

## **The First Yao City Foreign Residents' Council Meeting in FY 2016 [Minutes]**

Date & Time: Friday, June 10, 2016, 7:00 p.m.–8:45 p.m.

Place: Conference Room 401, 4th floor, Yao City Office

Council members at the meeting: TOKI Hikaru, OKUNO Tsunehisa, KAWAMOTO Yolanda, ZU Yan Ting, PARK Koon-ae, LE THI KIEU Nga, TAKATSU Nobue, PARK Yanghaeng, FUJITO Satomi (titles omitted)

Member of the department in charge of the project concerned: Mr. KONISHI (Director, General Information Division)

Secretariat: Mr. KAMATA (Manager), Mr. KAWAZOE (Assistant Manager), Mr. NISHINO and Mr. OKAMURA (Culture and International Affairs Department)

### **1. Opening of the Council Meeting**

### **2. Council Meeting Schedule for FY 2016**

The Council Meeting will be held twice a year.

### **3. Project in the Multicultural Society Promotion Model Area**

The Secretariat explained the Project in the Multicultural Society Promotion Model Area. Discussions were held regarding this topic.

### **4. Progress of Yao City's Promotion of a Multicultural Society (FY 2015)**

The Secretariat explained the projects with evaluations C and D in Fundamental Objectives 1 and 2.

### **5. Exchange of Opinions**

The Council members were divided into two groups to discuss different topics.

#### **Group A**

Topic: Fundamental Objectives 1 & 2 and Dissemination of Information

#### **Vice-chairperson**

- Although efforts at multilingual translation are commendable, some foreign residents are unfamiliar with the systems or do not know how to fill out a form. I think creating a manual is necessary.
- Is it a good idea to translate everything into multiple languages? I think it may be necessary to translate only currently needed information and, with regard to other information, to provide contact information related to the services concerned.
- I hope that there will be more programs in which foreign residents other than Vietnamese people will not hesitate to participate.

- With regard to the implementation of counseling services on employment, everyday life, and the local employment support project, the numbers of people who used these services are given here. From only these numbers, however, it is not possible to figure out how many foreign citizens used these counseling services. Indication of these numbers alone is not sufficient for evaluating the situation. Were these counseling services effective or meaningful for clients? For evaluation, it is difficult to determine which is to be considered: the number of those who utilized the services or the quality of the services.
- In terms of discriminatory treatment regarding properties for rent, what does “registered property” mean? If this term means a real estate property that can be rented out to foreign residents, this implies that there are many other properties that are not available for foreigners. In this case, I am afraid that rental housing discrimination is not moving toward a resolution.
- For disaster risk mitigation, separate evaluations were done for Japanese and foreign residents. In this way, it is true that the evaluations are easy to understand. However, in light of the creation of a multicultural society, I am not sure whether this style of evaluation is appropriate or not from a philosophical perspective.
- For dissemination of information, it is important to keep in mind that new information must be provided. As tools, the City News, official website, and FM Cyao are available.
- For the official website, although multilingual information is not as substantial as that in the Japanese version, translation of the entire site is currently in progress. Unfortunately, however, I do not think that the translated pages are being fully utilized.
- The website requires people to access it themselves when necessary, which differs from the City News. Taking this into account, I think that the website will be utilized more often if only essential information is posted.
- I would like to propose that measures be taken to enhance utilization of the website, for example, by making the multilingual indication more conspicuous.
- The Multilingual Newsletter is well utilized.
- I think that FM Cyao will gain a wider range of listeners and encourage more foreigners to listen by taking new measures including the following: broadcasting foreign music, inviting foreign residents in Yao to FM Cyao, and broadcasting a program in Vietnamese once a week.

## Group B

Topic: Fundamental Objectives 1 & 2 and Provision of Information in Multiple Languages

### Chairperson

- Sharing information about operations performed by the General Information Division
  - This Division is on the ground floor of Yao City Office, open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Chinese- and Vietnamese-speaking counselors are always stationed there.
  - The Division is in charge of interpretation within the City Office. The annual number of requests for interpretation exceeds 1,000.

- Making improvements in the appointment system is necessary. Foreign residents tend to visit without an appointment. The Division sometimes has more than 10 clients a day. When it is necessary to visit multiple departments to resolve an issue or various issues, it takes half a day per client. If a client without an appointment visits the Division while counselors are serving other visitors, the client has no choice but to wait a long time or return home. I would like to make the current situation better.
- Opinions from the Council members
  - Beside the interpreter call button, there is a sign stating that multilingual service is available. How about adding a statement to the sign, for example “Please call for an appointment?”
  - A mother of a Council member works as a counselor at the Community Center. According to her information, the Community Center occasionally has no clients. How about providing multilingual service in close liaison with the Community Center?
  - Looking at counseling projects, the number of counseling sessions held in Chinese and Korean is fewer than that in Vietnamese. However, for counseling service provided by the General Information Division, the numbers are almost the same.
  - Although both counseling and interpretation services are available, interpretation is mainly required.
  - When a client and counselor cannot understand each other’s language, the staff members of the General Information Division have a very hard time providing services.
  - Clients sometimes visit for counseling with a letter from the City Office. In this case, a counselor reads the letter first to understand what is written, and then translates it for the client.
  - When in-house interpreters are absent, counselors translate documents created by the City Office.
  - I’m afraid that the language used in Japanese documents is difficult to understand in the first place. I sincerely hope that information will be provided in plain Japanese that is easy to understand, not only for foreign residents but also Japanese citizens.
  - It is, of course, important to provide more multilingual information. However, the eternal challenge for us is to increase the number of people who are interested in multiple languages and have a good understanding of foreign residents. To raise awareness among citizens, measures that can be taken only by an administrative body are necessary, for example, carrying a story about the outstanding performance of a boy with a foreign background in the City News.

## **6. Close of Council Meeting**