



## **Commission on Immigrant Affairs**

**Monday, April 13, 2015, 6:30 PM**

**Austin City Hall, Executive Session Room #1027**

**301 West Second Street, Austin, Texas**

### *Approved Regular Meeting Minutes*

*The Commission on Immigrant Affairs convened a regular meeting on Monday, April 13, 2015, at City Hall, 301 West 2nd Street, Executive Session, Room #1027, Austin, Texas.*

<i>Members Present</i>	<i>Members Absent</i>
<i>Angela-Jo Touza-Medina, Chair</i>	<i>Mark Hand, Co-Chair</i>
<i>Peter Shen</i>	<i>Julius Okelo</i>
<i>Sandra Molinari</i>	<i>Pranev Parakh</i>
<i>Nancy Lobato</i>	

*Liaison: Adrienne Sturup*

- 1. CALL TO ORDER** – Chair Angela-Jo Touza-Medina called meeting to order at 6:30pm
- 2. CITIZEN COMMUNICATION:**
  - James Nichols, Cassia Santa Helena, and Amanda Cartwright, representatives from Proximos Passos, addressed the Commission on President Obama's recent Executive Action for Immigration Reform, urging the Commission to show support and make a recommendation for Council to sign Amicus brief in upcoming court battles, as well as provide additional city resources for educating and supporting vulnerable immigrants and their families as part of the Welcoming City Initiative. Chairperson Touza-Medina noted that the Council, Austin Police Department and Travis County have already signed Amicus brief.
  - Aimee Athar from Forward U.S provided an update on free event for National Immigrant Heritage Month. In partnership with Welcome U.S. and Define American, the group will host a free screening of La Americana at the Alamo Draft house, followed by a panel discussion. The Commission was invited to be named as a co-sponsor of the event.

In addition to the screening and panel discussion, Ms. Athar asked the Commission to consider making a recommendation to council to issue a proclamation naming June 2015 as National Immigrant Heritage Month, and to consider hosting a reception. As National Immigration Heritage Month activities was an agenda item under "Old Business," Chair Touza-Medina asked that discussion be tabled until that time.

**3. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

- Review and approval of March minutes postponed until the May meeting.

**4. NEW BUSINESS: DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION:**

**A. Austin Multicultural Festival**

- Festival is scheduled for May 16, 2015. Chair Touza-Medina agreed to attend in the morning and asked for other Commissioners to attend in the afternoon. As the organizer was not available to address the Commission for the second consecutive month, no action to support the event was taken.

**B. 2014 Annual Report – Review of items to include in the report**

- Newsletter content
- Narrative Report for Welcoming Cities initiative
- Welcoming Cities Summit
- Summary of recommendations for new Commissioners

**C. Review of the Commission on Immigrant Affairs Newsletter Report**

- Summary report for quarterly newsletter distributed for review. Open rate is 31.2%, this is higher than industry average of 23.5%.

**D. Transition Planning**

- Identify high priority areas for continuity:
  - Push out Welcoming Cities Report
  - Maintain mailing list and newsletter
  - Municipal ID
  - Follow up on various recommendations to council
  - Legislative tracking committee – during legislative sessions have commissioner(s) assigned to do legislative tracking and give regular updates to the commission through the liaison. This would enable commissioners to come to meetings prepared and ready to vote on action instead of waiting until the next meeting.

**E. Legislative Updates**

- SB1819 –Bill to deny in state tuition to dreamers. Voted out of committee, expected to go to a vote shortly, however not enough turnaround to make recommendations to council as a commission; however something to keep on the radar.
- SB 185 – Sanctuary City bill. Council has testified against this as it hinders Austin's welcomingness, and puts APD in the position of doing immigration enforcement, and to undermine decisions of supervisors. Bill was voted out of sub-committee, with senate vote to happen fairly soon.

**5. OLD BUSINESS: DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION:**

**A. National Heritage Month Activities**

- The motion to co-sponsor in name only, the National Immigrant Heritage Month event on June 3, 2015 was approved Commissioner Sandra Molinari motion, Commissioner Peter Shen second on a 4-0 vote, with Commissioners Mark Hand, Julius Okelo, and Pranav Parakh absent.
- Draft recommendation for a Proclamation declaring June 2015 as National Immigrant Heritage Month, with a vote at next month's meeting. Ideas: use remaining Welcoming City funding to pay for reception to be hosted in Atrium. Tie this event in with the release of the Welcoming City Report.

#### **B. Austin Welcoming City Update**

- Budget update: Two thousand six hundred five dollars and fifty-eight cents (\$2,605.58) remaining, plus an additional one hundred dollars (\$100) in the event brite account to be transferred over. Monies available until September 30, 2015. Chair Touza-Medina did ask about the possibility of funds being rolled over into the next fiscal year to allow the Commission to have a budget to work from; however these are one time grant funds only.
- Welcoming City Report: results already being tabulated. Plans to still hold some of the elected official interviews. It was suggested that current commissioners form a volunteer speakers corps to promote the report as well as the work of the Commission.

#### **C. Cities United for Immigration Action- Update**

- On April 17, 2015, the fifth Court of Appeals will hear oral arguments in the executive action case. This date also kicks off Immigrant Heritage Week, commemorating the day the largest number of immigrants passed through Ellis Island.
- Commission will send out information through listserv raising awareness about current bills and commemorating Immigrant Heritage Week. Ms. Athar was asked to send language about screening to include in announcements.

#### **6. ANNOUNCEMENTS: None.**

#### **7. FUTURE AGENDA ITEM:**

- Annual Report
- Transition plan
- Budget Request
- National Immigrant Heritage Month Activities

#### **8. ADJOURNMENT:**

- The meeting was adjourned at 7:10pm by Chairperson Angela-Jo Touza-Medina.

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