



**Our Mission:**

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

## Mayor's Multicultural Council of Stamford

Mayor's Conference Room – 10th Floor  
Government Center, 888 Washington Blvd.  
Stamford, CT 06901

February 26, 2018

### MINUTES

**Members Present:** Pilar Pelaez, Paul Isla, Eva Weller, Eva Padilla, Jeré Eaton, Nino Antonelli, Shelly Nichani, Tom Belleste Goiton, Sandra Barrett, Meera Banta, Beatrice Chodosh, Corey Paris, James Hinton and Ana Gallegos.

This meeting was called to order by Chair Pilar Pelaez at 6:10 PM.

#### **Welcome**

Chair Pelaez welcomed MMC members and thanked everyone for attending the meeting. She asked MMC members to take few minutes to review and approve the minutes from November 27, 2017. Nino Antonelli made the motion to approve the minutes; Sandra Barrett seconded the motion. Minutes were approved unanimously. Nino stated that the minutes of January 22, 2018 couldn't be approved because there was not a quorum.

Pilar welcomed and introduced Fiorella Velásquez, Director of Admission and Enrollment at REACH Prep. Fiorella said that she had learned about MMC through Ana and she is thankful to her and the MMC for hosting her. She stated she is originally from Peru and she has been a Stamford resident for 20 years.

She explained that REACH Prep is a non-profit educational access organization created 24 years ago. REACH Prep supports motivated and talented Black and Latino students through a 12 year educational continuum from Grade 4 to college. The program guides each family through the admission process and students receive individual guidance and academic support in rigorous independent schools in Fairfield and Westchester counties and the Bronx. She said most students are the first in their family to attend college.

There were questions about its location and costs. Fiorella replied the headquarters of REACH Prep is located at 1 Dock Street, Suite 100, Stamford, CT 06902. The program is free of cost.

Ana said it's important for the MMC to learn about, and share with parents, the opportunities that organizations like REACH Prep offer students with academic potential in our community. Pilar and the Council thanked Fiorella for the information.

#### **Budget**

Pilar presented information about the budget sent by the Mayor's office. The initial budget for the year from July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018 is \$15,000.00.

To date were the following expenses: Senior center: \$300.00; Children's parade \$5,941.40; Budget's hold 3%: \$450.00.

The current available budget balance is \$8,308.60.

#### **Project Updates:**

**Black History Month:** Sandra Barrett presented an evaluation of the *"Open Mic Competition and Panel on the Entertainment Industry"*. The event took place on Sunday, February 18, 2018 at the Ferguson Library from 1:00 to 5:00 PM. There were 8 participants. The three

winning performers were: 1<sup>st</sup> place Victoria Iparraguirre; \$100.00; 2<sup>nd</sup> place Rikelmesong Lozin \$50.00 and 3<sup>rd</sup> place Gabriel Marous \$25.00.

Sandra noted the event total of \$480.67 was under budget. Three American Express gift cards for the winners totaled \$175; Appreciation gifts: \$100; Give away for guest: \$109.94; Food: \$195.73. Event flyers were donated by the Stamford Community Collective.

She shared some feedback from the event:

- The children were talented and their work was original.
- The Academy of Information Technology and Engineering enthusiastically celebrated the winner who is a student at that school.
- More people from the community were expected. People who saw the event on the news commented that they wished they'd known about it ahead of time.
- Sandra mentioned that the Judges/panelists Thomas Harding, Robbie Jenkins, Richard Thomas, David Wooley and James Hinton were awesome.

Sandra expressed her gratitude to Valerie Pankosky who obtained the gift cards; to Ana, Pilar, and Nino for attending and supporting this initiative; to Jeré for all she did making the event successful. It was also mentioned that the MMC banner broke during the clean up.

It was requested that in future, the Program be available to share before the event takes place, and to send a Press Release to the Advocate and the Spanish newspapers.

## **New Projects**

### Multicultural Arts Festival

Beatrice Chodosh stated the location has been secured and it will take place at the cafeteria in the Government Center. She'll present an update at the next meeting.

### Jazz Festival

Eva Weller reported that the Jazz Festival takes place on Sunday, March 18<sup>th</sup> from 2:00 to 4:30 pm at the Unitarian Universalist Congregational Church.

Eva said that with the help of Barbara Occhino she has scheduled musicians and details of the event. Eva listed participating musicians: Dennis Collins, Barbara Espinoza Occhino; and musical groups: Altruistic, Maria Tiscia's-Rio Bound and Project Music who will be playing a variety of American, Latin, Brazilian and mixed Jazz.

Admissions and refreshments are free. It was suggested to reserve seats through the MMC email ([mayorsMMC@stamfordct.gov](mailto:mayorsMMC@stamfordct.gov)), or to call Ana for questions and reservations.

Eva passed postcards to MMC members and requested they distribute them, and share the information. Pilar mentioned the event is also on the MMC Facebook page.

Eva stated that at this time this event has the following expenses: \$1,200 for the musicians (honorarium \$100.00 for each musician); \$300 for printing; and \$200.00 for the venue, exceeding the approved budget of \$1,500.00. Pilar replied that the final cost won't be known until she confirms donations.

James made a comment about printing being overpriced. Jeré said that she can't do the printing due to a conflict of interest, but she could recommend someone for a better price next time.

Eva asked for help and passed sign-in sheets to volunteer for different tasks. Pilar said she will be there, and Sandra, James, Nino, Shelly and Ana also signed their names.

A Discussion on Race - URBAN TRAUMA

Jeré provided an update about the project. This event takes place on March 5, 2018 at the Ferguson library. The discussion is to "focus on current events and the opportunity to bridge the gap by getting people to talk through differences with an understanding on how we got here".

She stated that this event is done in partnership with the Ferguson Library and Stamford Community Collective. The Moderator is Dr. Maysa Akbar, a Dominican Republic psychologist and author of *Urban Trauma—a Legacy of Racism*. In addition, a book signing follows the discussion.

Jeré requested that the budget of \$400.00 previously approved be used to pay the speaker and that she will work with the Ferguson Library to cover the remaining \$100.00 of the \$500.00 fee; the usual fee is \$1,500.00; the Stamford Community Collective is funding the postcards and snacks needed. Jeré added that some products remain from the Rooting for Tarzan and Open Mic Competition.

**New Business**

**Open Discussion:**

Beatrice invited the MMC to the "International Women's Day Tribute to Outstanding Latino Women" presentation by Crisol Acuarela Arte y Cultura, co-sponsored by the Ferguson Library and the Mayor's Multicultural Council. This is scheduled on Thursday, March 29, 2018 from 6:00 to 8:00 pm.

Ana asked when MMC members decided to co-sponsor this event, since there is no proposal. Ana added that the Council needs to know about events the MMC is sponsoring in order to be able to inform and invite others. Nino agreed with this statement and said the MMC could request a Proclamation from the Mayor's office to be given to the women who are recognized. Jeré made the following motion: The Mayor's Multicultural Council will co-sponsor the "International Women's Day Tribute to Outstanding Latino Women"; Nino seconded it. The motion was approved.

Ana stated that members should be more proactive about the Mission of the MMC in celebrating, promoting and respecting the diversity of cultures in Stamford, as well as participating in the different events sponsored by the MMC.

Eva Weller reported that the multimedia performance *Our Revolution* on Thursday, February 1<sup>st</sup> at 4:00 PM was well attended by adults and kids. This event was co-sponsored by the Friends of Ferguson Library and the Mayor's Multicultural Council.

**Next Meeting:**

The next meeting is scheduled at the Government Center on March 26, 2018 at 6:00 PM. on the 10<sup>th</sup> floor.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 PM.

Submitted by:

Ana Gallegos, Secretary