels plan in Nov. Commitment to increase immigration, with 1.2 million planned permanent resident arrivals in that time.
- Supplementary mandate letter for the immigration ministry indicates intention to meet levels with stronger focus on transition of temporary residents to permanent residency (i.e. people already in the country). Strong implications for our international student and temporary foreign worker population, and eventually on service needs.
- Immigrants continue to be disproportionately impacted by the pandemic – i.e., higher COVID incidence, job loss, mental health, isolation and more. Language accessibility of information continues to be a challenge.

Margaret Walton-Roberts joined the meeting at 12:56pm.

Other updates included:

- Continued instability of some of IPs funding, in particular from the Ontario government. Meanwhile the United Way has renewed funding commitments through short-term agreements and IRCC has committed an additional \$100,000. Overall IPs is in a relatively good financial position.
- Submissions outlining investment priorities were submitted to the federal and provincial governments as part of their 20201 budget consultations.
- Engagement with area municipalities continues – Pari and Tara presented IPs 2020-2025 Community Action Plan to the Kitchener and Cambridge City Council at end of 2020 and will do the same for Waterloo next Monday. Tara invited IP Council to join the meeting.
- Alejandra is leading preparation of an annual report of IPs work and thinking for IPs next community forum is starting.
- IP Council recruitment will be needed soon.

5. CAP Implementation Highlights

Settle Steering Group (SSG)

Laura Stoutenburg noted that the SSG has evolved and changed over time. She noted:

- Some items are transitioning to more community-based leadership with ongoing support and engagement by the SSG, for example work on medical interpretation is not being led through the KW4 OHT with the LHIN and IP co-chairing that work.
- SSG identified a need for
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- and new addition to the CAP: short term goals of helping each other through the challenges of COVID-19. The group has also noticed the gap between being an international student and becoming a permanent resident for some immigrants.

Dan Vandebelt added that IP partners and staff continue to work with Ontario Health TeamKW4 region partners in assessing critical needs in newcomer health, focusing on mental health, interpretation, and pandemic-related needs. An [interpretation commitment statement](#) was also developed. There are also emerging issues that may not be identified in CAP, since it was developed before COVID-19. The steering groups are bringing the needs of the community into the group.

Lucia: what we are seeing is exciting after 10 years of IP. Doctor are using the OCEAN system in which they can make referrals to specialists. Now working with them to build automatic referral to interpreters in the system.

Belong Steering Group (BSG)

Brittney Emslie noted that the BSG is working on diversifying its member so they represent different ethnicities as well as sectors. The group had a strategic focus, having breakout meetings. Currently the goal is to make sure that immigrants feel connected during COVID-19.

Brittney and Abiha Syed met with Kelly Fran (?) regarding indigenous and immigrant issues and recommendations, and would like to have a training jointly with other IP groups. Laura thinks it is a great idea. Pari agrees and asks Abiha to send invitations to the groups.

The Public Education Working Group has started to work on the campaign for the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on March 21. They want to be doing something well received and adds value. The current idea is having organizations record 30-second videos about how the organization is doing that is actively anti-racist, and changes will we see one year from now. Karen likes this idea, especially since it will get the whole community on board.

Work Steering Group (WSG)

Nora Whittington highlighted the group's work with Worldwide Education Services (WES) on a program called Immigrants Works. WES was originally launched as a national social media campaign, and now numerous programs are being delivered as an extension. Ian McLean added that the goal is to launch an employer playbook for Waterloo Region re: hiring immigrants and more. The group is currently meeting bi-weekly with the WES team to develop a work plan.

Margaret added in the chat: "On the matter of matching there is an interesting project that has been undertaken by McMaster on matching internationally trained nurses to local hospital employers <https://nursing.mcmaster.ca/news-events/events/mcmaster-university-webinar-series-2020> "

Action item:

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6. Items for Information/Discussion

6.1 CCBR evaluation of WSG activities

Rich Janzen presented his evaluation.
(insert Rich's presentation)

Pari and Tara thank Rich for the presentation and invited questions from Council. No questions were asked.

6.2 Evaluation Strategy

a. Evaluation Strategy Progress

Margaret Walton-Roberts provided an update on the work of the Evaluation Advisory Committee. The now consists of Co-Chairs Margaret and Eliseo Martell (SSG), as well as Julie Newman (WSG), Kelly Kipfer (BSG), Yasir Dildar (community member), and staffed by Dan Vandebelt and Tara. Margaret updated that the group met in January to discuss the initial drafts. One issue raised was temporary migrants: realization one cannot capture what is going on in WR. We have to capture their issues and find how they get the assistant they need, as they are often not eligible for many services.

Ian McLean left the meeting at 1:43

Another issue is anti-racism: figuring out the types of data we need and discussing with IRCC. This may raise the role of the region other LIPs. Tara suggested that at the next meeting the group to bring ready-enough framework for the Council to review.

b. 2020 Partner Survey Results

Tara presented the survey results. 87 partners responded to the survey.



c. 2021 Immigrant Survey Plans

Deferred.

7. Partner updates of relevance

Deferred.

8. Meeting Adjourned at 2:01pm

Pari thanked everyone for participating in the meeting and adjourned the meeting.

Next Meeting: 15 April 2021

Location: Zoom

Immigration Partnership Council Meeting Minutes

Date:	15 April 2021
Time:	12:30pm – 2:00pm
Location:	Zoom
Present:	Pari Karem (Chair), Tracey Hare Connell (Vice Chair), Karen Spencer (Past Chair), Laura Stoutenburg (SSG Chair), Ian McLean (WSG Chair), Brittney Emslie (BSG Chair), James Bond, Lucia Harrison, Ernest Osei, Douglas Bartholomew-Saunders, Bryan Larkin
Regrets:	Margaret Walton-Roberts, Brian Kamm, Conal Vaughan, Sonja Erstic, Elaine Ranney
Staff:	Tara Bedard, Pauline Peng, Nora Whittington, Dan Vandebelt, Abiha Syed, Alejandra Amez

1. Welcome, Instructions, Regrets, Introductions

Quorum was achieved and the meeting started at 12:35pm. Pari Karem welcomed everyone to the IP Council's sixth zoom meeting and second meeting of 2021. She offered a Territorial Acknowledgement, and gave voting instructions to meeting attendees.

2. Review of the Meeting Agenda and Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Council reviewed the agenda. Agenda approved. No conflicts of interest were declared.

3. Items for Approval

Consent Agenda

Tracey Hare Connell invited Council to review the Consent Agenda, which includes the 18 February 2021 Council Meeting Minutes, the February – April 2021 CAP Progress Report and the ED's Report.

Motion: That the Immigration Partnership Council approve the consent agenda in its entirety.

- Tracey brought forward the motion.
- Lucia Harrison seconded the motion.
- No members opposed or abstained from vote. All approved. Motion carried.

4. Grounding our work: What we know about immigration and executive update

Tara Bedard shared a short update on immigration trends. In 2020, new permanent arrivals were down from 2019 by around 34%. There were 3050 new arrivals compared to around 4600 in 2019. We started to see the numbers growing again in December 2020 and January 2021, and were surpassing arrivals in the same months one year earlier. This upswing is consistent with federal government's policy commitment in the levels plan to grow immigration in the next three years and make up for pandemic deficits. The Immigration Ministry opened a new program yesterday - 90,000 temporary workers in essential roles and international student graduates can apply for permanent residence between May and Nov 2021. In addition, French-speaking and bilingual candidates in the same categories can apply with there are no limits. This is good news for temporary residents in our community and businesses that employ them.

Tara highlighted several strategic and operational updates:

- The province appears to be cutting funding for locally focused Bridge Training Programs, so we have worked with Greater KW Chamber of Commerce to close out existing provincial

funding requirements. We supported the Chamber in discussions with the province about further funding opportunities and informed Regional Council of the end of existing funding. Final financial and narrative reports were submitted.

- Staff, led by Alejandra Amez, are working on IPs 2020-2021 Annual Report. It will be interactive and feature video messaging from a number of partners and staff. Thanks to everyone who has been involved.
- To further implementation of IPs Anti-Racism Commitment, the Anti-Racism 102 training series has started. Council members who have not signed up are asked to do so. The first 2 sessions done and more sessions are continuing into June.
- We have continued to support and inform pandemic response, focused heavily on partner and staff engagement in multi-lingual vaccine information and targeted vaccination clinics for vulnerable communities, including many immigrants.

Pari welcomed the news about the new immigration program for temporary residents.

Tracey asked if we have a sense of the adoption rates among newcomers for vaccinations and understanding of registration process. She noted that we know immigrants and other groups are infected at higher rates so we should be looking at who is being vaccinated.

Tara replied that there is interest, hesitancy and access issues, so the community-based efforts are important to encourage and enable vaccination. We have encouraged that the same demographic data be gathered and shared for people being vaccinated at an aggregate level as has been done for COVID incidence – Public Health is working to get the data needed to do this (will be an add on to the data required by the province).

Lucia added that here and Waterloo Region and around the province, the biggest issue being flagged by immigrants is concern about what is in the vaccine and the science. The multi-lingual information sessions being planned are important in addressing this.

5. CAP Implementation Highlights

Settle Steering Group (SSG)

Laura Stoutenburg highlighted several things happening in SSG:

- SSG has moved forward with its Advisory Chair role, to support more participation of newer immigrants and racialized members in leadership. Hoda Ghonim from the SHORE Centre is SSGs Inaugural Advisory Chair and her first meeting in this role will be in May.
- Work of the KW4 Ontario Health Team on medical interpretation continues outside of IP with the strong engagement and leadership by IP partners and staff.
- SSG continues to engage with housing systems and planning tables to ensure strong focus on immigrant perspectives.
- The language learning action group met and is updating promotion material on formal and learning options to ease access to the right supports at the right time.
- Our remote world has opened more and different options for collaboration and collaborative learning. SSG has facilitated several remote learning and information sharing events that have helped settlement-type partners to better understand systems and their navigation to help clients and provided those systems the opportunity to hear more about immigrant challenges and opportunities. I.e, exploration of a newcomer landlord program from London and an upcoming session on area summer programs for children and youth.

Pari expressed her congratulations on all the work happening and especially with respect to the advisory chair role.

Work Steering Group (WSG)

Ian McLean provided an update on the work of WSG:

- #ImmigrantsWork one-year pilot with World Education Services. Planning an employer workshop and will develop an employer playbook to support immigrant and refugee hiring. Foundational partners are deciding on the direction of the plan.
- Talent Hub planning continues with exploration of potential platforms like findyourjob.ca.
- Continued to engage with the BestWR workforce committee to support the hardest hit sectors in their recovery, ensuring consideration of immigrant talent options.
- Collaborated with the Workforce Planning Board to deliver three virtual job fairs where nearly 300 immigrants were able to connect with 60 employers.
- Supported the Workforce Planning Boards survey of workers on the future of work, to ensure significant immigrant response rate. Very successful efforts, with many immigrant respondents. Learnings with shared with employers and others during a Chamber webinar.
- Nora Whittington is participating on a regional planning committee to raise funds to reskill individuals for new work opportunities.

Ian also did a plug for the Chamber's new program to provide rapid testing kits for small and medium sized workplaces to help keep workspaces safe.

Tara shared in chat: "The Business Success Sessions have all been really great. Really liked hearing from Workforce Planning Board on workers' thoughts on future of work and such specific attention to differences between immigrants and others. Really useful and great results due to Nora and others support."

Douglas Bartholomew-Saunders joined the meeting at 1:02pm. Karen Spencer joined the meeting at 1:04pm.

Belong Steering Group (BSG)

Brittney Emslie provided an update on the BSG:

- The March 21 campaign for the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination had great engagement. This year we focused on anti-racism action and accountability among IP and partner organizations – there were 23 videos shared widely on social media. Brittney thanked Alejandra for her work editing and uploading the videos – as a series it was very impactful. We measured over 7,000 views on IP channels along, and each organization shared independently. BSG is extremely happy with the engagement this year. All videos can be viewed [here](#).
- Organized the first ethno-cultural leadership roundtable of 2021, focusing on strategies, resources and tools. There were 25 participants and excellent discussion.
- BSG's Indigenization training for IP is coming up. Trainings will take place Tuesday mornings throughout May. Partners are encouraged to sign up [here](#).

6. Items for Information/Discussion

6.1 Evaluation Strategy

a. Evaluation Framework Update

Dan Vandebelt provided an update on the work of the Evaluation Advisory Committee (EAC), which has focused on development of IP's Data Evaluation Framework aligned with the 2020-2025 Community Action Plan. An overview is presented today for overall input and in principle approval of

its direction. The draft will be shared with all Steering Groups, revised and brought back to the June Council meeting for formal approval.

Dan provided an overview of the draft framework and invited Council members to do a more in depth review and provide comments as follow-up to this meeting:

Immigration Partnership Data & Evaluation Framework – DRAFT

15Apr2021

This Data and Evaluation Framework provides a map for the Immigration Partnership (IP). As we build community through immigration, both data and evaluation are foundational for IP. Collaborative learning and development are core to our strategy as we engage in evidence-based work.

Framework Principles

The following principles are foundational to our data and evaluation work:

- Asset-based Approach:** We need to ensure that data is available to tell an accurate and full story of immigration and the role of IP in Waterloo Region. Telling an accurate story of immigration acknowledges that too often the data we collect and the stories we tell are focused solely on deficits and needs. While we do want to be aware of the challenges for immigrants and occurring within the immigration process, the data in this Framework balances this with the strengths of immigrants and the benefits of immigration to achieve a thriving and prosperous community for everyone. This strong dual focus on both strengths and challenges can more effectively shape targeted and empowering solutions for stronger community outcomes.
- Rooted in our Action Plan:** We need to measure the performance of IP's work and the progress in WR toward our vision of a community where immigrants reach their full potential and contribute to creating and sustaining a thriving, prosperous community for everyone. This performance measurement purpose is rooted in our 2020-2025 Community Action Plan (CAP) which details what we want to achieve together (a thriving community through immigration) and challenges stand in the way of that and what specifically we want to do to address that in Waterloo Region. This Framework then measures the work and the broader changes in the community. We are committed to sharing not just where we are doing well but clearly assessing and addressing where the Immigration Partnership and the broader community needs to do further work.
- Utility:** It is critical that the data we collect is useful. We will ensure that the data and insights from our research will inform our own work and focus on respecting the critical needs in our community. We will share our research with partners and stakeholders across the community so it can inform their work, with all levels of government and community leaders to impact broad-reaching policy, as well as with other communities to impact collective efforts across our country.
- Future Oriented:** We will be attentive to emerging trends and what data and research is needed and not just what is available. This ranges from languages that are becoming more significant in our community and where additional support is needed, impact of events like the COVID-19 pandemic, needs and opportunities to ensure immigrants are able to fully contribute to a thriving economy, or a growing realization of the numbers and significance of temporary residents in our community.
- Inclusivity:** We recognize the centrality of listening to and involving immigrants themselves in the collection and use of this research. The voice and lived experience of immigrants will be our starting point. This Framework and the work of IP is based on a broad definition of immigrants –

¹ This Data and Evaluation Framework and IP's research activities are overseen by the IP Evaluation Advisory Committee.

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Document Number: 1546681

Tracey thanked the EAC for all of its work. She welcomed the leading practice approach and noted how comprehensive the framework appears to be. She reflected that have talked about this for the past 6-8 months she is ecstatic to see the rigor and the output. She noted she would look closely at the details.

Karen Spencer noted how much she liked the theory of change and support for the overall direction.

Brittney agreed and indicated she would provide detailed comments.

Dan welcomed early feedback to provide time to do updates, and noted that there is very likely interest in this work among IRCC and other LIPs across Canada.

Ian left the meeting at 1:28pm.

Lucia reminded us to look at language through the lens of immigrants and make sure they can understand it. She offered to have frontline staff to look from that perspective.

James Bond noted that the school board has been working on its upcoming student census and considering that and this work, noted the importance of reflecting in this work what the ideal experience for immigrants in Waterloo Region is and how we bring equity to this group.

Tara noted how pleased she is with the work done, significantly by Dan, and the contributions of all of the committee members. She noted the framework will be circulated with the meeting minutes and reminded Council to look at the full document and provide feedback by the deadline provided.

b. 2021 Immigrant Survey Plans

Dan noted that it is time to do our bi-annual immigrant survey in early June. We are hoping for interaction with students. Our target this year is 1,500 responses (up from 200 4 years ago and 1,100 2 years ago). This will be a challenge but we know the partnership is up for it. The survey will be primarily online but need to address the challenges. We are relying on partners with outreach strategies. We are inviting partners to be contributors and they can add 3-5 questions to those they

refer to, as an experiment, will include a mini report, in exchange for commitment for 100 respondents. Hopefully this will support the needs of the partner organizations and also help reach our response goal. The survey will be translated into several languages.

Tara noted the draft survey will be shared with Council along with the minutes and comments are invited.

Pari: we are happy to promote the survey among our clients. Will support the need for newcomer families to complete the surveys because their input is important.

Karen: Santiago Grande at FACS is a good contact for outreach.

Tracey: Have we asked organizations to add questions. Is there interest? Dan: asked them to respond if they are interested.

Action items:

- Circulate the draft data and evaluation to Council for feedback with the minutes
- Circulate the draft immigrant survey to Council for feedback with the minutes

6.2 IP Council Recruitment

Karen updated Council that we need to embark on recruitment. There are currently 13 voting members while the governance document foresees 15-18. She noted that when we are recruiting this time, we will do an open call plus targeted outreach. This came out the anti-racism governance review, and underscores the importance of looking not just in our own networks. She invited suggestions for the types of sectors, geographies, etc., that we should be recruiting for, and take guidance from the demographic info collected via the partner survey to work towards equitable representation. All Council members will be asked to share the open call through their networks to help boost recruitment reach.

James suggested we look at how the Crime Prevention Council recently undertook this work from an equity lens and asked are there voices we need to bring to this table that are not here right now? Do we need to look at targeted groups as opposed to an open call? Karen responded that we can do both. We can be clear in the criteria what we are looking for but make it an open call for broad circulation.

Douglas Bartholomew-Saunders noted that this a widespread quest. He strongly encouraged 1. Broad ask, sending out to broader community, there is benefit, 2. Target our request to specific areas. For example, LGBTQ+ immigrant communities who are here because of persecution. They have a much harder time attaching to the community because of their fear for authority because of their experience from their country of origin. He offered to support promotion and recruitment. Karen agreed that including the LGBTQ+ community is very important.

Pari suggested we look for representation of international students, temporary workers and family legal services.

Lucia notes that there may be obstacle for participation for people with lived experience if we hold meetings during work hours so we may need to consider how we conduct our business, depending on who is recruited and their ability to engage. Lucia suggested including a blurb in the application: “we generally meet at X – would that be an obstacle for you attending?”

Ernest Osei supported opening recruitment on a broader scale while being targeted and focused in the final selection of new members. As a Council we should be clear about what we need and we should get more voice in those areas.

Karen agreed and recalled we are also looking for people who affect influence in the community. She noted to importance of sharing what the role of Council is and what work at the higher level is like. It is not for everybody.

Brittney suggested seeking Indigenous representation.

Action items:

- Proceed with Council recruitment.

6.3 Immigration Forum 2021 Planning

Pari shared that it is time to start planning the next Immigration Forum, which has been postponed due to the pandemic. The suggestion is to hold the event in the Fall – there are many policy developments and pandemic recovery to consider and the implications for the community. She also invited Council volunteers to engage in planning.

Brittney suggested October would be good timing and offered to help planning.

Tracey: also prefers October, also would like to be involved.

Everyone agreed with going ahead in October.

Action items:

- Proceed with Immigration Forum Planning.

7. Partner updates of relevance

Re the school board student census, James invited Tara to follow-up.

Laura left the meeting at 2:00pm.

8. Meeting Adjourned at 2:02pm

Pari thanked everyone for participating in the meeting and adjourned the meeting.

Next Meeting: 17 June 2021, 12:30-2:00pm

Location: Zoom

Immigration Partnership Council Meeting Minutes

Date:	16 September 2021
Time:	12:30pm – 2:00pm
Location:	Zoom
Present:	Pari Karem (Chair), Tracey Hare Connell (Vice Chair), Karen Spencer (Past Chair), Laura Stoutenburg (SSG Chair), Ian McLean (WSG Chair), Brittney Emslie (BSG Chair), James Bond, Lucia Harrison, Ernest Osei, Douglas Bartholomew-Saunders, Margaret Walton-Roberts
Regrets:	Brian Kamm, Conal Vaughan, Sonja Erstic, Bryan Larkin, Della Lataille-Herdsman
Guests	Lynne Griffiths-Fulton, Stephanie Schreuders
Staff:	Tara Bedard, Pauline Peng, Nora Whittington, Dan Vandebelt, Abiha Syed, Alejandra Amez

1. Welcome, Instructions, Regrets, Introductions

Quorum was achieved and the meeting started at 12:34pm. Pari Karem welcomed everyone to the Immigration Partnership Council's eighth zoom meeting and fourth meeting of 2021. She offered a Territorial Acknowledgment, and gave voting instructions to meeting attendees.

2. Review of the Meeting Agenda and Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Council reviewed the agenda. Agenda approved. No conflicts of interest were declared.

3. Items for Approval

Consent Agenda

Tracey Hare Connell invited Council to review the Consent Agenda, which includes the 17 Jun 2021 Council Meeting Minutes, the Jun-Sept 2021 CAP Progress Report and the Executive Director's Report.

Motion: That the Immigration Partnership Council approve the consent agenda in its entirety.

- Tracey brought forward the motion.
- Lucia Harrison seconded the motion.
- No members opposed or abstained from vote. All approved. Motion carried.

Pari introduced and welcomed Lynn Griffiths-Fulton (Program Director, Reception House) as a guest to the meeting, who will later speak about Afghan Resettlement.

4. Grounding our work: What we know about immigration and executive update

Tara Bedard shared a short update on immigration trends. Numbers are going up. More people are coming into the region as permanent residents, which is in line with the federal government's immigration levels plan. The numbers for monthly admission has been growing. Waterloo Region welcomed 2980 permanent residents in Q1&2 2021. The first two quarters of 2021 number are higher than those in 2020. Monthly just under 500 new admissions. If pace continues, we will reach 6000,

higher than any previous year. Immigration is growing, but it is a mix of those who are already here and those who are new.

Second round of anti-racism training for leadership and frontline staff is done. Partners expressed desire for more of capacity building opportunities. Our trainer facilitated a brainstorming with the leadership of IP and the Children and Youth Planning Table to plan future initiatives. Special thanks for Pari, Abiha, Brittney and Ernest, for their involvement in the trainings and meetings.

Tara participated on the Kitchener Mayor's Task Force on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion on behalf of IP. The task force has concluded it's work. As a result, we were able to support development of a new Equity and AR policy for Kitchener Council, Staff and Volunteers; a comprehensive disaggregated data approach; a full audit of equitable hiring and retention policies and practices; development of equitable communications and community engagement approaches and guides; a new community fund for BIPOC which went before City Council for approval; and a permanent Equity and AR Advisory Committee to City Council to be established.

Immigration Forum: Will partner to host with the Greater KW Chamber of Commerce. Planning for mid November. Will finalise date and get information out to everyone asap.

Ian McLean joined at 12:45pm

5. CAP Implementation Highlights

Belong Steering Group (BSG)

Brittney Emslie provided an update on the work of BSG. The group launched the lawn sign component of the racial equity campaign. It is also on social media. Encourage people to take action against hate. Many people are interested in the signs. The start was slow but things are moving faster now: only 30 signs left in Waterloo, 80 in Cambridge, and 50-60 in Kitchener. Encourage people to show the sign on their lawn or through their window. Last week Brittney and Abiha visited local businesses in the downtown areas of Kitchener, Waterloo, and Cambridge to promote the campaign.

Brittney invited all of Council to support the campaign and asked James Bond if there is any way to get schools to post on their social media or yards?
James commented he would connect with Brittney about it.

Brittney informed Council that BSG will host a grant writing workshop for ethno-cultural groups. Brian Kamm, Sonja Erstic and KW Community Foundation will be there as presenters. This responds to the requests of these groups to help build their capacity in this area.

She shared that BSG is launching its Indigenous training – Part 2, based on the feedback of what people want to see in future sessions. This is intended to deepen the capacity of IP partners to engage in Indigenous Reconciliation.

Abiha Syed noted that BSG would like to curate anti-racism content for children specifically. She invited Council to share their ideas for appropriate resources.

Pari expressed her thanks for the work and campaign, noting that the artwork is amazing.

Work Steering Group (WSG)

Ian McLean provided an update on the work of WSG, which met at end of September. City of Cambridge economic development is now represented on the steering group!

The Talent Hub Working Group continues to support Findyourjob.ca as a solution and is working with the Workforce Planning Board to build it out to meet needs. It is a work in progress, but already a step in the right direction.

Ian noted that employers are desperately seeking talent. He is now chairing the BEST WR pandemic working group focused on economy and jobs. Nora noted that she is on the workforce planning group which is focused on talent, bringing immigration into the conversations.

Ian spoke about the Chambers new Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, which Nora has joined on behalf of IP.

He reported that WSG will host an employer workshop on Oct 28 with World Education Services to develop a playbook to help employers hiring and retaining immigrant talent.

Ian suggested that for the next Council meeting it would be useful to invite Charlene Hofbauer from the Workforce Planning Board to do a presentation about findyourjob.ca and discuss how it meets to community needs with respect to a talent hub. Council agreed.

Pari thanks Ian and Nora and WSG thanks for the work with the employers and clients.

Settle Steering Group (SSG)

Laura Stoutenburg provided an update on the work of SSG. In the area of interpretation, she shared that Grand River Hospital is piloting a new app and possibly new model of sharing with community health centres. All work in the community on this is welcome. She shared that the 2021 Newcomer Landlord Award Nominations are closing soon and that IP together with partners has been working on a video series with previous winners and newcomer families: <https://www.youtube.com/user/ImmigrationWR/videos>. It is important to keep working together to make sure the work complements each other.

She also noted SSG is having ongoing discussions about anti-racism, facilitated by Advisory Chair Hoda Ghonim. Members are considering what it means for their collaborative work and their own organizations.

Laura shared in chat: To support community efforts following the Afghan refugee announcement, and in conversation with immigrant-receiving partners, the IP has created a community-wide landing page providing information about Afghan resettlement in Waterloo Region – what is known, how people can help, and how to find out more. The webpage is being updated as new information emerges. NOTE: not everyone will make contact through the website – many people who participated in helping Syrian refugees are going straight to the connections they made last time offering to help.

Dan Vandebelt added to the interpretation discussion that the Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network has merged with four other LHINs within Ontario Health West. As they review programming and budgets, the previous local funding that provided free interpretation for physicians, specialists and LHIN-funded community programs may be at risk. The funding loss is \$300,000/year. Could IP request that Ontario Health West pull together all the stakeholders impacted by the change in funding to give an update on the funding?

Lucia Harrison acknowledged that she has a conflict in this discussion as the service provider for interpretation, but shared information on uptake in use of the service over time, which speaks to the need for it, and the importance of having multiple options available to best support patients (phone, video, in person, etc.).

IP Council agreed with the need to engage Ontario Health West and asked Tara to prepare a request on behalf of IP Council.

Douglas Bartholomew-Saunders joined at 1pm

Action Items:

- Staff to arrange a presentation of findyourjob.ca and the talent hub at the next Council meeting.
- Tara to send a request to Ontario Health to convene a meeting of the future of medical interpretation funding in the region on behalf of IP Council.

6. Items for Information/Discussion

6.1 Leadership Transition

Pari reminded Council that her term as Chair is winding-up at the end of the year. Pari noted that COVID made the chairing experience different from she had expected, but she is very thankful for the opportunity. When her term ends, Karen will be moving out of Past Chair role and Tracey will become the Chair. Council should select a new Vice Chair, and we are now seeking nominations.

Tracey added that it was an honour serving beside Pari. She noted she turned down the opportunity when she was first approached but when she eventually engaged, it has ended up to be a good learning opportunity and a fulfilling role. She shared that is not an extremely demanding role, but an engaged and rewarding one. She tag teams with Pari to help provide shared leadership. Council will commence recruitment now; aiming to approve new Vice Chair for the start to 2022. She invited all voting members to consider volunteering or nominating someone else and informed Council that Tara will open process by email following this meeting.

Pari shared the following from IP's governance document in the chat: Every other year, Council will vote in a new Vice Chair. They will fulfill their term as Vice Chair for a period of 2 years, at which time they will then assume the role of Chair for the next 2 years. Any voting member of Council can be considered for the role of Vice Chair, and subsequently the Chair. The Executive Director will ask Council for volunteers to take on the Vice Chair role for 2 years, and assume the Chair role for the following 2 years. Individuals will respond via email to the Executive Director by a nominated date. The Executive Director will notify all Council members of the name/s of volunteers for the role of Chair and/or Vice Chair. Each Council member will cast a vote (for each role if required). The Executive Director will count the votes and identify the individual with the highest votes, and recommend them for the role of Chair or Vice Chair respectively.

Douglas, Tara, and Alejandra thanked Pari and Tracey for their leadership in the chat.

6.2 Recruitment Update

Karen Spencer reminded Council that we currently have up to 5 open spaces on IP Council, plus one more in early 2022 when her term on Council will end. IP Council decided at the June meeting to recruit for three new members now and three more in 2022 to allow for some staggering to entries and exits. There is a robust and diverse candidate pool and the leadership team is currently reviewing applications, shortlisting and conducting informal interviews of candidates. She anticipates a motion recommending new members at the November Council Meeting

6.3 Immigrant Survey 2021 Initial Findings

Dan shared the initial findings from IPs 2021 Immigrant Survey, focusing on what changes we are seeing compared to the 2019 survey. A document will be shared closer to the November 2021 Council Meeting.

Margaret Walton-Roberts shared in the chat: Having this data about accessing interpretation services in health will be valuable in the effort to secure funding for this service. Tara and Lucia agreed.

Margaret asked in the chat: is the increased experience of discrimination in school or university possible a reflection of more international students included in the sample? Dan replied that the increased number of international students would have impacts on some of those items such as discrimination question or others. There will be important to mention when we write up the findings.

Margaret also shared that we were able to secure support with data analysis from an international student at Laurier through a program there. Dan and Tara noted that this was incredibly helpful.

6.4 Afghan Refugee Resettlement Update

Lynne Griffiths-Fulton joined as a guest from Reception House Waterloo Region, which provides resettlement supports to government assisted refugees. She provided an update on refugee arrivals and implications for Waterloo Region following the government's announcement it would resettle 20,000 Afghan refugees to Canada. Waterloo Region was expected to receive 352 arrivals this year – any Afghan arrivals are expected to be on top of that. So far around 160 Afghans have arrived. The situation in Afghanistan changed and there are people sent here. Basic needs are taken care of in Toronto. Biggest challenge is to get people into permanent living spaces. The affordable housing issue has not been solved in the past 6 years. We are also experiencing delays in their resettlement allowances coming forward which impacts ability to pay for housing. Would like to source landlords to support them. Some people have arrived without status. It will be an issue to get their permanent residence and also SIN, OHIP, etc. There is a gap between newcomer needs and our capacity, especially in healthcare. We are trying to move clients from Sanctuary and CFFM to family doctors to create capacity in these specialised clinics. Most families have at least one family member that speaks English, but the other family members do not. Temporary accommodation impacting children and youth because they cannot access school in the public board. We are not resourced enough to provide programs for children and youth as we with the Syrian due to COVID restrictions. There are also unexpected arrivals of people coming through commercial flights who need to be helped to regularize their status and access government supports. It will likely be a slow trickle of arrivals to meet the government targets.

Pari noted the launch of the Afghan Fund with the KWCF and the need for Council members to engage in its oversight.

Pari then lead Council in a discussion about how it can respond to some of the specific needs (i.e., individual members on behalf of their organization/system, or Council as a whole by advocating)?

James Bond mentioned WRDBS was planning to meet with RH to discuss, and he wants to support the learners in education, but noted the board is tied with registrations due to the Ministry's funding model (linked to permanent accommodation). He asked if IP can engage the school board to ask for a change to the rules regarding registration from temporary addresses. He also noted the importance of not re-traumatizing students and families by forcing things too fast for them.

Lucia agrees with James on the need to put children's interest first, but that having the option to register for school right away regardless of housing situation should be an option available. She supported the idea of IP Council sending a letter to WRDBS quickly to open registration to all arriving.

Pari supported the idea and Council agreed.

Laura, Stephanie, James, Douglas left at 2pm

Pari extended the meeting, asking Council to discuss if we can support the Afghan response needed within IP/other partnerships, or do we need to extend beyond (i.e. leverage ongoing pandemic structure somehow)?

Lucia suggested having a specific task group which meets on a more frequent basis, having representatives with high-level accountabilities. It was effective with the Syrian resettlement. She suggested that it focus on high-needs areas such as housing and healthcare.

Lynne suggested that its work needs to have a system focus, and look for immediate and long terms solutions.

Abiha Syed noted that some BSG members are interested in supporting the resettlement and asked if she/Brittney could be part of the task group.

Tara summarised that Council is in favour of a Refugee Task Group to address immediate needs with long-term solutions. She will prepare a proposal and work with a small group to finalise, with the aim of keeping it simple and focused for now.

Action Item

- Tara to formally commence IP Council Vice Chair nominations by email following this meeting.
- Tara to invite Council members to be involved in Afghan fund oversight.
- Tara to prepare a letter to WRDSB on behalf of IP Council on the topic of school registration from temporary accommodation.
- Tara to prepare a Refugee Task Force structure.

7. Meeting Adjourned at 2:10pm

Pari thanked everyone for participating in the meeting and adjourned the meeting.

Next Meeting: 18 Nov 2021, 12:30-2:00pm

Location: Zoom

Immigration Partnership Council Meeting Minutes

Date:	17 June 2021
Time:	12:30pm – 2:00pm
Location:	Zoom
Present:	Pari Karem (Chair), Tracey Hare Connell (Vice Chair), Karen Spencer (Past Chair), Laura Stoutenburg (SSG Chair), Ian McLean (WSG Chair), Brittney Emslie (BSG Chair), James Bond, Lucia Harrison, Ernest Osei, Douglas Bartholomew-Saunders, Margaret Walton-Roberts, Brian Kamm, Conal Vaughan, Sonja Erstic
Regrets:	Elaine Ranney, Bryan Larkin
Guests	Hoda Ghonim, Stephanie Schreuders, Vanessa Lopak
Staff:	Tara Bedard, Pauline Peng, Nora Whittington, Dan Vandebelt, Abiha Syed, Alejandra Amez

1. Welcome, Instructions, Regrets, Introductions

Quorum was achieved and the meeting started at 12:33pm. Pari Karem welcomed everyone to the Immigration Partnership Council's seventh zoom meeting and third meeting of 2021. She offered a Territorial Acknowledgment, and gave voting instructions to meeting attendees. She introduced and welcomed the guests: Stephanie Schreuders, SSG Vice Chair, and Hoda Ghonim, SSG inaugural Associate Chair.

Tara Bedard switched CAP highlights to item #4 on the agenda.

2. Review of the Meeting Agenda and Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Council reviewed the agenda. Agenda approved. No conflicts of interest were declared.

3. Items for Approval

Consent Agenda

Tracey Hare Connell invited Council to review the Consent Agenda, which includes the 15 April 2021 Council Meeting Minutes, the April-June 2021 CAP Progress Report and the ED's Report.

Motion: That the Immigration Partnership Council approve the consent agenda in its entirety.

- Tracey brought forward the motion.
- Lucia Harrison seconded the motion.
- No members opposed or abstained from vote. All approved. Motion carried.

2020-2025 Data and Evaluation Framework

Motion: That the Immigration Partnership Council approve the 2020-2025 Data and Evaluation Framework.

- Margaret Walton-Roberts brought forward the motion.
- Lucia Harrison seconded the motion.
- No members opposed or abstained from vote. All approved. Motion carried.

Margaret thanked the Evaluation Advisory Committee, especially Dan Vandebelt, for all of its work on this strategy. She invited all partners review the strategy and consider what data they can capture and contribute from their organizations and services to allow for robust data oversight.

Karen Spencer joined at 12:41pm, Ernest Osei joined at 12:44pm.

Lucia noted that the KW Multicultural Centre (KWMC), YMCA and Reception House can extract a lot of information from their data management systems and asked what specifically would be helpful. It was requested that Dan connect with KWMC and YMCA staff to pursue data options.

Action item:

- IP Staff (Dan) to follow up with KWMC and YMCA to identify data in support of IPs evaluation framework.

4. CAP Implementation Highlights

Douglas joined at 12:46

Settle Steering Group (SSG)

Laura Stoutenburg highlighted several things happening in SSG.

First, she noted that funding for medical interpretations in Waterloo Region is currently set to expire at the end of October and invited Lucia to talk more on the matter and Dan joined in updating. KWMC currently holds the service contract with Ontario Health to provide medical interpretation in Waterloo Wellington, for up to \$300,000 in service per year. Waterloo-Wellington has one of the most comprehensive services. There is significant health system transformation happening, with the establishment of Ontario Health and launch of localized Ontario Health Teams. Ontario Health seems poised to carry forward its investment of \$150,000 for medical interpretation in Waterloo Wellington after November, which leaves the other \$150,000 to be covered by other sources. There is an opportunity here to engage system leaders in how to bring this important service forward in Waterloo Wellington, and to consider the ideal way of positioning this service in Waterloo Region.

Pari asked about the timelines and what is requested of IP Council in terms of advocacy.

Lucia noted that for now this information is being shared for information. Further discussions are taking place in the community and there may be a need to engage IP Council in advocacy at some in the future, possibly via email or an ad hoc meeting.

Douglas Bartholomew-Saunders noted an alignment between this topic and discussion he is involved in regarding the transformation of provincial social assistance programs. He noted many ministries are working together to reform policies and programs, and there has been no discussion of interpretation within that transformation. He committed to bringing forward the importance of providing for interpretation in the future state of social assistance programs. He offered to provide updates via Tara and also suggested that the issue of medical interpretation in Waterloo Region could be an area to engage Regional Council in advocacy on behalf of the community to ensure continuance of the service, if that becomes necessary.

Tara Bedard noted that the investment in medical interpretation in Waterloo Region was the result of more than 20 years of advocacy and it is a vital service many immigrants. She noted the importance of not stepping back on hard won advances, but that how the service is funded in the future may change.

Pari asked that Tara bring any updates and requests to IP Council for follow-up if needed ahead of the September meeting.

Lucia thanked IP Council for its support and left the meeting at 12:59pm.

Laura then introduced Stephanie Schreuders and Hoda Ghonim as the SSG Vice Chair and Associate Chair, noting Hoda in particular is helping to bring focus to the anti-racism discussions within SSG. She shared that SSG will be having dedicated discussions about anti-racism in the context of its work and what the partners would like to do. She noted that she will share that with IP Council and asked the Council and other Steering Groups to also share their approaches with SSG.

Tracey left at 1:01pm. Vanessa Lopak and Sonja Erstic joined at 1:03pm

Brittney Emslie welcomes the SSGs intention to hold dedicated discussion about anti-racism, noting it aligns well with the work in Belong Steering Group too, and requested to attend the meeting next week.

Belong Steering Group (BSG)

Brittney Emslie provided an update on the BSG. The Social Inclusion Working Group planned and organized BSGs Ethno-Cultural Leadership Roundtable in early June. Twenty-six people attended this very successful community engagement and networking event. We received a lot of positive feedback. There was a smaller meeting as a follow up, in which 10 groups participated. The group expressed an interest in learning more about grant writing, so the BSG will host grant writing workshops in summer.

BSG first virtual Multicultural connections event took place in early June. More than 25 groups participated and we are also seeing them connecting directly with and supporting each other. BSG is becoming a platform for these groups to come together.

Brian Kamm noted the Untied Way used to provide grant-writing workshops and offered to share some materials that will be very helpful to grassroots leaders.

Sonja Erstic added in the chat: I can support you on the grant writing as well.

Brittney then shared that the BSGs Indigenization Training sessions were held in May/June as part of IP and BSGs anti-racism journey. The topics are very heavy and emotional. The group really got to know each other and their thoughts. This training is very important and BSG proposes that IP prioritize this training for partners.

Shared in the chat:

Nora Whittington: the training was amazing! I recommend it.

Tara: I have been so happy to hear how impactful participants thought the training series was

Hoda: I participated in that training, it was awesome.

Abiha Syed: the precious BSG meeting was quite emotional and there was lots of sentiments/feelings shared

Work Steering Group (WSG)

Ian McLean provided an update on the work of WSG. He reported that the Business Success webinar Series that the Chamber has been running in collaboration with IP just wrapped up. The final webinar featured with YMCA mentorship program and the KWMC connector programs. The series will continue in Fall/Winter 2021/2022 in collaboration with IP.

WSG is continuing to work with World Education Service (WES) on an Employer Playbook, with an employer workshop to be held in late October.

Tara shared in chat: I am very pleased for this WES partnership – they are an excellent organization and do amazing work. Pleased be aligning with them.

Ian shared that the Hub Group has continued to meet. There are some challenge around funding for the Talent Hub. The group has focused on a partnership with the Workforce Planning Board's findyourjob.ca for recruitment and retention. The Workforce Planning Board is working through the budgets and looking to expand the service provided.

Ian noted that the Manufacturing Summit will take place in July, and IP will have a presence there. Moreover, that the Chamber is planning its Federal and Provincial Leader speaker series in anticipation of upcoming elections. This will be an opportunity to bring attention to immigration issues with IP historically providing a question for candidates.

Nora Whittington added that she recently began representing IP on the Greater KW Chamber's DEI committee, and that the collaboration with Southwest Ontario LIPs continues in the area of employer engagement and education. The next webinar is next wee on accessing bilingual immigrant talent. Over 50% attendance so far is expected from Waterloo Region.

Action item:

- Tara bring forward any updates/requests regarding medical interpretation to IP Council as relevant.

5. Grounding our work: What we know about immigration and executive update

Tara shared a short update on immigration trends. Numbers are going up. More people are coming into the region as permanent residents, which is in line with the federal government's immigration levels plan, but there are concerns regarding the momentum. We will see how the levels are throughout the year. There has been significantly more immigration compared to the last two years.

Dan shared in the chat: Following up on Tara's update on immigration trends, I just pulled the most recent stats and April saw the highest number of monthly arrivals to Waterloo Region since the Syrian resettlement process in 2016.

Tara also shared that Public Health recently gave an updated presentation on COVID in Waterloo Region, which continues to who immigrant groups are disproportionately impacted. She noted many community partners are support outreach and vaccination clinics for immigrants and others in high priority neighbourhoods.

Tara announced the launch of IPs 2020-2021 interactive [Annual Report](#). She shared this this is the first such report for IP and it bring much life to the work of the partners and profiles partners – all thanks to Alejandra's creative vision and everyone's support in bringing all of its pieces together.

She noted that the last in the current anti-racism training series took place this morning. A short recording and summary notes from discussions will be shared with all partners, while we work out next steps based on feedback.

She informed Council that IP convened a consultation on behalf of IRCC with local organizations just yesterday – to identify settlement needs and funding priorities. There are more resources to be invested here and we want to make sure we can make use of them.

She also mentioned some recent discussions with James and other WRDSB colleagues about alignment between work happening within the school board and IP and the hope for some positive concrete actions to take place soon. James Bond added that he has been pleased with recent changes within the board, focus on clearer communication and outreach, and for work to be done together in the future.

6. Items for Information/Discussion

6.1 IP Council Recruitment

Karen Spenser provided an update on IP Council recruitment. She shared that with current composition and upcoming transitions, there are up to 6 spaces to recruit for. She recommends recruiting for three spaces now, with more recruitment for the other 3 in 2022. She noted that when we are recruiting this time, we will do an open call plus targeted outreach. This came out the anti-racism governance review, and underscores the importance of looking not just in our own networks. She invited suggestions for the types of sectors, geographies, etc., that we should be recruiting for, and take guidance from the demographic info collected via the partner survey to work towards equitable representation. All Council members will be asked to share the open call through their networks to help boost recruitment reach.

Ian and Douglas left at 1:30pm

Current discussion focus on the following priority areas:

- Law/legal services (broad knowledge, family services, immigration, employment standards, equity and hr, etc) – possibly outreach to Waterloo Region Community Legal Services
- International students – possibly outreach to ApplyBoard
- Housing development
- Business

A call will open following this meeting, with the intention of bringing on new members in Nov.

Pari thanks Karen for her engagement and help in recruiting future members.

6.2 Hate/racism incidents and IP responses

Pari introduced this item, noting recurring incidents of hate and racism, and the need and expectation of response, in solidarity and support of our community. She invited the whole of IP Council to share input on how to respond to incidents of hate and racism meaningfully. Are statements enough? How do we want the message to go out? How do we avoid making just a political statement, and do something more meaningful? How do we represent our ultimate goal of building a welcoming community to everyone?

James shared that with the recent events in London, his family was looking for a lawn sign as a way to signal to people in their neighbourhood that they are supported. Can IP make signs available to help residents be able to show solidarity? He understands this on its own may be tokenistic, but it still allows people to show and see support, and in that way makes a difference. It promotes a caring community at a time when many families he works with do not feel safe enough to walk in our community.

Karen shared that the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Society had a good statement that she has used – "It is our collective responsibility to make sure that our neighbours, friends and families feel safe". She shared that statements are important but need to be combined with other actions.

Ernest Osei commented that IP made an Anti-Racism Commitment last year when all of the incidents were taking place in the US. He agrees that IP should definitely make statements when events occur, when the matter takes place – don't wait. Any time something happens, IP should make a statement, affirm our commitment to ending hate and racism and building a welcoming community for everyone, as soon as possible.

Pari suggested that Tara work with IP Council leadership to turn statements around quickly.

Brittney and Vanessa agreed that statements of support are needed quickly. They also noted that BSG began planning a lawn sign campaign last year that was delayed, in line with James' suggestion. They shared info about the design, logistics and the #racialequityWR webpage which shares resources.

Abiha shared in the chat: <https://www.immigrationwaterlooregion.ca/en/business-opportunities/racialequitywr.aspx> #RacialEquityWR. The painting at the top of this page is painted by a BSG member, especially for this campaign. The painting's title: "All colours are beautiful".

Hoda Ghonim agreed that statements are needed quickly. She shared that people in the region are scared, that they need help and action - real action. Her clients are already experiencing hate crimes. IP needs to consider how it can help to save people's lives.

Brian agreed that statements should be made quickly as an act of acknowledgment and solidarity, but should be linked to concrete action. IP should actively share information for victims about supports and resources and for the community about allyship, bystander training, etc.

Pari stated that prevention is key and we want to focus efforts there.

Brittney shared in the chat: We need to work on preventing, so there are fewer hate crimes that we need to respond to.

Hoda shared that action needs to start at school to educate against hate.

Ernest comments that IP is already doing this work with its Anti-Racism Commitment and follow up to date, but that we need to continue to be proactive in resource creation and sharing ahead of hate incidents taking place.

Abiha shared her view that a statement alone will not make any change. We need a commitment and promise to actions too. She invited Council to sign up for the [Anti-Islamophobia and Countering Cyberhate Workshops](#).

Pari invited Council members to email herself, Tara or Pauline directly to share any further thoughts, noting that the leadership group can be called to approve statements, move ahead with action, or anything else needed. She suggested that the BSG is well situated to nudge when statements or other actions would be appropriate.

Tara thanked members for their engagement, passion and input on this topic. She summarized that it is IP Council's position that IP should issue statements quickly when hate/racism incidents take place as an act of solidarity with our community. IP's Anti-Racism Commitment should ground statements, which should include a call to action and direct people to concrete resources. Statements are important but they are only one action that IP is taking.

Karen left the meeting at 1:56pm

Action item:

- Tara work with IP Council leadership on statements in response to incidents of hate and racism.
- IP to continue to develop preventative actions and campaigns to reduce incidence of hate/racism.

6.3 Immigrant Survey 2021

Tara reminded Council that the Immigrant Survey is live through June 21 and reported that we have had incredible early engagement. There are currently 1219 responses, with a goal of 1500. She thanked all the partners for their support and engagement and asked everyone to continue to encourage participation in the survey. Some groups we are struggling to hear from include men, international students, temporary workers, and those who live in townships.

Stephanie, Ernest and Hoda left the meeting at 2:00pm.

7. Partner Updates

Pari asked Council to share any updates through email.

Sonja Erstic asked Council to promote the provincial grant for senior groups.

8. Meeting Adjourned at 2:01pm

Pari thanked everyone for participating in the meeting and adjourned the meeting.

Next Meeting: 16 Sept 2021, 12:30-2:00pm

Location: Zoom

Immigration Partnership Council Meeting Minutes

Date:	18 November 2021
Time:	12:30pm – 2:00pm
Location:	Zoom
Present:	Tracey Hare Connell (Vice Chair), Karen Spencer (Past Chair), Laura Stoutenburg (SSG Chair), Ian McLean (WSG Chair), Brittney Emslie (BSG Chair), James Bond, Lucia Harrison, Ernest Osei, Douglas Bartholomew-Saunders, Margaret Walton-Roberts, Brian Kamm, Della Lataille-Herdsman, Conal Vaughan
Regrets:	Sonja Erstic, Bryan Larkin, Pari Karem (Chair)
Guests:	Mark Crowell
Staff:	Tara Bedard, Pauline Peng, Nora Whittington, Dan Vandebelt, Abiha Syed, Alejandra Amez, Suzan Koujan (placement student)

1. Welcome, Instructions, Regrets, Introductions

Quorum was achieved and the meeting started at 12:33pm. Pari Karem sent her regrets and Tracey Hare Connell chaired the meeting. Tracey welcomed everyone to the Immigration Partnership Council's ninth zoom meeting and fifth and final meeting of 2021. Tara Bedard introduced Della Lataille-Herdsman, Mark Crowell and Suzan Koujan to their first meeting. Everyone took turns to introduce themselves. James Bond offered a Territorial Acknowledgment.

2. Review of the Meeting Agenda and Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Council reviewed the agenda. Agenda approved. No conflicts of interest were declared.

3. Items for Approval

3.1 Consent Agenda

Tracey Hare Connell invited Council to review the Consent Agenda, which includes the 16 Sept 2021 Council Meeting Minutes, the Sept-Nov 2021 CAP Progress Report and the Executive Director's Report.

Motion: That the Immigration Partnership Council approve the consent agenda in its entirety.

- Tracey brought forward the motion.
- Karen Spencer seconded the motion.
- No members opposed or abstained from vote. All approved. Motion carried.

3.2 IP Council Vice Chair Appointment

Motion: That the Immigration Partnership Council appoint Dr. Ernest Osei as its next Vice Chair.

- Tracey brought forward the motion.
- Margaret Walton-Roberts seconded the motion.
- No members opposed or abstained from vote. All approved. Motion carried.

Tracey noted that she had the pleasure of working with Ernest on the review of IPs Governance Document. He approached that work in a calm and structured way, which was a great asset to the group. She then presented a short biography.

Ernest expressed his appreciation to the group and his excitement in taking on the role as Vice Chair. He noted that most immigrants have challenges, and many did not choose to leave their home country. So it is always important to try to address the challenges and remove barriers for immigrants. He is honoured to be part of the team, making Waterloo Region not only a good place to live, but also a place to live without the fear of discrimination.

4. Leadership Recognition and Reflection – Karen Spencer

In Pari's absence and on the occasion of Karen's formal end of term, Tara shared appreciation for Karen Spencer and her leadership and engagement in the work of IP Council.

Karen expressed that she has gained so much more from sitting on this Council. She will stay connected because she sees how important the work is, and it was valuable learning about the benefits of immigrants to this region and the province and the country. This message is important to be repeated in conversations.

Tracey thanked Karen for her years of engagement and leadership on behalf of Council.

5. CAP Implementation Highlights

Settle Steering Group (SSG)

Laura Stoutenburg provided a brief update on the work of SSG. The three winners of the 2021 Newcomer Landlord Award will be announced on November 22, National Housing Day. SSG is embedding anti-racism as a theme to reflect on as it works to implement the Community Action Plan. Hoda Ghonim, SSG's Inaugural Advisory Chair has been amazing and really forced the group to up its game. All members were surveyed on next actions. They want to: 1. Compile all anti-racism policies in the region; 2. Focus on more training, active bystander, how to deal with racist clients, etc.; and 3. Create an ideaboard or similar – what do anti-racist organizations do or look like.

Tara commented in the chat: I love how anti-racism is becoming so deeply embedded across all of our work.

Douglas Bartholomew-Saunders joined at 1:05pm.

Work Steering Group (WSG)

Nora Whittington provided an update on the work of WSG on behalf of Ian McLean. The Talent Hub task group continues to meet, with Julie Newman of Carizon as the facilitator. FindYourJob.ca is not ready to host the full hub concept, so the group considered other alternatives for maximum effectiveness, including an ask that the Greater KW Chamber consider becoming the host, as with their Student Talent Access program. A facilitator will help map out full concept and budget.

WSG continues to support Business Success webinars in partnership with Greater KW Chamber. The most recent one was yesterday: State of the Workforce in Waterloo Region by Charlene Hofbauer. She noted that there is a hiring shortage rather than talent shortage. There are people who do not want to work and people in a mismatch. Tara and Margaret commented that Charlene's session was great.

The joint workshop with WES was a success and work on the playbook will commence. WSG via Nora continues to participate in the BEST WR talent working group and Nora now represents WSG on the Chambers DEI Committee to help develop that work at the Chamber. WSG is partnering with the Cambridge Chamber of Commerce on an education event for employers on hiring and retaining

immigrant talent, and will again be working with peers from other LIPs around Southwestern Ontario on other employer initiatives.

Ian McLean joined at 1:09pm.

Ian thanked Nora and added that funding for the hub is the challenge, noting there will be provincial and municipal elections in 2022 and potentially a federal election again in 2 years. He suggests that we should look at how to fill the needs now and how to unlock the funds in that context.

Belong Steering Group (BSG)

Brittney Emslie provided an update on the work of BSG. Sessions with ethno-cultural groups continued for the last few months – there were a lot of demand for the fundraising session so BSG raised attendance caps. It was a great session and thanks to IP Council members Brian Kamm and Sonja Erstic for participating.

Part two of Indigenization training with Kelly Fran Davis is in process and finishing next week. The learning is deep.

The International Organization for Migration is not holding the Global Migration Film Festival this year but BSG decided to do its own migration film festival in Waterloo Region December 1 to 18. It will be virtual again and there will be panel discussions of films and themes. Thanks to Abiha for all her work in identifying films, making the arrangements and connecting with everyone.

Abiha invited IP Council members to consider hosting a screening and asked for confirmation ASAP.

Tara noted in the chat: The films all look very interesting and are short – would be a nice lunch and learn moment. Thanks for all the updates from SSG, WSG, and BSG – so much great work happening. Incredible partner engagement, and such strong staff leadership by Nora, Dan and Abiha.

Lucia and Douglas shared their agreement and gratitude in the chat.

Brian shared in the chat: United Way WRC open application calls are quarterly. Current round is open until November 26th. General Operating Support or Program Project Streams are available. Needs to align with one of our Focus Areas – Basic Needs, Isolation, or Mental Health. We are emphasizing investment in marginalized communities, including newcomers. Happy to chat further.

6. Items for Information/Discussion

6.1 IP Council Recruitment Update

Karen recalled that there were up to 5 open spaces, and IP Council decided to recruit for three new members now and three more in 2022 to allow for some staggering to entries and exits. IP Council determined recruitment priorities to focus on Law/legal services, International students, Housing development, and Business. The open call for new members plus targeted outreach to identified individuals. 16 prospective members filled the expressions of interest from, the Council leadership team created a short list of 5, and the selection committee (Pari, Tracey and Brittney) conducted brief interviews with Tara and Pauline's support.

Three are candidates selected for recommendation to Council (Murray Gamble, Shannon Down, Dauda Raji). Currently confirming intent to proceed with them, and expecting motion to appoint at the February meeting.

Tracey added that on the expression of interest form, one question was that if they are not part of the council, would they be interested in other areas of work, and they all said yes. That follow up should start now. She also added that the new members will add diversity to our group.

6.2 Advocacy Update

a. Ontario Health engagement

Lucia Harrison provided an update on developments since the Sept IP Council meeting. A letter was sent to Ontario Health West on behalf of IP Council raising concern about possible discontinuance of medical interpretation funding, and Tracey, Tara and Lucia then met OW West. There was good discussion, and OH West committed to funding the service to the level of \$12,500 per month through the end of March 2022. That is only have the current level of funding. KWMC as the service provider will have to adjust service level and eligibility. She raised concern that that clients will not have professional interpreters and suggested that IP Council needs to continue the dialogue with Ontario Health West.

James suggests an inclusive and accessible communication strategy and focus on key information and documents to be translated into different languages. For example the consent forms at schools – parents need to understand what they are consenting to. It may be a good idea to have medical consent forms translated and accessible.

Lucia noted that many clients also have limited literacy in their native language, so translated documents may not be enough – interpreters to do sight translation are needed. Our health system is based on informed consent, which is difficult to reach with no common language and no trained interpreters who can be counted on to accurately convey the message. She also shared concern about the potential use of equity concerns as a basis for pulling a needed program from our region because it is not funded across the province – better to build it up and out.

Ian left at 1:30pm.

Douglas reflected that the province is redesigning the entire social assistance system. Provincial human services table has at least 10 ministries sitting on it. Health was the last one to come. In order to treat people holistically, we need a basket of services as opposed to a series of monolithic services. Ontario Health has been trying to find its role in an integrated service delivery model. He suggested that they are trying to bring more consistency across region without causing damage and that the intention is not trying to drop to the lowest denominator. He provided two recommendations:

1. To advocate to both OH West and Ontario Health Proper, as well as the health minister. He suggested we leverage the advantage Waterloo Region has with two Ontario Health Teams that have benefited from the services and ask them to advocate with us because they benefitted from having the service for their patients.
2. Potentially take a political stance and ask Regional Council and the area municipalities to advocate with the Premier with a focus on liability and health equity.

Douglas offered he could work with staff to move this forward if Council agrees.

Lucia thinks these are good ideas and asks IP Council to move forward on some of these ideas before the next meeting, noting KWMC would be doing it's own follow-up.

Action: Staff to support further IP Council advocacy on medical interpretation.

b. WRDSB engagement

In Pari's absence, Tara shared that in follow-up to the September IP Council meeting a letter was sent to the WRDSB Director of education on behalf of IP Council urging registration of children living in temporary accommodation. Since then, there have been two meetings with school board partners, who are working on solutions. WRDSB is working on logistics of getting children currently in four temporary accommodation sites into nearby schools. The longer-term issue of temporary residence as an administrative barrier to registration is outstanding and should transfer to the work of the Task Force. Both WRDSB and WCDSB are committed to participating in the Refugee Task Force.

c. MP roundtable

Tara shared that letters of welcome were sent to all newly and re-elected area MPs with an invitation to co-convene a regional immigration roundtable with small group of partners. We heard back from Bardish Chagger's office and arranging a meeting in December of January. The aim is to help the MPs understand how they can advocate for WR in Ottawa.

6.3 Afghan Refugee Resettlement Update

a. Refugee Task Force

Douglas updated that the Initial Task Force structure is ready, similar to the Syrian Settlement structure. Douglas will be the Chair, and Lucia will be the Vice Chair. The task force will focus on housing, education and health care to start. Also community welcome and integration. Both school board representatives confirmed to be on the task force as is the ROW Housing Director. Ontario Health Team representatives are being determined. Settlement partners are onboard. Regular meetings are to commence shortly – next week or week following. Plan regular communication and updates to IP Council, Regional Council, others timed to task force meetings. We are also informing Regional Chair/Mayors of what is happening and asking for their commitment to undertake advocacy with federal/provincial governments and help move local systems to action as needed. The work will likely evolve over time.

Lucia stated that with the work of the Task Force, all refugees should benefit, not only Afghans.

James left at 1:58pm.

b. IP Fund Oversight

Tara shared that there are currently about \$23,000 in the fund. We need to convene fund committee to determine how to invest donations in the community, and would like one or two more volunteers to participate with Pari. The commitment will not be as much as last time with the Syrian Newcomers fund, but would like different opinions.

Tracey noted that she sat on the committee last time, and it was great to help from small things like dental for individuals and as large as organizations.

Ernest offered to participate in this committee.

6.4 2022 Meeting Schedule

Proposed 2022 schedule: 17 Feb, 21 Apr, 16 Jun, 15 Sept, 17 Nov.

7. Meeting Adjourned at 2:02pm

Tracey thanked everyone for participating in the meeting, wished everyone happy holidays, and adjourned the meeting.

Next Meeting: 17 Feb 2022, 12:30-2:00pm

Location: Zoom