



**Council Member Motion
For the Council Meeting of April 27, 2017**

Date: April 21, 2017

From: Councillor Ben Isitt and Councillor Jeremy Loveday

Subject: Advocacy to Improve the Refugee Sponsorship and Settlement Process

Recommendation:

THAT Council adopt the following resolution:

Resolution: Advocacy to Improve the Refugee Sponsorship and Settlement Process

WHEREAS Many citizen sponsors responded very positively and in line with Canadian citizenship values to the federal government's call in 2015-2016 for Syrian refugees to come to Canada, building on a strong tradition of welcoming newcomers and providing sanctuary for people fleeing violence, hardship and persecution;

AND WHEREAS Many private sponsorship groups raised money, undertook training, secured housing, and generally prepared to welcome refugee families and individuals;

AND WHEREAS Many of those groups welcomed and received families and individuals who they had agreed to sponsor through an expedited process;

AND WHEREAS Because of subsequent cuts in federal government support of visa staff some of those private sponsorship groups are still waiting for refugee families and individuals;

AND WHEREAS New sponsorship groups and the refugees they wish to sponsor are faced with processing waiting periods of 1.5 to 5 years (periods that existed under the previous government) in Canadian visa offices worldwide;

AND WHEREAS It is evident from experience that private sponsorship is a proven way of integrating refugees, of involving community members in that work, and engaging financial resources that are community-raised and based;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council requests the federal government take action to ensure that refugee families both from Syria and other countries are processed, and travel arrangements made, so that private sponsorship groups that are ready to host such refugees can normally welcome those refugee families within twelve months of the receipt of a completed application package by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT Council requests that the federal government work with refugee resettlement partners, including sponsorship agreement holders, private sponsoring groups and their advocates, and settlement agencies, to improve the overall refugee processing and settlement system across Canada, including Victoria, with resources, including those related to coordination of effort, that are adequately financed and sustained;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT Council requests that the Mayor write, on behalf of Council, to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Ahmed Hussen, urging them to take prompt and effective action on this matter.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Isitt', written in a cursive style.

Councillor Isitt

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Loveday', written in a cursive style.

Councillor Loveday