

# **Ad Hoc Committee on Development of a Commission on Immigrant Issues Meeting Notes April 12, 2013**

**Present:** Fernando Marroquin, Urania Petit, Mui Mui Hin-McCormick, Rafael Pichardo, Nancy Caddigan, Letty Cotto, Maryse Adonis, Janet Bauer, Homa Naficy, Edgar Johnson, and Jorge from the Corporation Counsel's Office. Linda Bayer facilitated.

**Updates:** The naturalization ceremony was held at the Library on April 11<sup>th</sup> which was very inspirational. Thirty-one individuals became citizens.

**Ordinance:** Jorge explained that he will be drafting the ordinance to create the Commission on Refugee and Immigrant Affairs. He asked several clarifying questions about the outline developed by the group. He suggested that a quorum requirement be included, such as a majority. He asked if the group had discussed the number of commissioners (recommended at 21) and task force members noted that they wanted to provide the opportunity for many countries to be represented. It was also noted that not all seats would necessarily be filled at any one time. The wording might be "up to 21".

Jorge raised the question of whether the commission would have specific authorities. He gave as examples the investigation of complaints or reviewing of contracts. The group discussed the question several possibilities, including having the authority to receive information from City departments. It was suggested that language be included to give the Commission the power to determine that the laws of Hartford conform to Human Rights principles. However, it was then suggested that the capacity may not exist to accomplish such as task and we don't want to over-promise, because the commission will lose credibility. After extensive discussion, it was decided that no specific authorities shall be included at this time; the ordinance can be amended in the future if necessary.

The recommended requirements for membership were discussed. Although there may be an issue with

It was noted that we can't foretell what the climate will be in the future. Issues will be brought before the commission and decisions will need to be made about whether and how to address them. The commission would not be addressing individual's issues but those that affect a broader group. The ordinance should give the commission flexibility to choose issues and determine what actions to take.

Jorge asked that if members had additional ideas they should let him (or Linda) know. He will begin drafting the ordinance and will consult with Rafael as needed.

**Next Meeting:** The group decided to defer setting a next meeting date. When a draft ordinance is ready, a meeting will be scheduled. Linda will stay in touch with Jorge to determine when a meeting will be most useful.