



Mayor's Multicultural Council of Stamford Meeting held virtually

MINUTES
October 25, 2021

Attendance and quorum check:

Members attending the meeting: Eva Weller, Corey Paris, Shobhna Bhatnagar, Sandra Jean Barrett, Peter Dao, Deborah Goldberg, Hayate Jandar, Francise Jean-Louis, Sonal Patel, Pilar Pelaez, Malinda Polite and Ana Gallegos.

Eva Weller, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:21 PM.

Welcome:

Eva welcomed MMC members and thanked everyone for attending the virtual meeting. Eva and the Council members congratulated Corey Paris for being recognized by the NAACP as one of 100 Most Influential Blacks in CT and to Ana Gallegos for being recognized as "Valor Migratorio 2021" by the Ecuadorian General Consulate in CT.

September 27, 2021, Minutes:

Eva, as Chair, asked members to review and approve the minutes from the September 27th, meeting. Debby Goldberg made the motion to approve the minutes. Malinda Polite seconded. Minutes were approved unanimously.

Budget Report:

Shobhna, as treasurer informed that there are no updates. Shobhna informed that thanks to the information from Council member Peter Dao, the approved budget is \$9,500. To date, the only expense is \$250 to co-sponsor the SPEF Marc US for Change event. Shobhna reported the total amount remaining is \$9,250.

Projects/Events:

Walk for Unity in our Community: October 10th: Deborah Goldberg informed that the *Walk for the Unity in Our Community* took place as planned, on Sunday October 10, 2021, at Cove Island Park. She added that although it poured, it didn't dampen the enthusiasm and camaraderie of the attendees. Between 60 and 70 people came for the Walk. Due to the rain, the picnic was not held. People got together and mixed and mingled. Mayor Martin addressed the group, people talked to each other, and created rhythms and good vibes through drumming. There are great pictures of the event with MMC members. Debby said that attendees would like to have this event again and it would depend on the date and time. The date was chosen because of the park permits. She informed that the MMC had good publicity and the logo was displayed in the Jewish Community Relations Council. The event was an opportunity for the MMC and other organizations to join forces. Debby thanked Malinda and Pilar for being part of the Planning Committee. She also thanked Shobhna, Sonal and Ana for attending and participating in the Walk. Eva thanked Debby for the updates, and that it is so nice for the community to see the diversity of the MMC.

Stamford Stands Against Racism: Shobhna said that she still is hoping that Anup Gupta, one of the panelists on Oprah Winfrey's Show which featured the book, "Caste" by Isabel Wilkerson, will contact her soon. She will set up a phone call and include Eva Weller to discuss details. Shobhna said that the MMC could invite the Ferguson Library and PLTI to partner. Debbie also suggested inviting the Jewish Community Relations Council. It was decided that when we coordinate with Gupta, we'll be able to choose a day for this event, making sure that it won't interfere with other MMC events.

Eva asked members opinions about the film "Reflecting on Anti-Bias Education in Action: The Early Years". Ana said that the film is well done and is set in early childhood settings, where teachers show the importance of reflecting identity and equity daily with their students. She asked Corey if he would be interested in leading this project and possibly partnering with CLC, since he works there as the Development Director. He said that it would be ideal to talk with parents and teachers about racism and other issues in real time. Corey added that 3 to 5 years is a critical age and stage and a vital part of child development. He agreed to look for information about the film and find ways to pursue it. Shobhna, Pilar and Sonal will work with Corey as a committee.

New Business:

Publicity Committee: Ana thanked Khadija Hamran for her recommendation to create an Instagram account. She followed up with the suggestion to contact the Mayor's Office. Rachel LaBella, Special Assistant to the Mayor for Communications, approved creating the Instagram page for the Mayor's Multicultural Council. Rachel sent Eva and Ana the Social Media Guidelines for content removal, participant restriction, etc. The Instagram account has been created as StamfordMayorsMCC. Eva Weller thanked Ana and suggested MMC members send flyers of their events and share other appropriate information.

New Business: New Projects for Fiscal Year 2021-2022

Author Presentation: Eva reached out to Roya Hakakian, author of the new book *A Beginner's Guide to America*. The author prefers to present in person but is open to presenting via zoom if needed. Eva said that Friends of Ferguson also are interested in hosting the author as part of their Author Series. The immigration topic and author would be a draw. Roya Hakakian's fee is \$4,000 but she will accept \$500 if the MMC is a cosponsor. Eva said that in order to confirm the author and program with Friends of Ferguson, MMC needs to approve the commitment and expenditure. Ana Gallegos made the motion to invite the author and to make the payment of \$500. Deborah Goldberg seconded the motion. It was approved unanimously. Eva will share details after arrangements are confirmed. Debby asked who will provide the refreshments, the MMC or the Friends of Ferguson. Eva said that she will have more information after this is discussed.

New Business: New Project Possibilities for Fiscal Year 2021-2022

Some project ideas discussed at the meeting:

- *Helping refugees:* Contact the organization that is helping refugees and ask ourselves: What can we and the community do to help refugees?
- *Stamford Day and the Afternoon of Jazz* events, Establish planning committees for events.
Afternoon of Jazz: Hold in church or at Curtain Call in the theatre or outside stage. They are willing to work with us if the event does not conflict with their schedule. Eva will follow up.
- Stamford Day brings people together to share their cultures. Council members should let Eva know if they are interested in joining the planning committee.
- *Walk for Unity:* Debby suggested that we should include *Walk for Unity* in our plans for the year.
- *Martin Luther King Jr Day:* Malinda said she and NAACP are putting together activities for Martin Luther King Jr. Day. She added that she had contacted the JCC, not only for his birthday, but the whole month of January.
- *Chinese Heritage:* Peter said that he is still observing and learning about the MMC. He said that as the former president of the Chinese Language School of Fairfield County he has been trying to promote the learning of the Chinese language. He said there are statistics that show that Mandarin, English, Hindi and Spanish are the top languages that people are learning and using to communicate. Peter shared the link of the Chinese school, so the MMC knows their mission and efforts about language <https://chineseschoolct.org/en/>. He added that part of their heritage is the traditional Chinese dance. As a group he could teach the community, perhaps for Chinese New Year.
- Game Day:* Sonal said that we can plan a Game Day indoor or outdoors. We could create a specialized program. Eva suggested that this could be a nice addition to Stamford Day as an activity for young students.

Announcements:

Eva shared that Meera's son was getting married. Everyone congratulated her.
The next MMC meeting will be on Monday, November 22nd (fourth Monday of the month)

Next Meeting: Monday, November 22, 2021, at 6:15 pm. Via zoom.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:24 pm.

Submitted by
Ana Gallegos
MMC Secretary