



MINUTES

Abbotsford Local Immigration Partnership Council
Archway Community Services
Virtual Meeting
Thursday, January 7, 2021 – 2-4 pm

Attending		Regrets
Manpreet Grewal (co-chair)	Balbir S. Gill (FVRL)	Camilla Boisvert (FHA)
Alison Gutrath (Project mgt)	Sharon Crowley (Literacy Matters)	Michael Spuls (VanCity)
Beatrice Silver (Project mgt)	Amrit K Gill (FVRL)	Adrian Bontuyan (UFV)
Natalia Deros (Project mgt)	Nicola Mooney (UFV)	Ghizlane Laghzaoui (UFV)
Seydou Keita (IAT)	Sherry Wang (IAT)	Tammy Johnson (Inasmuch)
Kanta Naik (SWIS)		Stephen Piper (UFV)
Gagan Phulka (IAT)		Katerina Anastasiadis (Chamber of Commerce)
Kyle Nelstead (MCC)		

1. Meeting Opening and Introductions
 - a. Land Acknowledgement

On the ancestral, traditional and unceded territories of the Matsqui and the Sumas Nations, of the Stó:lō nation.

2. Agenda Review & Approval
3. Acceptance of Minutes October 8, 2020
4. Presentation: Beatrice Silver, Semá:th First Nation

Introduction and warm welcome to Bea Silver, on contract with ALIP. Bea is from the Semá:th First Nation and is working with ALIP Project Management to provide curriculum and advice to the different programs within Archway's Multiculturalism and Immigration Integration Services, such as LINC, Community Connections, etc. Bea also works as a contractor for the Abbotsford School District, and is a retired district principal herself.

In future, when COVID regulations permit, a visit to Semá:th First Nation will be organized for ALIP and IAT members to meet Bea in person, and to learn more about local Indigenous history and culture.

5. Previous Business
 - a. 2020 – 2025 Strategic Action Plan



Last meeting reviewed the 2020-2025 Action Plan, and working groups since have been able to meet and advise. The Action Plan is a living document and will be revised during the five-year contract

b. Working Group Updates

Social Integration: Instead of a Newcomer Bus Tour around Abbotsford, the Working Group has devised a replacement: the newcomers video tour. Newcomer travel guides speaking English, Punjabi, Mandarin and French will visit local services for a short series of videos

Labour Market: The fact sheets around hiring newcomers are with the marketing department. An in person networking event hosted by the Chamber of Commerce is currently being planned.

Research, Practice and Policy: This working group is supporting a book project organized by UFV TESL professors. Local residents who were newcomers to Canada themselves went through a writing workshop series to learn how to write their own immigration story. The book is to be published next year. These stories could provide exceptional stories for educational purposes to the wider community.

6. Group Discussion

What recent trends, barriers and/or observations have you made within your professional work and the broader community in regards to newcomer needs in Abbotsford?

-Many newcomer families are finding online learning component for schools and other services a barrier. Many folks do not have access to technology or reliable internet. Some students in the school district were lent technology, but the technology might not be up to date, or not compatible.

-Youth workers find it difficult to sometimes connect with the youth online. Restrictions make things difficult, like when driving clients to services.

-The FVRL libraries are open 10-5, Monday to Saturday. Wifi and computers are available to use, although there is limited seating. Online programming is also available for children and adults of all ages. Curbside pickup of library materials also available.

-Many recent newcomers find navigating the health system very difficult, especially in the time of COVID.

-The images from January 6th Insurrection on Capitol Hill may have triggered newcomers who originally are from war-torn or unstable countries. Indigenous people were also upset to see the Buffalo headdress used to frighten people.



-Settlement and SWIS workers will provide support to any struggling clients.

-It was disturbing and frightening for many Canadian spectators as America is our closest neighbour.

-The contrast in police presence for the peaceful protests of Black Lives Matter and the insurrection where police were spotted taking selfies with the insurrectionists, letting them in, and a less aggressive response in general.

- There are less arrivals of newcomers to Canada this year due to COVID. The federal government hopes to catch up this year, especially with students. UFV took a hit due to international students, for the time being, ufv international students can count the time studying online in a different country count towards a pathway to another visa. This is temporary, so it will probably be reversed, and the numbers will be the same in future

-Refugees are the most vulnerable, and border closures and other COVID regulations create more barriers for them in getting to safety.

Action Item: Project Management to look up statistics form different visa pathways and send to the ALIP council.

8. Round Table Updates /Upcoming Event

- Literacy Matters: Reading challenges online or in print. Literacy Matters is happy to distribute print copies of the challenge and pick them up.

- Learn About Series. Kathleen Yannis, January 22, on chemical health and safety.

Action Item: Project Management to send out upcoming events to ALIP council.

- ALIP Council Meeting- Thursday, April 8th, 2-4 pm.
- ALIP Council Meeting- Thursday, June 10th, 2-4 pm.