

## **New Portlanders Policy Commission General Meeting minutes**

Teleconference Meeting

Date: March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020 5:30-7:00 pm

Minutes by Marco Mejia

Commissioners present: Evelyn, Mohammad, Octaviano, Rick birkel, June, Blanca, Yonas, Salome, Bernal, Ahmed

Staff present: Andrea, Touk, Marco

Facilitation: Evelyn

### **1.- Welcoming and Check-in**

Each commissioner expressed how they were doing dealing with COVID-19 crisis

Evelyn; In good health including her partner, mother is in a senior retirement home which is on lockdown, can deliver food but can't see her.

Mohammad: Dealing with the COVID-19 response at the County, working on shelters for people in need with other staff, some are upset and afraid to go working on shelters and been put at risk. That's every day, tomorrow will start to require more workers since there's not a lot of volunteers.

Rick; At catholic charities, human services is closed to people, trying to figure out how to deploy the services where they are needed, so people are fed, access to health attention, etc. They are working 100% on virtual communications with all staff, personally doing fine working from home.

Octaviano: This time is testing our resistance and resilience, for us indigenous people it is not new, it is more how to deal with the next crisis. Neighbors are collaborating, helping people with their questions about understanding the policies about the crisis and how to use social media, I have been sharing information.

Salome: Family is doing fine, working from home, hard not to see clients, juts working by cellphone for meetings

Bernal: current times are bringing the best and worst of people, blessed to have many friends and inspired by their work (doctors, social workers, etc.). Have a cold but getting better, meditating, trying to be productive and mindful, sharing with family and doing home things.

Blanca: doing well, working from home, lots of readjustment with campaign for the census, and figuring out how to do it, it's been a bit rough, but nice at the same time. Mom has been at home and sharing together.

Yonas: doing great, lots of tensions but coping, so far so good been alive.

June: June; have a mother who is 100 y/o and I'm the primary helper and now I can't go even to the lobby, no communication because has a hearing impediment. Husband and I are find, have lots of time.

## **2. Current COVID-19 reality and challenges**

---

Evelyn asked the group to share the experience they are facing during this crisis based on the following question:

- a. Assessing emerging community priorities + Resources
  - What needs are emerging from your community as a result of COVID-19?
  - What resources are needed to address these needs?
  - What resources or efforts already exist that we can use/share?
- b. What is our role as NPPC currently?
  - Identify any action items for NPPC to carry out

These are the responses:

- Rick, Catholic Charities is helping to process unemployment, is a priority, how to get access to unemployment insurance for clients.
- Blanca, we need a list of resources in different languages. Be informed what people are allowed to do and what not to do, specially going places.
- Andrea: the governor have site with info and resources
- Octaviano: we need to compile a list of executive orders, moratoriums, that are accessible in different languages, the county is translating some documents though. Will be good to get a ONE document with all the links for access to different services and in by County. Just ONE STOP place for it. For us NPPC need to gather everything (info) around Portland, and we need to decide who administrates this ONE PLACE. Long documents are frustrating and scary, we need something simple and easy to understand
- Evelyn; we get pieces of information from different resources. Is that happening at the city?

- Andrea; we are trying not to duplicate and have a committee working on it, gathering info about needs on the ground and share it with the county to make it accessible for the people
- Touk; what I notice is on social media happening lots of information, we are learning on how to utilize the information we get to translate it into an accessible form of information to be shared. We're making it sure we have info in different languages, but also not to duplicate the info available already.
- Andrea; there is a place on the State website but also there's a place on the Multnomah County page. What we are gathering is what is needed by migrant and refugee communities, needs and priorities.
- Rick; we should also talk about food security, especially for seniors, people afraid to go shopping. Emergency basics which makes people feel safe. We see challenging situations increasing during the stay home period; family tensions, abuse, domestic violence at home since they need to stay at home, the tensions are also about, food, jobs, health care, etc. We need the City of Portland to be the voice for Portlanders.
- Bernal; community base work is not only based on basic needs. There are challenge for people who are isolated, specially recently arrived migrants and refugees without contacts and knowledge of the city and the services, we need to asses it.
- Octaviano; The economic impact on our community is big, are elected officials aware and dealing with this?, there's usually communities that are not seating at the discussion table, just some, we need to have groups assessing what are the needs and impact to all these communities, it will be great if WE have a voice on those spaces or tables that are having all this discussions.
- Andrea; An Economic Impact taskforce is been created at Prosper Portland, at the state level, the legislature created the COVID-19 taskforce. we could connect you all with them.
- Evelyn; went to taskforce with Prosper Portland, LEE PO Cha is also there, today I got an email from Kimberly and asked on behalf of NPPC how we can be involved in that commission/taskforce, and I'm waiting for a response. What happens usually is that we have representatives in this taskforce but sometimes they are not the ones working on the frontlines. Should we as NPPC be part of this?
- Rick; What we need to talk about is also about the consequences after this pandemic crisis, we the NPPC are representing those communities in need. We need to have voices and be the voices for people that are not insured, etc.
- Blanca; The refugee community can file for unemployment, but the undocumented community don't have access to unemployment, we need to bring

to this committees/taskforce this challenges. Also, what are the steps the city could give to take this into account and see what can be done to support undocumented communities with access to services, health care, etc.

- Yonas; some people could be eligible to apply for aid during this emergency, low income people can get covered and get some help, I can assist those in need with the work I do at IRCO
- Rick; there will be challenges related to critical needed services. There is a small number of hospital beds in Oregon.
- Evelyn; the Oregon Health Authority, they give weekly updates and I will send links for this info and community partners, anyone can join
- Octaviano; We should think about how strategically we can position commissioners that have expertise on the different issues that are being addressed in the different tables around health care, unemployment, services, etc. There has been a lot of racist incidents nationwide, how can we create alternatives for safety for our communities? we need to talk about public safety. Emergency preparedness is also important, especially when we run out of food. Lets identify who are the institutions that deal with all of it. How can we get help for those institutions helping migrant and refugee communities? it is important to define how we as NPPC can advocate for them. We need to see what impact is and the consequences for small business in our communities. We need to be present with our voices in those meetings. We can bring more useful info to those spaces. We want our communities to be protected, to be safe. What can we as NPPC do?
- June; about attacks to our communities, Asian people is been attacked, the president refers to it as Chinese virus, and as a result many people are attacking verbally to Asian people, harassing them, etc. We need to bring it to the Human Rights commission, also City council sent a message to prohibit people to use those harassing messages.
- Andrea; we have also PUAH to report as a resource
- June; we should not ignore the incidents; we need to report them and discuss them and track them.
- Salome; for evictions people can go to rental rights, they work with lawyers, Also there are places for people to get health insurance. People that are undocumented can access them too
- Yonas; for those that don't have health insurance can go to 122<sup>nd</sup> and division, also the county has health care services accessible at low cost. About the evictions people have 3 months before they can evict them

- Salome; we need to inform people that can't speak English and don't know their rights. Utility companies encourage to pay the bills online and they give you an extension. The issue is how to get help
- Blanca; there is CAT (Community Alliance of Tenants) that can help renters, we can send people to them.
- Octaviano; Can we post a video? Can we draft a letter assuring our communities?, send the message not to panic and be very mindful and careful with the messaging, especially if it come from an institution/organization. can we work on it on google docs?
- Evelyn; it is a good idea, Marco will put the ideas from this meeting together and the NPPC EC will work on it and produce a letter, taking into account what we can do as an official city body, this is an opportunity for us to get more visible
- Rick; we want to share all this with Commissioner Eudaly about our communities' concerns and needs
- Yonas; about census, what's going on?
- Blanca; people have received the invitation to file census in the mail to be filled online, they can also call for help. The timelines have been changed; the end of the census postponed to August 14<sup>th</sup> 2020, and might be extended a bit more. We need to encourage people to file the census. Census enumerators have delayed their work. There is lots of information to figure out
- Yonas; about CAC's and libraries?
- Alma; for CAC's and libraries it's been put on pause since people can't go places
- Ahmed; I can help with can be done with the African American community, we can share the video in Arabic through social media, I can help filling up the census by phone.
- Evelyn; all the CAC's operating in our communities at MET, IRCO, etc., have been closed for now
- Ahmed: you can find info online in different languages
- Alma; Ahmed is referring to the census bureau website. The kickoff in Portland was planned to be done at the Mercado was canceled and will be on Zoom, it will have elected officials, and sessions in different languages; you can tune into that. It's on April 1<sup>st</sup> from 12noon to 2pm
- Ahmed; about health insurance?
- Yonas: all human beings should be treated with health care!
- Bernal; I'll be interested on the call tomorrow and understand what the plan is and what the priorities are. The conversation should be with our voices present

- Evelyn; we have the response e-mail, and says yes, we can join the calls of the Oregon health authority;
- Evelyn's husband; how can we support Homeless people? they are disconnected from so many services

Evelyn mentioned there's lots of good issues and things that have been mentioned in this call and the call/meeting was adjourned over 10 minutes after 7pm and Evelyn finished reminding that we will have an Executive Meeting on April 7<sup>th</sup> where Action items will be identified from today's discussion.