



Mayor's Multicultural Council of Stamford
Meeting held in person and via Zoom
Hampton Inn Boardroom -26 Mill River St, Stamford

January 9, 2024

Attendance and quorum check:

Members in attendance: Eva Weller, Meera Banta, Deborah Goldberg, Sonal Patel, Malinda Polite, Carmen Hughes, and Ana Gallegos attended in person. Shobhna Bhatnagar, Sandra Barrett, Francise Jean-Louis, Naomi Osei-Mensah and Ajmal Qureshi attended by zoom. James Hinton, Peter Dao, and Pilar Pelaez were not able to attend the meeting.

Eva Weller, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:45 pm.

Welcome:

Eva Weller welcomed everyone and thanked them for making the effort to join us in person and by zoom. Eva shared a message sent by Hayate Jandar wishing everyone a Happy Year.

Approve Minutes: October 30, 2023 & November 27, 2023

Eva shared that minutes from the last two meetings will be voted on at this meeting. First, Eva asked to review the minutes from the November 27th meeting. Meera Banta made the motion to approve the minutes as presented. Malinda Polite seconded. Minutes were approved unanimously. Prior to reviewing the minutes, the Chair asks if there are corrections or additions to the minutes. The vote to approve the October 30th minutes was postponed allowing MMC member, Peter Dao, to submit a summary in his words of what he stated was omitted. Carmen asked if Peter had submitted a summary to be included in the minutes for approval. Eva replied that she hadn't received a summary from Peter. Carmen said that since there was no follow up from Peter and there is a quorum, we can proceed to approve the minutes. Malinda Polite made the motion to approve the minutes with the following recommendation: The new Mayor's Multicultural Council Executive Board will be elected in February, instead of "The new MMC will be appointed In February". Deborah Goldberg seconded the motion. Minutes were approved as amended. (The Chair and Vice Chair are appointed positions and the Secretary and Treasurer are elected under the new by-laws.)

New Business:

*** St. Patrick's Day Parade**

Eva Weller informed the members that she had received information about the parade. That we will be stepping off at 2:00 pm at the meeting place -- the intersection of Hoyt Street and Summer Street, and it was recommended arriving by 12:30 pm. In addition, we must fill out the Liability, Indemnification, and Publicity Waiver for the Parade to participate on March 2nd, 2024. Eva will reach out to the organizers and ask if each member attending will need to sign the waiver for the parade. Eva will also ask the members to let her know who will participate in the Parade.

Budget Report:

Carmen Hughes commented that all the events presented by the MMC have been growing in a positive way and reflect the diversity in Stamford. Carmen said she would like to see more events presented under the MMC and as the Executive Officer will also be involved in the planning and coordination of the MMC events. She reported that 27 flag raisings and other events have been completed in Stamford and for that reason she is planning to request a budget increase for MMC of \$15,000 or \$20,000. She shared a conversation with representatives Anabel Figueroa and Jeffrey Stella about holding a Hispanic Festival in Stamford during Hispanic Heritage Month. Carmen added that we need more money, and a bigger committee, and it may be necessary to add members from outside the MMC and have more members actively participate from the MMC.

Carmen announced that Eva Weller has been appointed by Mayor Simmons to continue as Chair of the Mayor's Multicultural Council. In the February meeting, the new executive officers will be nominated and approved. Ana Gallegos said that with the leadership of Eva Weller as chair, more events have been presented costing less money (previously the budget was \$15,000; currently the budget is \$9,500.) We received substantial in-kind support which makes a difference in saving expenses for our events. We have been successful because many people in Stamford know Eva W. so the MMC has been given support and participation from different artists, community groups and volunteers, etc. Ana also thanked council members who were very involved in the different events. All council members congratulated Eva for this appointment and shared how Eva has been leading the MMC in a way that makes things easy. Eva thanked everyone for their positive comments,

and she asked them to continue helping and working together on the MMC initiatives. Carmen thanked Eva and Ana and complimented them on the work that they accomplished as a team.

Announcements:

Eva W. thanked Malinda for sharing about the March to Honor Martin Luther King Jr. Day, to be held on Monday, January 15th. Eva asked for a motion to support and participate. Ana made the motion that the MMC attend the March on Monday. Malinda seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously. Eva will send a reminder to the council and hopes many can attend. Eva also mentioned that we have MMC sweatshirts to distribute to new MMC members. It was suggested that members wear them at the March on Monday. Eva confirmed that the annual Jazz Concert will be held at the Ferguson Library from 2:00 to 4:30 pm, on March 24. She announced that Barbara Occhino will perform with a quartet. Other performers still need to confirm participation.

Stamford Day will be on May 19 at the Mill River Park and Rhythm and Rhumba Salsa Nights for Hispanic Heritage Month will be in September. Fall events will be under next year's budget beginning 7/1/24.

Announcements:

Ana shared that today has been a difficult day in Ecuador because of the armed conflict between the government and the organized crime groups. President Daniel Noboa declared a national state of emergency. Although Ana was able to contact her family, she is worried about the violence that is happening there. Everyone expressed their concern and hope for better days for the country.

Eva shared that Galdino Velasco's wife, Juanita, passed away. She said Galdino is a well-known leader in Stamford for many years. Eva will send a condolence note on behalf of the MMC.

Next Meeting: February 26, 2024

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:23 pm

Submitted by:

Ana Gallegos,
MMC Secretary