



Mayor's Multicultural Council of Stamford
Meeting held virtually

MINUTES
August 30, 2021

Attendance and quorum check:

Members attending the meeting: Eva Weller, Shobhna Bhatnagar, Peter G. Dao, Khadija Hamrane, Sonal Patel, Malinda Polite and Ana Gallegos.

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

Welcome:

Eva welcomed MMC members and thanked everyone for attending the virtual meeting. She was pleased to welcome three new board members. Peter Dao, Khadija Hamran, and Sonal Patel. Eva asked the new members to introduce themselves to the group. Sonal Patel thanked the group for the opportunity to be part of the MMC. She said that it's important and critical that Stamford's diversity be celebrated. She said that as a member of a minority, the MMC is a perfect fit for her. She said it is important for Asians to be represented in organizations, government, boards, etc. She also said that she has been participating in different initiatives such as: mentoring, volunteering at the animal shelter and with the primary election preparations. Peter Dao thanked Eva for inviting him to participate in Stamford Day as an introduction to the MMC. He said that he has been living in Stamford since 1999 with his wife and son. Peter was a past president and is on the board of the Chinese School of Stamford and is active in the community. He said that diversity is the key to a community like Stamford and it's important to have representation in organizations like the MMC. He added that it's an honor and pleasure to be part of the team. Khadija Hamrane said that it's a pleasure to join the MMC. She is from Morocco and lives with her two girls 10 and 13 years old. She said diversity is important because it's what makes America. Khadija said that she enjoys helping and being active in the community especially helping minorities. They can be discriminated against and may not know about opportunities in our community. She added that she comes with ideas to help minority youth. Eva thanked the new members and welcomed them to the Council.

June 28, 2021, Minutes:

Eva said that the June 28 minutes require majority approval by members who attended the meeting. The minutes will be on the agenda for approval at the next meeting.

Budget Report:

Eva said that we are beginning the fiscal year and will review some events the MMC has sponsored during the past year and consider possibilities for this fiscal year. She added that unfortunately because of the surge of Covid-19 we still have challenges, but we successfully partnered and collaborated with other organizations such as the Ferguson Library, NAACP, ECCFC, PLTI etc. during fiscal year 2020/2021.

Shobhna, as treasurer, also welcomed the new members. She explained the following updates to the budget.

Approved Budget 2020-2021		\$9000	
Programs/Initiatives/ Budget requested	Actual Expense		In kind
Marc Us for Change: \$250.00	\$250.00		XX
Afternoon of Jazz: \$5,000.00	\$3,534.74		
Stamford Day: \$4,520.74	\$1,944.39		\$250
162 caps and 12 sweatshirts: \$1,600	\$1,600.68		Shipping
Juneteenth – MMC cosponsor \$600.00	\$600.00		XX
Total expense	\$7,929.81		
Amount remaining	\$1,070.19		

Eva added that the budget estimate for, the new to MMC, Stamford Day event was based on the International Dance Festival cosponsored with SPEF and SPS for many years. Each partnering organization paid a third of expenses for the event. For Stamford Day, the MMC cosponsor was the Mill River Park Collaborative which waived or paid for some of the fees, so the final expenses were less than budgeted. For the "Afternoon of Jazz" event, the MMC partnered with Curtain Call and used their theatre to livestream the event. The format and requirements were very different due to Covid-19 restrictions. The Mayor's Office informed that the final budget expenses were \$7,961.49 which is very close to our total of \$7,929.81. Any remaining funds not spent are returned to the City and cannot be carried over to the next fiscal year. The Treasurer reported the amount that was returned was \$1,070, a difference of \$31.68.

Projects/Events:

MarcUS for Change: September 26th Eva reported the Stamford Public Education Foundation (SPEF) first asked that we partner with them for US DAY on Sunday, September 26th as we have done in the past. The MMC approved, via email vote, the estimate for shared costs of up to \$2,000 and voted to participate with dances, entertainment and sharing the costs. SPEF decided to cancel the event due to a surge of Covid-19 cases. Last year SPEF held the event in a different format and invited the MMC to be a co-sponsor. Eva added that last year MMC members participated as a team, and it was a good opportunity for the MMC to be visible in the community as a sponsor through SPEF's promotional materials and social media and on the back of all tee shirts. Members also expressed their positive experience of participating, and the opportunity to see each other in person. The cost for sponsorship is \$250.

At the meeting it was recommended that MMC funds be allocated for our events and not to organizations with more funding resources than the MMC. Eva said the MMC had co-sponsored the same events with SPEF over many years and there was a precedent since before she was chair. The last two years have been different as organizations modify their events due to Covid-19. In the future, the MMC can evaluate the requirements for co-sponsorship. Eva asked the members for a vote supporting the event as a co-sponsor. Shobhna made the motion to co-sponsor and have a team where the MMC walks together between September 20 and Sep 26. Ana seconded the motion. The motion was approved with 6 votes yes and 1 no. The MMC will participate in MarcUs for Change with a sponsorship of \$250. Eva will send registration information to Council members. Stamford Stands Against Racism Eva invited members to share ideas for projects that we can share with the community.

Shobhna said that the book "Caste" by Isabel Wilkerson talked about racism in USA. She informed that she had contacted Anup Gupta to see if he would be interested in presenting a webinar. Shobhna will contact him again for his availability. In addition, it was suggested to partner and invite other groups and community members to be part of this conversation following his virtual presentation: library, PLTI, etc. We could ask people to read the book and participate in a facilitated conversation with Donn Reid.

Shobhna also mentioned about the film "Reflecting on Anti-Bias Education in Action: The Early Years". The film will be shared with MMC members to get feedback about making this a project and get their perspective.

Walk for Unity in our Community: October 10th Melinda Polite one of the representatives of the MMC for this event informed that the United Jewish Federation of Stamford in partnership with the MMC and other organizations are planning the Walk on Sunday October 10 from 12:30 to 3:30 at Cove Island Park. Registrations will start at 11:00am and the event will start at 12:30 pm. After the Walk participants will be invited to come back for a picnic. Participants must bring their own lunch and extra for those who may not have one. Malinda said that this is a family-friendly event, and the organizers are looking for volunteers to organize the picnic, registration, information, etc. Malinda will send the flyer and asked members to please share with contacts and social media.

New Business:

For Consideration for Fiscal Year 2021-2022

Eva recommended for consideration an author, Roya Hakakian, who is an immigrant from Iran. Her latest book: "A Beginner's Guide to America" is about her immigrant experience as a teenager who fled Iran with her mother in 1985. Eva spoke with the author about presenting to the community virtually or in person and partnering with the Ferguson Library, if the MMC approves. The topic resonated with the group as many members are immigrants or belong to an immigrant community.

Khadija said children who are immigrants can also relate to the topic. She also likes the idea of having a book reading club where ideas could be discussed or view a movie and then hold a conversation. Also, for consideration, Khadija proposed holding a "ceremony" and giving incentives, so more will participate. She encouraged exploring different ideas for this year.

Announcements:

Ana announced that SPEF and PLTI are inviting Spanish speaking families to participate in the People Empowering People for Communities, a leadership program in Spanish. It will start on October 7, 2021. She said that she has been a facilitator since its beginning in Stamford in 2010.

Haiti Relief Efforts: Report by Francise Jean Louis: Eva informed that our board member Francis Jean Louis, founder of The Haitian Collaborative, has sent by email a letter, with links related to Haiti Disaster Relief. She said she had shared it with the council members if you want to help aid & assist in a personal way or share this information to the member's contacts.

Next Meeting: Monday, September 27, 2021, at 6:15 pm.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 pm.

Submitted by Ana Gallegos MMC Secretary