



Mayor's Multicultural Council of Stamford Meeting held via zoom

July 31, 2023

Attendance and quorum check:

Members attending the meeting: Eva Weller, Deborah Goldberg, James Hinton, Francise Jean-Louis, Yelena Klompus, Naomi Osei-Mensah, Sonal Patel, Malinda Polite, Ajmal Qureshi, Ana Gallegos and Carmen Hughes. Sandra Barrett, Peter Dao, and Pilar Pelaez apologized for being unable to attend the meeting.

Eva Weller, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:20 pm.

Welcome:

Eva Weller welcomed everyone and thanked Carmen Hughes for representing the Mayor's Office. Eva was pleased to welcome Naomi Osei-Mensah as a new Council member. Naomi introduced herself and thanked the group for the opportunity to join the MMC. She said that she was born in the United States and her parents are from Ghana. She is a PLTI graduate, lives in Stamford and is excited to be part of and learn about the mission and initiatives of the MMC. Eva thanked Naomi for bringing her many talents to the Council.

Approve Minutes: June 26, 2023

Eva asked members to review the minutes from the June 26th meeting. Malinda Polite made the motion to accept the minutes as submitted. Yelena Klompus seconded the motion. Minutes were approved unanimously.

Budget Report:

Since the treasurer was unable to attend the meeting, Eva gave the budget report and shared that the budget for 2023/24 is the same as last year's fiscal budget of \$9,500. She said that the fiscal year ended on June 30th. Funds remaining were \$1,675 for the fiscal year due to in-kind support and fewer expected expenses. Eva thanked Carmen for exploring the possibility of ordering replacement bags, but the deadline for submitting expenses (June 15th) had passed, so we could not submit new invoices. There was some discussion about purchasing other items to give away, such as hats, t-shirts, sweaters at MMC events. The consensus was that bags were a better option, because they could be used for multiple events. Carmen and Eva will review size and material options and get quotes for bags to be purchased during this fiscal year.

By-Laws committee:

Carmen informed that she would meet with By-Laws Committee members: Eva Weller, Deborah Goldberg, Francise Jean-Louis, and Pilar Pelaez in August. She said that this will be a purposeful process. The committee will review the current by-laws and make changes. At the September meeting the first draft of the proposal, will be shared with the MMC so they will have the opportunity to voice their opinions. Changes will be incorporated if necessary. At the October meeting the By-laws will be presented for approval.

Projects/Events Updates:

MMC Fashion Show Event at Mall Block Party on July 15: Eva W. thanked Malinda and James for Co-chairing this new and successful event with many additional countries represented to a wider and new audience for MMC. Eva thanked Shobhna, Sonal, Khadija, Naomi, Ana and James for attending the event and acting as MC's, which demonstrated the diversity of the Council. Eva recognized James for guiding the models at a rehearsal prior to the event, Khadija for helping to coordinate with Stamford Town Center administration, Ana for coordinating with the models and dance groups and Naomi for modeling and ending the event with style. James said the event went very well. Eleven models, one singer and two dance groups with bio, country and clothing descriptions were well received. He said Ana was key to the success of the event because she reached out to models, and they knew her. Eva also invited models and she and Ana prepared the program and coordinated with all participants. James suggested that if we hold the event again, we include children and youth, have just one MC, better communication with Mall administration and event promoters. It was a great group effort.

Concert for Peace: Find Your Cultural Voice 2:00 to 4:00pm on August 6th. Eva thanked the MMC for approving the motion presented by Council member Yelena K. to co-sponsor the event with the Ferguson Library. Yelena thanked Eva and the MMC for their support. She said the event is sponsored by En Vivo Con Maricarmen (grant funded by the Stamford Arts and Culture Commission) and the Friends of the Ferguson Library. Concert includes the performance of: CT Troubadour, Bokandeye African American Theater, Paco Godoy, Nathaly Palacios, and INTEMPO. A raffle and food from Cabaña, Remo etc. will end the program.

60th Anniversary of the March on Washington August 13th. Yelena invited the MMC to attend the documentary film and panel discussion about the 60th anniversary of the March on Washington, sponsored by the Ferguson Library with MMC and others on August 13th from 2:30 to 4:00. Yelena asked members to spread the word.

HBCU: WEE Act Movie Night on August 18th. Eva thanked the MMC for (in a previous meeting) approving to co-sponsor & support this event for the second year. She thanked Malinda for chairing the event and Naomi for volunteering to co-chair when Malinda asked for a volunteer. Carmen H. and Ana G. also agreed to help. Malinda made a motion to provide popcorn for \$60 for the event. Yelena K. seconded the motion. Motion was approved. Eva requested a copy of the invoice of the purchase.

Rhythm & Rumba Salsa Nights for Hispanic Heritage Month. Mill River Park Collaborative is a co-sponsor again this year for two Friday nights, September 22nd and 29th. The time will again be 6:00 to 9:00pm. There are no rain dates available this year. The cost for Alisa's House of Salsa and DJ Harry Trinidad will be \$1,600 (\$800 each night). Mill River Park Collaborative will pay the \$350 for percussionist group, CT' Ritmos Latinos.

Ana G. made the motion for the MMC to co-sponsor the two Salsa Nights celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month with Alisa's House of Salsa and DJ Harry Trinidad for \$1,600 plus water expenses. Francise Jean-Louis seconded the motion. Motion was approved.

Announcements:

First Bolivia flag raising: Ana G. reported that the UConn PEP class will present their project: the First Bolivian flag raising in Stamford on August 13, 2023, at 10:00 am. She is proud of this initiative since she is the PEP class facilitator. Ana invited the MMC to attend this event and share that it is open to the public.

Ecuador Flag raising: Ana G. also President of the Ecuadorian Civic Committee informed that the Ecuadorian Civic Committee are holding the Ecuador Flag raising, on August 13th at 2:00 pm at the Stamford Government Center. She added that thanks to the grant from Stamford Arts and Culture Commission, Stamford residents from Ecuador will be recognized for their positive impact as professionals, leaders, students, and for their community service during the event. There will also be an exhibition of art, performances of dancers, and musicians as well the traditional Ecuadorian gastronomy.

First Jamaican Flag raising: Carmen informed that on Sunday, August 10th the first Jamaica Flag raising will be held at the Government Center.

Hispanic Advisory Council of Greater Stamford (HACGS) meetings. Sonal P. informed that she had been attending the HACGS meetings which are an opportunity for those who are involved in the community to share about their organization or business and to get information about initiatives, programs, and resources in the community.

Reverend Dr. Tommie Jackson: Eva shared about the tragic and untimely death of her neighbor, Reverend Dr. Tommie Jackson, a great and well-respected leader in the Stamford community. She and the community will miss his warmth and positive outlook on life. Debby shared: "I remember when he first came to Stamford and was the assistant Pastor at Faith Tabernacle Church, right across from where the Interfaith Council was housed. From the time he arrived, he was very involved in the religious community in Stamford and worked to bring clergy and lay people of all faiths together."

Next Meeting: September 18, 2023 (No meeting in August)

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:29 pm

Submitted by:
Ana Gallegos MMC Secretary