



## Mayor's Multicultural Council of Stamford

### *Meeting to be held via conference call*

**phone # 605-475-4700**

**access code: 331855**

#### **Our Mission:**

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

### **MINUTES June 29, 2020**

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

Members attending the meeting via conference call: Eva Weller, Marty Levine, Shobhna Bhatnagar, Deborah Goldberg, James Hinton, Hayate Jandar, Pilar Peláez and Ana Gallegos.

Eva Weller, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:27 PM.

#### **Welcome:**

Eva Weller welcomed MMC members and thanked everyone for attending the virtual meeting. She thanked James for facilitating this meeting via conference call.

Eva reported that she contacted Guy Fortt, current President of the NAACP, as directed at the last meeting. In the discussion with Guy about the possibility of the MMC working with the NAACP on projects that will benefit the community and bring people together, Guy suggested that a board member from the NAACP would attend the next meeting of the Council. Eva introduced Malinda Polite, NAACP executive board member, as a guest, and invited her to share some of the recent work the NAACP has been doing in the community. Malinda thanked Eva for the invitation to attend the meeting. She said that the NAACP is a community-oriented organization. She shared some activities the NAACP is doing to address needs resulting from the Covid-19—such as giving away masks in high-density neighborhoods and supporting community members with food and services. Eva asked about initiatives the NAACP is working on to address antiracism issues. Malinda said there are no specific projects because they need to have a planning meeting on the topic, but she was interested in learning more about the MMC—what we are, and what we have done for the community, and to see how we can collaborate on antiracism issues.

Debbie mentioned a letter in the Advocate asking the community for a “Call to Action: Stamford Stands Against Racism”. Many organizations have already signed this initiative. Eva stated she received the information through another organization, which received a letter inviting them to participate. Eva shared that she inquired about the various sections of the letter and what commitment would be required if we supported the letter in its entirety. Eva asked each Council member to read the letter so the Council could discuss it before making a decision about supporting the “Call to Action”. Marty shared a copy of the letter, originally sent by the Interfaith Council of Southwestern Connecticut; and through the MMC secretary, were able to share the document immediately with all the members. Members will familiarize themselves with the content, so the group can determine ideas and areas that would be the best fit for MMC to explore addressing the issues. James Hinton said his church received the letter, but no action yet.

Eva suggested speaking with Michael Hyman to find out ways they envision focusing on racism and creating solutions. Malinda said that the NAACP Board also is having a meeting to talk about this topic.

Everyone agreed to discuss this topic in future meetings because supporting this cause, as well as, working with the Board of Education is important.

Other ideas that arose: to establish a committee, explore the possibility of working on partnership with other organizations, and invite Michael Hyman to answer questions drafted by the MMC. Eva asked members to send her an email if they are interested in joining this committee.

Eva invited each board member to share his or her experiences during this month. Each member shared personal experiences about family, health, work, and helping in the community and supporting the Black Lives Matter Movement.

### **June 1, 2020 Minutes**

Eva Weller, chair, asked members to review and approve the minutes from the June 1, 2020 meeting. Deborah Goldberg made the motion to approve the minutes. Pilar Pelaez seconded the motion. Minutes approved unanimously.

### **Projects/Events:**

#### International Dance Festival: October 4, 2020

Eva reported that she has been in touch with Matt Quinones, Chief Executive Officer of Stamford Public Education Foundation (SPEF) about the event. She said although we have a date – October 4 – we are not sure if they will be able to hold the event due to the pandemic. She shared that she spoke with Matt about Corey's suggestion of integrating CLC as another partner of the event. Matt said it is too early to start the process. He indicated we would need to continue waiting for the State and City recommendations about safe practices.

The MMC agreed to wait until August or September to see if we will need to postpone the event until next year.

Eva thanked Ana for sending the preliminary letter to the dance groups. Ana informed that she had sent 11 letters to groups that had performed in previous years. Groups from India, Albania, Peru, Colombia, and two from Guatemala had responded. Ana also mentioned that a group from Greece is also willing to participate. Ana added that everyone is happy to participate, as long it is safe and approved by the respective authorities. She will contact the groups who have not responded yet.

### **New Project/Event:**

#### Stamford Day: May 16, 2021

Eva said that there are no updates about Stamford Day at this time, but hopes we will be able to hold the event on May 16, 2021.

### **Old Business:**

#### Census 2020 Update

- Pilar said the Stamford Complete Counts Census Committee organized the Car Caravan Party on Wheels on June 24. She reported it was a good event – the Mayor and other government representatives were present. The event in general had a good response by people and volunteers with forty registered cars. The caravan started at the Boys and Girls Club and went through areas where the Census response rate has been low. Shobhna added that she also was a volunteer and a lot of people registered and local representatives attended too. Ana said along the parade route were information tables, and one of the tables was at St. Mary's Church where the census jobs subcommittee was in charge.
- Ana added that the Census Bureau continues announcing new hires and fingerprinting activity. She asked the Council to continue encouraging people to respond to the Census before the census takers start interviewing households from August 11 to October 31.

### **Announcements:**

- Eva thanked Ana for posting important information on the Facebook page and for emailing the information to the members. Ana thanked members who liked and shared the MMC posts.
- Eva thanked Malinda for attending the meeting and asked her to keep in touch and if possible bring project ideas next month.
- Ana shared the message sent by Jeré through the MMC Facebook: "Has the MMC provided a statement on Coronavirus and BLM pandemic?" The MMC agreed to decide if there would be one statement after we respond to the Call for Action initiative. The MMC has been sharing information sent by the Mayor's Office regarding related events in the community.
- Debbie invited interested members to attend the webinar "What Does it Mean to be Anti-Racist?" with Dr. Ibram X. Kendi on Tuesday, June 30 at 6:15pm. She will provide more information by email.

**Next Meeting:** Monday July 27, 2020 at 6:15 pm.

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 7:21 pm.

Submitted by: Ana Gallegos MMC Secretary