



CITY OF CONCORD

REPORT TO THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Christopher Carley, AIA, Chairman
Economic Development Advisory Council (EDAC)

DATE: June 29, 2016

SUBJECT: Welcoming Concord Resolution

Recommendation

Accept this report and attached resolution.

Background

The City's Economic Development Advisory Council (EDAC) offers the following as a supplement to our earlier Report to the Mayor on Business Development in Concord.

Several local organizations have asked EDAC to recommend that the City Council adopt a resolution declaring Concord a Welcoming City as part of the national Welcoming America Initiative. The resolution would be a public commitment to fostering policies and actions intended to help immigrants overcome the difficulties of relocation and realize their potential as economic and social contributors to the community.

Discussion

EDAC believes that the recent and projected increase in Concord's immigrant population offers the potential for economic energy and cultural enrichment that the City needs for its future growth and vitality. Many of the newest arrivals come from countries with economic, political and cultural environments that differ dramatically from Concord's. These differences create challenges for immigrants that native born people do not face. However, these new arrivals are also fueled by a passion to succeed and the strong desire to see their children climb the ladder to prosperity.

Because of the significant role that immigrants do and will play in the economic development of Concord, EDAC recommends that the Council endorse the initiative and the resolution declaring Concord a Welcoming City.

Some specific points that EDAC considered in our discussion follow:

We do not believe that adoption of the resolution would create any new obligations for the City. Adoption will provide access to resources and information available under the Welcoming America Initiative, a nationwide organization dedicated to aiding immigrants.

The US State Department has determined that Concord has the necessary jobs, housing and transportation system to allow the settlement of refugees. Although not all immigrants are refugees, some refugees will be among the city's new arrivals regardless of local policy. It is in our economic interest to be ready to help them make the most of their potential. Several local nonprofit, government and educational organizations are already providing services and other help to immigrants including:

- Second Start
- New American Africans
- Bhutanese Community of New Hampshire
- City of Concord
- Greater Concord Chamber of Commerce
- Riverbend Community Mental Health
- Concord Community Music School
- NH Endowment for Health
- Ascentria (formerly Lutheran Social Services)
- Greater Concord Interfaith Council

Adoption would be a public statement of the City's endorsement of their efforts. We think that a diverse population will make Concord a destination for enterprising people and businesses.

The challenges and contributions of immigrants will certainly inform Concord's future as they have its past. We believe it to be in the City's best interest to welcome and cultivate anyone who wants to contribute to the social and economic life of the community regardless of where their journey began.