



## Mayor's Multicultural Council of Stamford

### Meeting held via Zoom Meeting

Meeting ID: 992 184 1396

Passcode: 374400

#### **Our Mission:**

To inform, celebrate, promote, understand, appreciate and respect the many diverse cultures that enrich Stamford

### **MINUTES January 25, 2021**

#### **Attendance and quorum check:**

Members attending the zoom meeting: Eva Weller, Martin Levine, Sandra Barrett, Shobhna Bhatnagar, Deborah Goldberg, James Hinton, Hayate Jandar, Francise Jean-Louis, Shelly Nichani, Pilar Pelaez, Melinda Polite and Ana Gallegos.

Eva Weller, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:25 PM.

#### **Welcome:**

Eva welcomed MMC members and thanked everyone for attending the virtual meeting. She welcomed and introduced new Council member, Francise Jean-Louis. Eva invited members to introduce themselves so Francise would get to know the members. Francise thanked Eva and said that she's excited and honored to be part of the MMC and is looking forward to eventually meeting in person and working with all of us. She said that she is the founder/CEO of the Haitian American Collaborative started in January 2014 with the goal of serving the Haitian community with services or connections. She added that it's important for each group to keep its unique culture. She has been involved with Haitian Independence Day celebrations including flag raising and festival events. Francise works in a marketing and public relations company where they offer information to small companies, nonprofit organizations or individuals in CT, NY and NJ.

#### **Budget Update & Report:**

Eva informed the Council that there were no expenditures, so the current budget is \$8,750 of the \$9,000 allocated to the MMC.

#### **January 25, 2021 Agenda:**

Eva Weller, Chair, asked for a motion to add the election of the treasurer to the agenda. Ana Gallegos made the motion to add the election of the treasurer to today's agenda and the motion was unanimously approved. Debbie nominated Shobhna Bhatnagar. Eva asked Shobhna if she would accept the nomination and Shobhna accepted. Eva asked if there were any other nominations. Since there were none, nor objections to Shobhna's nomination, Shobhna Bhatnagar was elected treasurer unanimously. Shobhna thanked everyone and said that she is looking forward to serving in this role.

#### **November 23, 2020 Minutes:**

Eva, as Chair, asked members to review and approve the minutes from the November 23, 2020 meeting. Melinda Polite made the motion to approve the minutes as written. Deborah Goldberg seconded. Minutes were approved unanimously.

#### **Projects/Events:**

Call to Action: Eva reported that around 100 organizations signed onto the Call to Action: Stamford Stands Against Racism. Eva asked Shobhna, who represents the MMC on the Call to Action planning committee, to share her idea about a new project. Shobhna said that she has been reading and attending different Oprah podcasts related to racism and how privileged groups keep African Americans as outcasts through institutional policies and systems. She has viewed podcasts about breaking barriers and the different ways to understand the system that supports racism. Shobhna would like the MMC to consider co-sponsoring a speaker or holding a book discussion. She proposed reading the book "Caste" by Isabel Wilkerson. She said that reading and having a discussion about the book would be a good way to educate our community. Eva supported the proposal, but suggested having the MMC first discuss the book before taking the concept to a larger group. Eva added that Donn Reid is interested in facilitating the book discussion for us. Debby suggested inviting other community groups to participate. Shobhna also informed that she had written to Anu Gupta the founder of BE MORE, and she asked him, if he would be interested in a webinar type session to kick off the book discussion of "Caste". If he agrees, the MMC could invite other groups like PLTI, The Friends of the Ferguson Library and others to participate. Debby suggested that a planning committee: Shobhna, Debby and Francise get together to plan and then report to the Council.

Jazz Concert: Eva thanked James, Ana, Shobhna, and Shelly for attending the Concert Committee meeting last week. She reported that she contacted the musicians who were unable to participate last year due to schedule conflicts and invited them to participate in the 2021 concert. Roberto Marullo and Tony Truglio were contacted, but are unable to participate. Eva said that since we are unable to rent the church for this year's concert we will explore the possibility of renting a recording studio and contracting with a videographer to create a virtual concert. She added that we could consider inviting some musicians who participated in our prior concerts since they have a following and we know their talent and style. Project Music, who participated in our first concert cannot be recorded by us because students would be a risk of contracting the Covid 19 virus, but, Project Music has offered to let us use one of the video clips. Barbara Espinoza Occhino and Carmen Marino, Cookie Thomas and Joe McWilliams and Subhi Khanna were all suggested as musicians. Shobhna contacted Subhi and is waiting for permission to use her recorded music. Eva said that this year MMC will be adding a few new and different cultures. We would ask musicians to share the history of the pieces they are playing and how their culture has influenced the music, so the event will also have an educational component.

The suggested date for the concert is Saturday March 20th and time is 7:00 to 8:30 pm. There will be in total of five groups, three groups will be recorded in the studio while the other two are prerecorded. Recording will take place in February, so there will be enough time to record and edit all the parts of the concert. Ana will translate into Spanish. We'll invite the Mayor to welcome the musicians and audience as he has done in the past. We will ask if he would like to be recorded in his office or speak on the date of the event. Ana and Eva will prepare the invitation to be sent to the Mayor.

Eva presented the budget:

- Recording studio \$600: for 4 hrs. \$150 per hour (2 hr minimum) includes an audio engineer
- Musicians: \$1,000 total with \$100 honorarium for each and \$100 donation to Project Music for a recording
- Videographer: \$2,000 which includes recording, graphics, publicity trailer and managing video streaming
- Advertising: \$200
- Program/Flyer: \$200
- TOTAL: \$4000

It was suggested to use email, Facebook, and other social media to advertise the concert. It was also suggested to create and send a flyer electronically with a clickable link. Ana suggested sending invitations to people who registered for the jazz concerts in previous years. The publicity committee (Malinda, Francise, Eva and Ana) will get together to find new ways to send invitations: by making use of electronic sites, such as Event Brite, to register attendees. The committee would decide if flyers and a program would be used as we had done in prior years. Eva indicated that next month more specifics about the musicians and expenses would be reported. Eva asked for a motion to approve the budget proposal.

Sandra Barrett made the motion to accept the budget for the jazz concert as presented. Malinda Polite seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

#### **Announcements:**

Several suggestions were presented regarding a book reading for "Caste". Shobhna reached out to Anu Gupta to see if he would conduct a webinar for the community which MMC would sponsor or co-sponsor about the "Caste" book. We would expect a large audience for this type of event. We would need to advertise ahead of time so people could read the book beforehand and look for ways to make the book or tapes readily available by coordinating with the library and getting worksheets that go with the book.

Debbie announced the Jewish Film Festival of Fairfield County & USC Shoah Foundation's presentation of the documentary, "Liberation Heroes: The Last Eyewitnesses" from January 28 to January 31, 2021 in commemoration of International Holocaust Day.

**Next Meeting:** Monday, February 22, 2020 at 6:15 pm.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 pm.

Submitted by Ana Gallegos  
MMC Secretary