

**CITY OF ANAHEIM  
MAYOR'S TASK FORCE – WELCOMING ANAHEIM INITIATIVE**

**MINUTES**

**April 28, 2017**

Agenda Posting: A complete copy of the Anaheim Sister City Commission Agenda was posted on Tuesday, April 25, 2017 at 8:30 a.m. at Anaheim City Hall.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Tait called the meeting of the Mayor's Task Force on Welcoming Anaheim to order at 8:30 a.m. on Friday, April 28, 2017 at the Gordon Hoyt Conference Room, Anaheim West Tower, 201 S. Anaheim Blvd., 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Anaheim, California.

**INTRODUCTIONS**

Mayor Tait began the meeting by asking members around the table to introduce themselves. The following Task Force members were present:

- 1) Mayor Tom Tait
- 2) Councilmember Steve Faessel
- 3) Councilmember Jose Moreno
- 4) Glen Peterson, World Relief
- 5) Greg Walgenbach, Diocese of Orange
- 6) Valentina Purtell, Provost, School of Continuing Education, North OC Community College District
- 7) Julio Perez, OC Labor Federation
- 8) Allison Edwards, OC Human Relations Commission
- 9) Nathan Zug, Chairman, Anaheim Religious Coordinating Council & Minister, Magnolia Baptist Church

City staff included Greg Garcia, Deputy City Manager, Dukku Lee, Anaheim Public Utilities and Mishal Montgomery, Mayor's Chief of Staff.

**II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

Minutes for the meeting of February 17<sup>th</sup> were reviewed and approved unanimously. Moved by Steve Faessel and seconded by Mayor Tait.

III. GUEST PRESENTATION - RHONDA ORTIZ, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF USC'S CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION

Mayor Tait welcomed our guest speaker Rhonda Ortiz. Rhonda is the Managing Director at the Program for Environmental and Regional Equity and the Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration at USC where she both manages research projects and conducts research. She holds a Masters in Urban Planning from UCLA. She co-authored California Immigrant Integration Scorecard; Making Change: How Social Movements Work and How to Support Them, as well as other publications. She also previously worked as an Evaluation Associate for The California Endowment, working closely with evaluators serving the Hmong immigrant community of the Central Valley, evaluating initiatives targeting policy and advocacy work and grassroots organizations. Rhonda's areas of expertise include: Immigrant Integration, Grassroots participation and advocacy, and Program Evaluation.

Rhonda provided the Task Force with a presentation that outlined the following: Overview the USC Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration; Demographics on Orange County/Anaheim; Lessons from Research at the Institute on Immigrant Integration. Presentation is attached.

After the presentation, Rhonda stayed to answer some questions from the group.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS

At the conclusion of the presentation, Mayor Tait opened the meeting to public comments. There were no public comments at that time, but the Mayor indicated that there would be other opportunities to make comments.

V. NEW STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMS

The conversation continued after the presentation about various points outlined in the presentation. Julio Perez mentioned that there is a myth that immigrants take jobs here, but that immigrants are actually very entrepreneurial. Mayor Tait agreed and mentioned that when he attended a conference in New York he was told that economically successful cities all have one thing in common and that is a large immigrant base. If we can harness that community and make it easy for immigrants to open businesses in Anaheim, it would be better economically for everyone.

Valentina Purtell mentioned that there is a role for education institutions to partner with the city to help immigrants navigate the system. She suggests creating a series of courses that would help immigrants to become entrepreneurs. Mishal Montgomery also mentioned linking those students directly with City staff. Steve Faessel also mentioned that a partnership between the city and the college district is a good idea and would be easy.

Council Member Moreno made a comment about how not only undocumented residents are being targeted but also legal permanent residents. As a result these groups are fearful of seeking assistance for fear that this information will be used against them by immigration officials. Rhonda Ortiz agreed with this statement and indicated that perhaps we can utilize schools or libraries to facilitate giving information about programs since the community seems to trust them. LA Unified has an office that focuses on dealing with immigrant families and helps direct them to services.

Steve Faessel mentioned that a big takeaway from the presentation was the difference in wages between citizens versus non-citizens (40% difference). Because of that, he suggested that perhaps the City could get more involved in facilitating finding those eligible for citizenship and providing them the assistance they need to get citizenship.

Mayor Tait asked Dukku Lee to provide a brief description on what Utilities is working on with regard to new residents. Dukku Lee mentioned that we get about 1,000 new customers a month. With all these new customers, APU is thinking about building a new welcome kit to introduce people to the city government and all of the services that we have available. Greg Garcia mentioned that city staff are starting to look at all of the City's frontline staff and examining if we are doing enough to be welcoming and kind. Additionally, he mentioned that the city is partnering with a local organization (OCCORD) on an upcoming citizenship fair. Finally, the city is looking at which city staff could be cross-trained to be immigrant integration staff based on current responsibilities as opposed to creating a new independent office with new staff, which we may not have the resources to do so.

Glen Peterson asked Rhonda about business involvement in these issues. Rhonda mentioned that the LA Chamber is on the County Immigrant Integration Council and they bring a different angle and are supportive of their efforts on integration.

Nathan Zug mentioned that a takeaway from the presentation today was that there needs to be a collective champion to move the work forward. Council Member Moreno mentioned that he worries about the rhetoric in our society today and whether that keeps people from seeking services. Folks are feeling that their local governments may participate in programs that could threaten their well-being. We see some parents keep their kids from school out of fear from immigration. So how do we build the trust of our community and ensure them that their local government is not going to participate in certain federal immigration actions. Mayor Tait mentioned that we need to focus on being a city of kindness and how a city of kindness would respond to this issue. We need to create a culture of welcoming as part of this initiative.

Greg Walgenbach asked Mayor Tait how the work of the task force is getting out there to the community. Mayor Tait said that the work of the task force is the preliminary work and that ultimately, the recommendations of this task force will be forwarded to the city council for action. Steve Faessel said that he thinks Anaheim needs to create a statement of beliefs to let the community know what we stand for. Mayor Tait said that a first step would be a statement from the council and some specific policy suggestions and then a plan on communicating the plan and our statement of beliefs.

Council Member Moreno asked if immigrants make any distinctions between different levels of government. Rhonda said she believes that it is hard for the immigrant community to distinguish between the different layers of government and that is a challenge. Allison Edwards mentioned that she was at a community forum the other night and she was surprised about how many questions they had for the police representative in the room and how impactful it was to have that representative there to share information. These communities need to know that there are outlets out there to assist them.

Mayor Tait reiterated that we need to have a very clear statement to the community about what our police will do or not do with regard to immigration. The intent is to assure people that they can call the authorities about important issues without fear.

Glen Peterson mentioned that the Refugee Forum Orange County is a great place to engage with the refugee resettlement community and a good group to partner

with. He also mentioned how he found it interesting how cities are using the term sanctuary city. Los Angeles does not use the term while Santa Ana does use the term. There is a survey that his organization is undertaking with some partners about who could qualify for an immigration remedy and how would they access that remedy and how to reach those certain communities that need the assistance. That information would be very informative for this task force.

Council Member Moreno mentioned that there is an item that was placed on the City Council agenda about an up or down vote on whether the city should be a sanctuary city – what does the group think about that and does it hurt our community. The Mayor mentioned that such a vote is harmful because the term is not defined. Many people are confused about what a sanctuary city actually will do and not do. We need to be clear of what our police policy is and stand by that.

Greg Walgenbach mentioned that a vote on that issue would undermine all of the efforts that are being taken by the PD, the nonprofits and others that are trying to engage immigrants. Glen Peterson said that people are afraid and social media does not help with rumors and fears, etc. Political rhetoric on sanctuary cities is also not helpful especially at a city level. Steve Faessel said that it is important to make it clear that Anaheim follows the law, but agrees that using certain terminology could be hurtful.

Valentina Purtell said that her district passed a Resolution to protect privacy of student records and for the district to be inclusive and to educate a diverse population. This resolution had a very positive impact on the students. Mayor Tait mentioned that the city passed a Resolution calling for comprehensive immigration reform and that is ultimately the answer. It is not right for a section of our community to be living in the shadows and living in fear.

#### VI. NEXT STEPS

Mayor Tait said the process has been very beneficial and that he has learned a ton. He suggested that the group meet again in about a month – May 26. He asked the city departments to come up with some concrete things to present to the task force and hopefully the group can get a consensus on some recommendations to the city council. Council Member Moreno mentioned that the group should send us any ideas to staff so that they can compile them in advance of the next meeting. He also asked the group if they would be comfortable officially joining the Welcoming America effort via Resolution at the council level. Steve Faessel

asked for more information on the Welcoming America group again prior to officially endorsing joining the Welcoming America. The group agreed to take this up as part of a package at a later meeting. There was no objection to pursuing the Welcoming America membership. Staff confirmed that all the recordings, minutes, agendas and presentations made at the task force will be posted online for the public.

Julio Perez mentioned that it is important for the city to say who we are in addition to who we are not. The group may take political hits, but it is important to move forward.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mayor Tait adjourned the meeting at 10:46 a.m. The next meeting will take place on Friday May 26.