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AGENDA REPORT

SUBJECT: Report from Subcommittee on Becoming a Welcoming Community

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Receive and review report from the Welcoming Community Subcommittee and give direction on recommendations.

STRATEGIC PLAN: Becoming a Welcoming Community can contribute to economic development, arts and culture, public safety, and community planning goals.

FISCAL CONSIDERATIONS: Some of the Subcommittee report recommendations may require funding. If so directed by the full Council, the Subcommittee proposes to identify potential external sources of funding where possible and bring back to Council any efforts that would require additional City resources.

BACKGROUND:

At its December 16, 2015 meeting, the City Council gave direction to “Form a subcommittee to work with community faith leaders, social service organizations, and residents to evaluate opportunities, impacts and potential sources of support, and report back with specific recommendations early next year (2016).” Deputy Mayor Shaffer and Council member Kranz were appointed as the subcommittee.

The subcommittee held two public meetings, on January 7 and January 21, 2016. Summaries of these meetings are provided as attachments. In addition, the subcommittee participated in a conference call with the San Diego 211 organization to learn more about their capabilities and interests in supporting efforts to make Encinitas more welcoming for immigrants and refugees. A report from San Diego 211, which provides information from their database indicating the calls they received from Encinitas residents over the last year and what services they may have obtained as a result of the calls, is also attached.

Our goal was to identify whether there were actions the City could take that would add value without duplicating effort, to give people the opportunity to become integrated into the local culture, and to ensure that people can find programs and services when they are in need of support, even if they are not English-fluent.

Encinitas has always been a community of immigrants and refugees from its earliest history. In addition to many individual efforts to welcome new arrivals, there are many organizations in Encinitas (e.g., Mira Costa College, Community Resource Center) and throughout San Diego County (e.g., Catholic Charities, Jewish Family Services, Interfaith Community Services, County Health and Human Services) providing programs to support immigrants and refugees, as well as coordinating bodies among organizations that serve similar or the same communities. These organizations provide programs and services that are available to Encinitas residents. Encinitas

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also has untapped human resources, such as Peace Corps alumni, who might be interested and useful in supporting integration of immigrants into our community.

Immigrant and refugee communities are highly diverse, some groups are highly educated but may not speak or write English well, while others are “pre-literate” even in their own native language. Thus, outreach and services need to use a variety of strategies and technologies to be effective.

There was recognition that symbolic acts matter, in addition to substantive programs and services. A proclamation or the presence of an elected official at an event, information in multiple languages, or a symbol in the window of a business can all contribute to making people feel welcome.

While there are many programs and services available, it is not always easy for residents, whether newly arrived or having lived here for a while, to know what is offered and how to participate. The Encinitas Library is a vital point of entry, providing both in person and online referral support. The San Diego 211 service provides referrals to over 15,000 programs and services in their database, but you have to know about 211 to take advantage of their service. It should also be noted that San Diego 211 services are available to everyone in our community, not just refugees and immigrants.

So the subcommittee considered where value could be added, not reinventing the wheel, but making sure our residents can make the most of what is already in place. This desire to focus on real value added underlies our recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The subcommittee received substantial public input and seeks Council direction whether there is support to continue developing the following next steps, in order to bring back more detailed proposals with costs and other specifics fleshed out.

1. Work with the 211 service and other stakeholders to develop an inventory of existing organizations, programs, and services that are located in Encinitas and/or are available to residents of Encinitas. From that inventory, develop a template to invite those organizations to identify what, if anything, would be needed to expand or enhance their programs/services for Encinitas residents.
2. Work with the the library and social service providers to develop the framework for a volunteer registry, starting with the existing Volunteer Match program, to solicit volunteers and other potential resources (e.g, meeting space, translation services) that could enhance Encinitas’s efforts to be more welcoming. Identify any resource needs to make such a registry effective, and any potential sources of such needed resources.
3. Obtain demographic information about the immigrant and refugee populations in Encinitas to inform program planning from the County.
4. Develop a resolution for City Council consideration, stating our commitment to being a welcoming community, and inviting civic, business, and nonprofit organizations to do the

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same. If approved by the City Council, we would also share our resolution with other cities in the region and encourage them to adopt similar statements.

5. Develop materials (written, electronic) to describe our commitment, and provide links to key service providers and the 211 service, as well as a symbol that could be displayed, similar to the Live Well San Diego logo, to demonstrate commitment to being a welcoming community.
6. Join the White House Task Force on New Americans' Welcoming Communities Initiative (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/04/15/fact-sheet-strengthening-communities-welcoming-all-residents-and-promoti>).
7. Consider sending a proposal to the County Board of Supervisors requesting them to consider a county-wide initiative, modeled after the Live Well San Diego program, to encourage cities, businesses, schools, and other organizations to identify as welcoming to immigrants and refugees and documenting the services and programs each offers.

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