

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

MINUTES

February 17, 2017

Agenda Posting: A complete copy of the Anaheim Sister City Commission Agenda was posted on Tuesday, February 14, 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, February 17, 2017 at the Gordon Hoyt Conference Room, Anaheim West Tower, 201 S. Anaheim Blvd., 2nd Floor, Anaheim, California.

II. 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) Valentina Purtell, Provost, School of Continuing Education, North OC Community College District
- 5) Jaron Fried, on behalf of Mike Matsuda, Superintendent, Anaheim Union High School District
- 6) Glen Peterson, World Relief
- 7) Greg Walgenbach, Diocese of Orange, Roman Catholic Church
- 8) Sheikh Mohamed, Islamic Center of Orange County
- 9) John Bennett, Chief Administrative Officer, St. Joseph's Heritage Health Care
- 10) John Stratman, Director of Public Affairs, Kaiser Permanente-Orange County
- 11) Julio Perez, OC Labor Federation
- 12) Nathan Zug, Chairman, Anaheim Religious Coordinating Council & Minister, Magnolia Baptist Church
- 13) Rusty Kennedy, Executive Director, OC Human Relations Commission

City staff included Greg Garcia, Deputy City Manager and Mishal Montgomery, Mayor's Chief of Staff.

III. PRESENTATION ON WELCOMING AMERICA PROGRAM

Mayor Tait indicated that since our guest speaker was limited on time, he was moving straight to the presentation.

Mayor Tait introduced Isha Lee, the Chief Network Officer for Welcoming America, a non-profit organization that supports communities and partners who are leading efforts to make their communities more vibrant places for all.

Isha joined the Task Force via the phone since the Welcoming America offices are located in Atlanta, Georgia. She had a power point presentation that she went through outlining some basic information about Welcoming America. Her presentation also touched on the Welcoming Community Pathway for communities that has the following tenets: Adopting a Framework, Advancing policy, Practice and Culture Change; and Achieve Whole Community Benefit.

Isha also outlined the important Return on Investment (ROI) that Welcoming America believes communities can achieve if they adopt welcoming community practices. The three points identified are:

- Competitive and Resilient Local Economies – Cities are more open and innovative and better able to attract and retain global talent and investment.
- Strong Civic Fabric – New Americans can be more active in civic life.
- Equitable Outcomes, Thriving Communities – More equitable access to services, educational and workforce opportunities.

Welcoming America has municipal partners in over 50 cities and many other county governments as well. Isha spoke about the specific case study in Pittsburgh, PA and how that community has utilized the tools and support provided by Welcoming America in order to empower their immigrant community to the benefit of the entire City.

Isha also spoke about member benefits available should Anaheim choose to become formally a part of the Welcoming America network. They are as follows: Access to the Network of Members, Access to staff support, Access to online member site, Participation in annual events, Training opportunities and Scholarship opportunities. She also talked about an event called Welcoming Week that may member communities participate in and plan within their own cities each year.

At the conclusion of her talk, she opened it up to questions.

Council Member Moreno asked about programs for immigrants who have been here more than five years or more. Isha explained that programs that are promoted by Welcoming America also take into consideration this population not just new immigrants. She explained how it is just as important to reach out to members of our community who may have been here longer, but still do not have a connection to the community.

Mayor Tait thanked Isha for her time and willingness to address the group. Isha offered her assistance to us as we move through this process.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Tait asked if there were any members of the public that would like to address the Task Force during public comment. There were no public comments.

Rusty Kennedy suggested to Mayor Tait that members of the audience also introduce themselves. About 18 members of the audience introduced themselves to the group.

V. OVERVIEW OF THE MAYORAL TASK FORCE

Mayor Tait provided a short overview of the Task Force and the idea behind it. He said that it is important that we make every resident in Anaheim feel welcome and a part of our community. This group is put together to discuss the ways we currently do that and to provide feedback and new ideas on how we can improve on these efforts. He thanked the members of the task force for giving their time to this effort and opened up the floor for comments.

Steve Faessel mentioned how he was impressed with the presentation from Welcoming America and the concepts within the presentation. He looks forward to hearing more and hearing from his colleagues.

Rusty Kennedy from OC Human Rights Commission discussed the challenges that his organization deals with on a regular basis and how they track closely with this topic. They are in the business of trying to assure people not to be afraid.

Valentina Purtell with the North OC Community College District explained that Anaheim is their largest area and that ESL courses are their largest program. They are always looking to expand and find more opportunities. She is happy to be a part of the group and mentioned that the Community College District could be a good hub to help distribute information and other resources that may come out of this effort.

Jaron Fried of the Anaheim Union High School District discussed everything that AUHSD is doing in this area including the opening of a newcomer welcoming center in the District that seeks to assist newcomers get registered and parents to

get situated. He mentioned that they also have community engagement specialists within the District that engage in this type of work as well.

Greg Walgenbach with the Catholic Diocese of Orange County mentioned that it is important for this group to help identify activities and programs that we already provide. We probably need to do a better job of articulating the activities we already do as welcoming. Also he mentioned that bringing people together and sharing immigrant stories is a powerful way to connect people with one another and the community.

Julio Perez with the OC Labor Federation mentioned that Orange County has the largest percentage of undocumented people in California. People in Orange County are truly scared and scared of the new administration and their policies. The Labor Fed is working with partners to inform people of their rights and assisting legal permanent residents become citizens. He said that we need to open up these discussions to more groups and stakeholders.

Glen Peterson with World Relief mentioned that most of their work is in congregations: legal services, refugee resettlement, etc. He is encouraged by the strategic partnerships of this effort. He mentioned that they have a new project called Matthew 25 that seeks to inform congregations on how to become “Welcoming Congregations.” They also work in partnership with the OC Community Foundation to study the issue of providing legal services.

Valentina mentioned the idea of creating a directory for residents and agencies that helps them understand what services are out there and how folks can help and seek help.

Rusty Kennedy made the comment that everyone around the table today does not check immigration status. All of our agencies deal with a reality that is on the ground. The Mayor agreed and said it is the role of cities to make sure that people understand that if they are in our community, they must feel welcome.

Councilmember Jose Moreno thanked the Mayor for his willingness to address this issue and convene this task force. Welcoming America puts the onus on the community to become more welcoming. National policies have consequences at the local level. He is afraid that some residents are fearful of their city and that is what we are trying to avoid – overcome the anxieties that may exist out there. He said authentic relationships across lines of difference create positive conversations.

Councilmember Moreno also mentioned that he believes policies are important and hopes that the task force thinks about new policies. We know we want to be good, but how do we get there. Now more than ever it is important for the city to welcome all our residents and send a good message.

VI. TASK FORCE WORK, GOALS & OBJECTIVES AND MEETING SCHEDULE

Mayor Tait indicated that this is just the beginning of the process and over the next few months this group will meet and discuss recommendations, ideas, etc. Whatever this group recommends over the course of the dialogue will be packaged up and shared with the City Council. Mayor Tait encouraged folks to come back at subsequent meetings with ideas that can move this effort forward.

Mayor Tait discussed the future meeting schedule and the group agreed that Friday mornings work well. If members are unable to be at a task force meeting, they are welcome to send someone to attend on their behalf and participate.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mayor Tait adjourned the meeting at 9:45 a.m.