



Date:	January 27, 2016
Time:	1:00-3:00pm
Location:	Pari, Eliseo, Gael, Kristin, Sharon, Ed, Eunice, Margaret
Present:	Pari Kareem (Chair, YMCA), Eliseo Martell (Vice-Chair, Community Member), Gael Gilbert (SHOW), Sharon Schmidt (Welcome Home Refugee House), Nicole Francoeur (ROW-Housing), Ed Kaut (ROW-Income Support), Margaret Brockett (Sanctuary Health Centre), Heidi Newton (ROW- Public Health), Kristin Johnson-Perlock (KPL), Eunice Valenzuela (MCRS), Herb Richardson (Community Member), Shannon Down (WR Community Legal Services), Nancy Singer (WR Community Legal Services), Melissa Strachan (Carizon)
Regrets:	Ana Luz Martinez (KWMC), Lynne Griffiths-Fulton (Reception House), Priscilla Muzira (ACCKWA), June Moyo (ACCKWA), Laura Stoutenburg (LINC)
Staff:	Daniella McIntosh

1. Welcome

- Pari introduced guests to the meeting

2. Review of Minutes- November 23, 2015

- Approved with no changes

3. Approve Agenda & Declaration of Conflict of Interest

- No conflict of interest to declare
- Update from MCRS added under community updates

4. Presentation: Waterloo Region Community Legal Services

- WRCLS is a local community legal clinic with a mandate to serve low-income individuals in Waterloo Region
- Focus is on housing, income assistance and other misc. areas
- Funded through Legal Aid Ontario
- Local clinic staff include: 5 lawyers, paralegals, social workers, intake workers and administrative staff
- Want to encourage organizations to send clients to WRCLS early in order to receive support
- Staff at WRCLS provide wraparound, holistic services to clients



- Kitchener office (450 Frederick St.) offers walk in hours – typically clients will get service that day
- Interpretation and translation are available to clients and legal materials are offered in different languages
- Information about Legal Aid services for refugees can be accessed here -- http://www.legalaid.on.ca/en/getting/eligibility_refugee.asp
- Discussion/Questions:
 - Immigration law is not an area of practice at the clinic however they receive many questions and are able to help direct clients and help with getting answers—locally, staff will help clients gather their documents and help people to navigate the immigration law system
 - Increasingly seeing people coming to their office with immigration law questions
 - Recently applied for funding to get an immigration lawyer to either be based at the WR clinic or at least shared among neighbouring clinics

5. Council Update

- Pari provided an overview of the last IP Council meeting and shared that the focus was on Refugee Resettlement efforts and next steps from the IP evaluation
- Tara emailed all partners a copy of the final evaluation report and outlined how Council intends to move forward with the ongoing planning and evaluation of our work
 - An Evaluation Committee will be formed and the intention is to have a member from each of the steering groups participate to guide the Council and staff in supporting the Partnership through this process

ACTION(S):

- **SSG members who are interested in joining the Evaluation Committee should email [Daniella](#) to indicate interest**

6. Syrian Refugee Resettlement Update

- The resettlement structure that is currently in place seems to be working well
- To date over 400 refugees have arrived in Waterloo Region
- Weekly briefing notes are sent out to those involved in the Resettlement structure. Daniella asked SSG if they would be interested in receiving these updates as well.
- Discussion:
 - How do we ensure that other refugees (i.e. not from Syria) are not being left out?
 - Concern with name of “control group” in the structure—Pari clarified the use of the name “control” came from the initial response being deemed an



emergency because of the large numbers of people that were expected in a shorter period of time. Daniella and Pari emphasized that this structure has community and municipal partners working together.

- Comments that the Partnership should start thinking about evaluating the refugee resettlement preparedness process and take notes of learnings that have come out of this work.
- Many group members expressed that we need to start changing the language and moving away from talking about the “Syrian refugee crisis” to talking about the “refugee crisis” – stated that it is the role of the Partnership and everyone involved to ensure that we are not forgetting about other refugees arriving from other countries and those who are already in our community.
- Also need to look at change happening within organizations as a result of this resettlement work and how will we keep this momentum once the focus is no longer on the Syrian refugees and responding to the current crisis.

ACTION(S):

- **Daniella will forward future briefing notes to SSG members**

7. Community Action Plan

Refugee Services Action Group (CAP 1.1)

- Group started approx. 8 months ago before becoming an action group of SSG in November 2015 and has met 4x since then
- Focus of recent meetings has been a review of preparations to meet the immediate needs of newcomers from the Middle East
- Continuing discussion of longer terms efforts to streamline support of future refugees in key areas identified (i.e., interpretation and language support; health and mental health; housing and school registration) through collaboration and possible colocation of services
- Currently developing a portfolio of information that a refugee will gather on arrival so that they don’t have to repeat information as they go around the community to receive support from various organizations

Draft Housing Consultation Report (CAP 4.1)

- Daniella provided everyone with a document containing key finding taken from the Housing Consultation and items for follow up based on community input. SSG members reviewed the document as a group and provided input and suggestions for changes to be made.



- Daniella noted the changes to be made and will send out the full draft report to the entire SSG for final comments before the report is made public and shared with those who attended

Connecting CAP to Syrian Refugee Resettlement Work

- Daniella outlined that many members of the SSG and/or colleagues from the various organizations represented around the table are participating in the Syrians Refugee Resettlement workgroups that have been established
 - We need to be thinking about what they are doing and seeing in these groups and then asking how that connects to what we (SSG) are doing here – we want to maintain the interest and momentum in order to continue to build on our work as the Settle Steering Group
 - Can we identify people in the various working groups who do not traditionally participate in our IP groups and start having conversations with them about being more engaged
- Of the individuals present today, the following are directly participating on one or more of the Syrian Refugee Resettlement Workgroups: Sharon (Welcome Home), Nancy (WRCLS), Shannon (WRCLS)
 - The following individuals noted that someone from their organization is participating: Sharon (Welcome Home), Eunice (MCRS), Melissa (Carizon), Margaret (Sanctuary Refugee Clinic)
- Discussion:
 - SSG members asked if there were parts of the WRwelcomesrefugees initiative that we could continue or that we want to keep going
 - Suggestions that the Housing registry is useful to keep
 - Can we continue the control group – these are people with influence and power within our community
 - How do we keep linkages between municipal partners, especially the mayors—and potentially get them to play an advisory role to IP Council
 - We need to look at involving ethnocultural community leaders that are actually doing work with their own communities
 - Empower these communities to help as well
 - Should we establish some sort of community advisory committee for hospitals? – comment that these committees in other communities have incorporated measures to be more culturally accommodating (for example, having hospital gowns that are acceptable to Muslim women)
 - Can we look at setting up a furniture bank for all the donations we have that people aren't able to use or access because they already have items?

ACTION(S):

- **Daniella to incorporate feedback from housing report discussion and email final report to SSG for last comments/approval**
- **Margaret to connect with Dr. Michael Stevenson to inquire about community advisory committee in local hospitals**

8. Community Updates

Region of Waterloo Public Health Update

- Heidi presented brief overview of Public Health plans with their recommendations to improve access to information, programs and services for immigrants and refugees
 - Public health will be looking feedback on recommendation 2.1 and 2.4 (Heidi is the lead on these items)
 - 2.1 - Coordinate ROWPHE communication with agencies working directly with immigrants and refugees (i.e. settlement workers) to share what programs and service we offer, changes to service levels, and important information on how to refer their clients to ROWPHE. Ask agencies to promote services.
 - 2.4- Establish a connection with and maintain a contact list/advisory group of different ethnic leaders in Waterloo Region in collaboration with the Immigration Partnership to help ROWPHE staff reach ethnic communities for consultation on a subject or for targeted outreach.
 - Public health has developed a brochure tailored to settlement agencies that provides basic information on the services they provide -- This will be translated into other languages
 - Will be reaching out to find out the usefulness of this resource
 - Feedback that Settlement workers are not receiving information from Public Health—Heidi will be working on improving this
 - Currently Public Health does not have a way to consult different populations
 - Is there a list of different ethno-cultural groups?
 - United way has a grant for newcomer groups so they may have contact for various groups that exist
 - KW community foundation
 - Settlement agencies
 - ** WRCLS also interested in a list like this to do some training
 - Public Health could participate in the Refugee Services Action Group – would inform both Public Health and the action group

MCRS Update

- Eunice shared information about a challenge MCRS is facing when making referrals for refugee claimants to the Family in Transition (FIT) program



- Finding that clients who may be temporarily staying with a friend and then referred to the FIT program are not eligible because they are no longer considered homeless
- Eunice looking for assistance from SSG members to address this issue

ACTION(S):

- **Nicole will look into this with ROW staff and partners involved in the program; Sharon to bring forward to Syrian Refugee Resettlement housing workgroup; Pari to bring forward to Council to request assistance advocacy if needed**

9. Feedback on Joint Meeting with BSG

- Eliseo reminded group members that our last meeting in November (2015) was our first joint meeting with the Belong Steering Group and asked for feedback about how it went and if the group was interested in future joint meetings
- Discussion:
 - If we are going to be doing CAP planning then it may not make sense to have a joint meeting this year because we will be connecting with other the other steering groups
 - If we are meeting with that many people we need really clear decision making tools and it needs to be really well facilitated
 - Better organize the agenda—so both groups know about each other’s items beforehand
 - A joint meeting may not be the meeting for decision making
 - Suggestions that there be regular cross collaboration with BSG/SSG members by having a representative (not staff) participating on each other’s groups
 - Interest in having presentations, training or learning sessions together

ACTION(S):

- **Daniella to share feedback with Janet and discuss bringing the Chairs and Vice-Chairs from both groups together to plan for another joint meeting**

10. Adjournment

- Next SSG meeting will be March 2016
- Daniella will send a doodle poll to the group to determine the exact date



Date:	April 7, 2016
Time:	2:00-4:00 p.m.
Location:	Ray of Hope, 659 King St. E., Kitchener
Present:	Eliseo Martell (Vice-Chair, Community Member), Sharon Schmidt (Welcome Home), Ed Kaut (ROW-Income Support), Margaret Brockett (Sanctuary Health Centre), Ana Luz Martinez (KWMC), Lynne Griffiths-Fulton (Reception House), Priscilla Muzira (ACCKWA), June Moyo (ACCKWA), Laura Stoutenburg (LINC), Vanessa Lopak (RoW- Citizen Service), Mary Mueller/ for Heidi (ROW—Public Health), Leah (ROW- Public Health Student), Diana Palmerin-Velasco (BSG Member, YMCA)
Regrets:	Pari Karem (Chair, YMCA), Nicole Francoeur (ROW- Housing), Heidi Newton (ROW- Public Health), Kristin Johnson-Perlock (KPL), Herb Richardson (Community Member), Gael Gilbert (SHOW)
Staff:	Daniella McIntosh

1. Welcome

- Eliseo introduced guests to the meeting

2. Review of Minutes- January 27, 2016

- Approved with no changes
- Noted that all actions were completed 😊

3. Approve Agenda & Declaration of Conflict of Interest

- No conflict of interest to declare
- Update from MCRS added under community updates

4. Region of Waterloo Citizen Service

- Introduced Vanessa from Citizen Services at the Region—she has joined the Settle Steering Group as a new member and this is her first meeting
- Vanessa provided information about her role as a service planning associate and explained the role of citizen services
- Citizen Services looks at how the Region delivers services and how they can improve the way services are delivered
- Citizens Services has taken on the Diversity and Inclusion portfolio at the Region and is now situated with the Human Resources Department

- Will be launching guidelines on the use of interpretation and translation services—BSG was involved in the process of developing these guidelines and reviewed the draft document
- These guidelines will be launching across the Region of Waterloo (the organization) in approximately one month and looks at best practices
- Also looking at internal HR practices (i.e., employment, recruitment) and training in the roles of customer services
- A new resource on service animals is available and has been translated into Arabic—this will be available on the Region of Waterloo website soon
- The Region is also in the early stages of the “Welcoming Spaces Project”
 - Developing a tool to look at how welcoming and accessible spaces are
 - Will focus on diverse groups including newcomers and people who speak different languages
 - Goal is to address barriers
- Group discussion
 - Citizen Services should be represented at the Syrian Refugee Resettlement tables if it isn’t already
 - Feedback that the work that the Region is doing on this is great – how do we spread it to municipal partners at the City and others in the community

5. Belong Steering Group

- Diana from the BSG is attending today as a result of discussions around how we can have a link with the BSG and continue to build on our joint meeting that was held last year
- Diana provided a brief overview of the work happening at the BSG tables
 - Public Education Campaign—“I am Waterloo Region”
 - Nomination process is complete—there were 32 nominations from all over the Region (including Cambridge and the rural areas!)
 - Stay tuned for information about the launch of the campaign
 - Municipal Services Action Group
 - Purpose is to let newcomers know about government and local democracy
 - Have hosted citizenship ceremonies and also organize “Civics 101” sessions with ESL students
 - Looking at organizational change
 - Planning sessions to better understand equity and inclusion realities within IP partner organizations
 - World Refugee Day
 - This years theme is “**Waterloo Region Celebrates Refugees**” to build on the “Waterloo Region Welcomes Refugees” message
 - Visit www.worldrefugeedaywr.com for information and updates

6. Council Update

- Daniella provided a brief Council update in the absence of Pari
- The next IP Council meeting will be held on April 20th
- Feedback from SSG members to Council regarding the IP Community Forum 2016 is that this year's forum should be an event for learning and bringing members of the Syrian Refugee Resettlement task groups together with a focus on finding ways to keep them engaged going forward

7. Refugee Services Action Group

- Margaret provided an updated that the RSAG has been addressing two issues
 - Support of refugees as a whole—concerned about perceived inequities around the treatment of Syrian refugees and refugees from other countries who receive different treatment when trying to access services because of the greater emphasis on Syrian Refugees
 - Diana shared that the BSG also had a discussion about this -- SSG interested in hearing more about the discussions at the BSG tables

ACTION(S): Daniella to connect with Janet about BSG discussions around the different experiences of Syrian refugees and refugees from other countries

- Refugee Hub—Ontario Trillium Foundation Application
 - The organizations at the RSAG who primarily provide services for Refugees have been discussing the possibility of co-location
 - Wanting to do a community scan since things have changed since IP last did a scan
 - The RSAG wants to find gaps in services given the new realities that exist and feel it would be a benefit to IP as a whole
 - Looking for support from the SSG
- Group discussion
 - Do we need another research project given the information gathered after the recent IP evaluation?
 - How different will the results be? Maybe we don't need an answer to this question right now but it is something to consider before taking on a community scan
 - Keep in mind that the Immigration Partnership will also be updating its 3-year Community Action Plan and this is an opportunity to provide input that will help to address the existing and newer concerns
 - Other work has been done with a focus on Immigrants but this is about refugees—narrower focus would be driving this – and also considers that there are many new players involved

- The question being asked should be to those who weren't previously involved—why wouldn't you continue to engage and be involved? If everyone goes back into their silos, that won't help, so we need new data for people to advocate for services
- Need to look at how things have changed—coordination wise
- Language is important—consider saying “you play a critical role” instead of “why wouldn't you be here/involved” and shift from finding gaps to finding critical players and mapping services
- Also need to look at the difficulties/challenges in working together within the Settlement sector (i.e., applying to the same funding) and how we can overcome those issues

8. Community Action Plan

- Daniella lead a discussion about the Community Action Plan-- progress on each priority action area and suggestions
- Need to continue to emphasize continue the work of the Syrian Refugee Resettlement groups
 - How can we broaden the scope of the task groups to consider the needs of other groups and differences between groups (i.e., claimants, GARs, PSRs, other immigrants)
- 2.1
 - Needs more emphasis
- 1.2 & 2.1
 - Huge overlap here—makes it look like there's much more that needs to be done
 - Cultural competency training on its own isn't very useful—if people aren't open to changing, they won't! Training can be a start but we need a culture shift that is top-down
- 3.1
 - Look at BSG work on this and how it aligns with the progress made in the Syrian Refugee resettlement workgroups
- 3.2
 - No longer relevant (this was based on the way things were 3 years ago)-- we addressed the issue when we brought everyone together
 - We can check in later to see how this is working and then ask “what are new concerns that are relevant to right now?”

9. Community Updates

- Welcome Home re-opens on Sept. 1st
 - New location in Waterloo
 - Will house primarily singles (up to a year supportive housing)

- New housing has 13 rooms and a bungalow for transitional housing for a family
- Reception House
 - New Executive Director, Carol Cadogan has started
 - Reception House is looking for new, larger space in order to house the increased number of Refugees that they will be expecting going forward
 - Refugees currently housed temporarily—Howard Johnsons (167), Reception House (32), Roy St. House (101)
 - Target date of May 1st to have everyone moved out of Howard Johnsons
- Trauma Informed Training—free—April 13th
- The Arab Israeli Cookbook event—May 5th-7th
- Global Skills Conference—April 13th
- Region of Waterloo Public Health—Women’s Health Series (in planning)
- April 4th was the 3rd anniversary of Sanctuary Refugee Health Clinic being open

10. Syrian Refugee Resettlement Update

- Daniella provided highlights from the latest briefing note that was sent out (#14) and shared that they will be going out less frequently now instead of on a weekly basis – people can still check www.wrwelcomesrefugees.ca for the most up to date information and resources

11. Regular Meeting Schedule

- This group will be moving to a regular meeting schedule—similar to the Council and the Belong and Work steering Group
- Options for dates will be sent out soon-- Please respond!

12. Adjournment

- Next SSG meeting will be June 2016

SETTLE STEERING GROUP

Minutes

Date: August 11, 2016

Time: 1:00-3:00 p.m.

Location: YMCA office, 800 King St

Present: Pari Kareem (Chair, YMCA), Sharon Schmidt (Welcome Home), Kristin Johnson-Perlock (KPL), Ana Luz Martinez (KWMC), Lynne Griffiths-Fulton & Greg Awad-Lobe (Reception House), Laura Stoutenburg (LINC), Deb Schlicter & Fauzia Baig (ROW – Housing), Michelle Martin & Tara Bedard & Dan Vandebelt (Immigration Partnership staff), Katie Krauss (Big Brothers Big Sisters), Helen Ala Rashi (Shamrose), Iman Arab (CCORIC & Muslim Social Services), Fatah Fatah & Ban Al Saffar (The Working Centre, guests)

Regrets: Eliseo Martell (Vice-Chair, Community Member), Margaret Brockett (Sanctuary Health Centre), Jody Brown (ROW- Housing), Priscilla Muzira & June Moyo (ACCKWA), Heidi Newton (ROW- Public Health), Vanessa Lopak (ROW- Citizen Service), Herb Richardson (Community Member), Gael Gilbert (SHOW), Liliana Araujo (Community Member), Sharon Down (WRCLS), Deb Engel (Carizon), Ed Kaut (ROW-Income Support), Amanda Botelho (MCRS), Sheri Phillips (ROW- Children’s Services), Leslie Josling (KW Counselling)

1. Welcome

2. Review of Minutes - April 7, 2016

- Approved, with the change that “Carol Cadogan” should be changed to “Carl Cadogan”.

3. Approve Agenda & Declaration of Conflict of Interest

- Moved the housing discussion earlier in the agenda. No conflict of interest to declare.

4. Upcoming Housing Needs

- Reception House provided an update about upcoming refugee housing needs.
 - 350-400 government-sponsored refugees are anticipated before the end of the year. The numbers are quite low right now but they are receiving individuals from many countries.
 - The current plan for housing is to locate refugees in both Cambridge and Kitchener-Waterloo – though all plans are dependant on numbers and when individuals arrive.
 - The most significant challenge continues to be housing very large families and single individuals.
 - Coming into the end of the year we will continue to need housing for refugees (both GARs and PSRs) and it will be important to continue to work with landlords. The process established earlier this year with the Housing Working Group was helpful.
- National Housing Day is on November 22nd and Deb suggested that the focus this year could be on newcomers. Region of Waterloo Housing is working on a video to tell the story of a newcomer family. National Housing Day is an opportunity to highlight the needs and to present awards. It would be great to tell stories about how things worked well so the focus isn’t solely on problems.
- Previously it was suggested that we should celebrate local landlords as some went above and beyond to resettle Syrian refugees. The SSG could discuss how to best celebrate this and whether we should sponsor an award for National Housing Day local celebrations. It would include having time at the celebration event and could include a physical award.

- Earlier this year the Immigration Partnership and other partners supported Reception House primarily through communication and that was helpful. It is not anticipated that the number of refugee arrivals will be as much as this past winter but communication support to spread the word will still be important. There is a limit to what preparation we can do until we have more concrete information about arrivals and until they actually arrive.
- The housing registry on the WRwelcomesrefugees.ca website was useful. There are very few current submissions though Dan is checking it regularly.
- Deb is continuing to explore newcomer housing options with student housing partners.
- At our next SSG meeting we will discuss potential landlord recognition options. It could be useful to involve the media. It would be useful to invite Lynn Macaulay to our next meeting.

5. Council and Other Steering Group Updates

- Council forwarded the letter from the SSG to federal representatives regarding the concern that refugees and newcomers from other countries are being excluded due to a focus on Syrian refugees. There hasn't been a response yet. Various discussions with MPs continue.
- YMCA has 100 laptops donated for Syrian refugees which they are distributing to families with high school students. Contact YMCA if you know of families that would need this.
- Council is discussing the Syrian Resettlement Fund and how the donations were specifically for Syrian refugee efforts, as well as how to address resettlement needs beyond the life of the fund.
- The Region of Waterloo, local funders and community groups are exploring a collaborative community wellness initiative.

6. Refugee Services Action Group Update

- Margaret emailed an update highlighting ongoing discussions about a refugee hub, dental needs and available services, and an access pass checklist for refugees to point them to relevant services.
- **ACTION: Dan will send information about dental services from Dr Robert Hawkins from Public Health.**

7. Syrian Refugee Resettlement Update

- Working groups are largely continuing to meet on an as needed basis – though most haven't met over the summer. The Refugee Resettlement Steering Committee will meet in August. The Housing Working Group has formally ended but Deb Schlichter is on the Steering Committee and housing issues can still be discussed there or at SSG.
- The Community Integration & Language Support Working Group is waiting to coordinate with the BSG when they meet in the fall.
- The Syrian Newcomer Fund has made 18 grants totalling \$408,670. The next deadline is September 7.
- We had in the past invited most of the organizations that received these funds to join the SSG and have also talked about the need to collaborate and ensure that programs/agencies are connected – so we renewed our invitation to those groups to join us. Representatives from Big Brothers Big Sisters, Muslim Social Services, and Community Coalition of Refugee & Immigrant Concerns joined us at this meeting.
- Fatah and Ban shared about the Transition Assistance Project through the Working Centre. It is a job creation partnership funded by the Ontario Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development. While it is for any Arabic-speaking individuals, most are from Syria. A team of 4 Transition Assistants provide linguistic and cultural supports to Arabic speaker newcomers when they access employment service providers, education service providers and financial service providers around the community. The TAs introduce, inform, explain,

help and interpret culturally and linguistically the information pertaining to the above mentioned services. They are also open to help other agencies in presenting info sessions, workshops or any kind of training.

- **ACTION: Dan will email the list of Syrian Newcomer Fund recipients.**

8. Medical Interpretation

- Lynne and Tara met with Grand River Hospital representatives about medical interpretation. They developed a summary of GRH interpretation policy and the suggested steps for all agencies requesting Interpretation supports at GRH.
- **ACTION: Dan will send out the summary. All agencies are encouraged to follow the suggested process to maintain consistency of results and tracking issues.**

9. Community Action Plan – Evaluation & Next Steps

- Michelle provided an overview of the process to gather community input into the impact of our current Community Action Plan (CAP 2014-2016) and the development of our next CAP (2017-2019).
- **ACTION: All are encouraged to fill out the recent survey reflecting on the impact of our current CAP activities.**

10. Community Updates

- Shamrose
 - Shamrose started with private sponsorship agreements with many Syrian individuals and evolved as they received calls for support from others. Shamrose does ‘cultural interpretation’ between new Syrians and private sponsors or others, introduces newcomers to Canadian systems/norms and makes referrals. Referrals to community programs are key as Shamrose doesn’t provide settlement but builds trust and connections with other community supports. Shamrose has a Syrian cultural school and a Speak English Café.
 - Partnering with a KWMC settlement worker (part time) has been very beneficial. They have a workstation for other organizations to come to Shamrose once a week as a way to reach out/connect (i.e. a settlement worker or employment counsellor).
 - YMCA has both settlement workers and employment counsellors and would be happy to partner with other organizations in various locations. Pari and Helen to talk further about potential partnerships.
- Region of Waterloo Housing
 - All their programs are about creating new affordable housing for all (including newcomers) and maintaining the affordable housing that we currently have. Large units and singles are often the largest needs for the newcomer population.
 - The Region is piloting portable benefits for survivors of domestic abuse.
 - There will be a forum on September 30th on repurposing student housing. The forum is open for others to attend. The focus will be on working with landlords who are looking for other options. Newcomer housing is one of the scenarios that will be suggested.

11. Next Meetings

- Dan will send out a doodle poll for the next SSG meetings in September and November.

SETTLE STEERING GROUP

DRAFT Minutes

Date: September 29, 2016

Time: 1:00-3:00 p.m.

Location: The Family Centre, 65 Hanson Ave, Kitchener

Present: Eliseo Martell (Vice-Chair, Community Member), Sharon Schmidt (Welcome Home), Ana Luz Martinez (KWMC), James Swaka (Reception House), Fauzia Baig (ROW – Housing), Dan Vandebelt (Immigration Partnership staff), Helen Ala Rashi (Shamrose), Iman Arab (CCORIC & Muslim Social Services), Deb Engel (Carizon), Gael Gilbert (SHOW), Crystal Brown (LINC), Kaylee Perez (MCC), Mohamed Bendame (Muslim Association of Canada/Embrace Syria), Eunice Valenzuela (MCRS), Stephanie Schreuders & Gibo Shim (Welcome Home, guests)

Regrets: Pari Karem (Chair, YMCA), Margaret Brockett (Sanctuary Health Centre), Jody Brown (ROW- Housing), Priscilla Muzira & June Moyo (ACCKWA), Heidi Newton (ROW- Public Health), Vanessa Lopak (ROW- Citizen Service), Kristin Johnson-Perlock (KPL), Herb Richardson (Community Member), Liliana Araujo (Community Member), Sharon Down (WRCLS), Ed Kaut (ROW-Income Support), Amanda Botelho (MCRS), Sheri Phillips (ROW- Children's Services), Leslie Josling (KW Counselling), Katie Krauss (Big Brothers Big Sisters), Laura Stoutenburg (LINC), Lynne Griffiths-Fulton (Reception House)

1. Welcome

2. Review of Minutes – August 11, 2016

- Approved.

3. Approve Agenda & Declaration of Conflict of Interest

- Approved. No conflicts of interest to declare.

4. Council and Other Steering Group Updates

- Council discussed the need for further advocacy to ensure sufficient resources to support refugees and newcomers – especially the transition in “month 13” for recent refugees. This also includes the need for resources beyond direct settlement. The Council will continue to advocate for these broader needs. Council also discussed the CAP evaluation, the composition of council and how to fill vacancies that are coming up.
- The Belonging Steering Group discussed how the I Am Waterloo Region campaign has been well received so far and are starting discussions to extend the campaign in partnership with others. Diana Palmerin Velasco has joined the staff team to replace Janet Howitt.
- The Work Steering Group discussed their online platform to match newcomers and employers. They have piloted it with Scotiabank and are exploring next steps.
- RSAG
 - The Refugee Services Action Group of SSG has continued to develop a Community Checklist of the items that refugees need to cover – as a support to refugees and partner organizations. Two organizations will be piloting the checklist.
 - The RSAG has been under the IP umbrella for almost a year now, with many changes in the surrounding landscape for refugee issues over the last year. They have started to discuss their mandate and role within the context of all the other

conversations that happen around the SSG, Syrian Resettlement Working Groups, etc. The discussion will continue as the CAP evolves so we can look at our structure, what tables should be convened and who should be at each to allow us all to most efficiently take action on future CAP activities.

- RSAG is also working with Public Health dental to develop a useful summary of dental services available to different categories of newcomers, which will be shared when finalized.
- Newcomer Fund
 - The last funding announcement was August 24th with 2 more grants – SHORE Centre and the Multicultural Centre. To date, \$445,733 has been allocated to 15 different agencies and a number of private sponsorship groups. Applications continue to be accepted until the fund is exhausted. IP Council is discussing what is next for the Syrian Newcomer Fund and options for continuing the valuable support it has provided in the community.

5. Community Action Plan - Evaluation & Next Steps

- Michelle Martin provided a summary of follow-up from the 2015 evaluation of the Immigration Partnership and next steps. Michelle also shared the Impact Summary Report highlighting the impact that the Immigration Partnership's 2014-2016 CAP has had on the community. Michelle will share the summary with the SSG, particularly for those who couldn't make it to this meeting.
- From the results, it appears that partner engagement went up in the last 2 years. It was suggested that this may be in part due to the Syrian resettlement community effort.
- Some people who responded to the CAP impact survey may not be aware of all that had already been done or what specific CAP actions had been focused on.
- It can be confusing if the strategic directions or priority actions overlap between pillars (i.e. same/similar action in both settle and belong). Overlap can lead to ambiguity.
- While it was recognized that there was lots to be done in many of the strategic direction/action areas, we will need to focus our efforts and we can't address all issues through the CAP.
- There are ongoing needs with housing and school systems.
- Private sponsorship partners are relatively new and we need to link them to existing services.
- It was also mentioned that we need to continue to consider the situation of refugee claimants and the first 8-12 weeks.
- All participated in an activity to prioritize the current CAP action areas regarding the need to carry them forward into the upcoming CAP. Action areas 1.1, 2.1, 3.1, and 4.1 received the highest number of priority votes.
- **ACTION: A task group will meet on October 19th to discuss and draft strategic directions/actions for the next CAP (2017-2019). All members to consider attending and to RSVP if they can.**

6. National Housing Day Awards

- Before this meeting, Dan emailed some preliminary ideas for a Landlord Recognition Award based on conversations to date.
- It was agreed that we would like to sponsor an award at the November 17th National Housing Day awards event. The drafted purpose is appropriate:
 - Purpose of the Award – 1) To recognize and celebrate landlords that provided exemplary, innovative, responsive, and caring solutions to housing for refugees over the last year; and 2) To encourage currently engaged and new landlords to continue

to be involved and build on the examples of providing affordable housing for resettled refugees in Waterloo Region.

- The award would be related to housing for “refugees over the last year” rather than only “Syrian refugees”.
- It was noted that there isn’t one association that covers all landlords and which went above and beyond to support housing for recent refugees.
- Option B was preferred. We would give certificates or awards to 4-10 landlords who exemplify the good work that was done over the last year and have all winners come to the front to receive their certificate/award. We could give a very brief overview of why each was selected as a winner with more detailed stories on the [wvwelcomesrefugees](#) website. We would invite nominations in the coming weeks and select a shortlist of 4-10 from those nominations.
- When selecting winners, we could have sub-categories (large/small, private/non-profit, etc.)
- We have 10 minutes on the agenda to talk about the award, the stories/winners, and present the award.
- There isn’t another SSG meeting between now and November 17th so we will have a task group that will flesh out the details and act as a selection committee (2 meetings likely). Fauzia/Jody, James or someone from Reception House, Sharon, Dan and possibly Helen volunteered.
- **ACTION: Dan will organize task group meetings. The task group will sort out details, put out the nominations form, act as a selection committee and coordinate the awarding on November 17. The task group will share information with the SSG.**
- Some potential selection criteria were suggested:
 - Number of families helped
 - Recruited other landlords
 - Reduced rents
 - Innovative/creative
 - Flexibility (i.e. allowed large families, willing to take variety of people/categories of refugees)
- It was suggested that Tara and Eliseo should introduce the award on November 17th.

7. Community Updates

- **ACTION: Please email any community or organization updates to the SSG group.**

8. Next Meetings

- **November 21, 2016 from 1.00-3.00pm** at YMCA Immigrant Services, 800 King St W, Kitchener.

SETTLE STEERING GROUP

DRAFT Minutes

Date: November 21, 2016

Time: 1:00-3:00 p.m.

Location: YMCA Immigrant Services, 800 King St, Kitchener

Present: Pari Karem (Chair, YMCA), Eliseo Martell (Vice-Chair, Community Member), Sharon Schmidt (Welcome Home), Ana Luz Martinez (KWMC), Margaret Brockett (Sanctuary Health Centre), Tara Bedard, Michelle Martin & Dan Vandebelt (Immigration Partnership staff), Gael Gilbert (SHOW), Crystal Brown (LINC), Mohamed Bendame (Muslim Association of Canada/Embrace Syria), Eunice Valenzuela (MCRS), Lynne Griffiths-Fulton & Tarek Al Farra (Reception House), Katie Krauss (Big Brothers Big Sisters), Priscilla Muzira (ACCKWA), Gina Hickman (ROW- Citizen Service), Kathy Hogarth (Muslim Social Services), Christine Gilles (CMHA WW), Laaraib Khattak (guest)

Regrets: Laura Stoutenburg (LINC), Helen Ala Rashi (Shamrose), Iman Arab (CCORIC & Muslim Social Services), Deb Engel (Carizon), Kaylee Perez (MCC), Fauzia Baig (ROW – Housing), June Moyo (ACCKWA), Heidi Newton (ROW- Public Health), Kristin Johnson-Perlock (KPL), Herb Richardson (Community Member), Liliana Araujo (Community Member), Sharon Down (WRCLS), Ed Kaut (ROW-Income Support), Amanda Botelho (MCRS), Kristen Bustamante (ROW- Children’s Services), Leslie Josling (KW Counselling)

1. Welcome

2. Review of Minutes – September 29, 2016

- Approved.

3. Approve Agenda & Declaration of Conflict of Interest

- Approved. No conflicts of interest to declare.

4. Council and Other Steering Group Updates

- Council discussed ongoing CAP evaluation and planning efforts. Council also discussed ongoing community efforts with refugee resettlement and “Month 13” planning. There are conversations with community foundations regarding future donations and resources and a concrete plan going forward. Preliminary budgets from IRCC have projected settlement cuts. Council will advocate for sufficient resourcing for settlement supports. The IP website will be refreshed over the coming months. It will continue to provide information for newcomers to Waterloo Region and streamline how they connect to local services.
- The Belong Steering Group continues to support public education through the I am Waterloo Region campaign. Municipal presentations to ESL classes continue regarding municipal services.
- The Work Steering Group is exploring an immigrant talent engagement program. The manufacturing sector needs many people and we are exploring how to connect immigrant and refugee talent.
- The Refugee Services Action Group discussed health needs and continues to develop a community checklist for refugees.

- Syrian resettlement working groups continue to meet regarding transitional needs for refugees who arrived this year. We are expecting 242 more GARs to settle by the end of the year in addition to privately sponsored refugees.
- The Syrian Newcomer Fund will be reviewing the last applications and is anticipating one more announcement of funds before the end of this year.
- Discussed furniture donations. Individuals are being directed to wrwelcomesrefugees.ca for information about donations. **ACTION: Pari will connect with Jane (chair of the Donations Working Group) for more information about donations and the vouchers for refugees to use in furniture thrift stores.**

5. Community Action Plan – Draft Actions

- Michelle Martin provided a summary of the process to date and the draft actions coming out of the task group meeting on October 19th. The task group meeting was attended by many members of SSG and built on previous SSG discussions and surveys of many partners, immigrants and refugee newcomers, and other community members.
- Electronic polling was used to gauge group direction with each draft CAP action. The draft CAP actions were each discussed including elements to adjust, consider and incorporate. There was broad support for content of the first four actions, to be adjusted per discussion, and broad agreement that elements of the fifth and sixth could be incorporated into others instead of being stand-alone actions. The group discussed possible gaps with the draft CAP actions. These discussions will be incorporated into the draft CAP actions and shared in preparation for our January SSG meeting.

6. National Housing Day Awards Debrief

- The discussion about the Landlords Welcome Refugees Award and the National Housing Day celebration was deferred to the January meeting.

7. Community Updates

- **ACTION: Please email any community or organization updates to Dan to forward to the SSG group.**

8. Next Meetings

- Based on the doodle poll, the best time for people to meet was the 4th Thursday afternoons.

The meetings for 2017 will be:

- **January 26, 2017, 1-3pm** at MCC, 50 Kent Ave, Kitchener
- **March 23, 2017, 1-3pm** at location TBD
- **May 25, 2017, 1-3pm** at MCC, 50 Kent Ave, Kitchener
- **July 27, 2017, 1-3pm** at location TBD
- **September 28, 2017, 1-3pm** at MCC, 50 Kent Ave, Kitchener
- **November 23, 2017, 1-3pm** at location TBD