



Mayor's Multicultural Council of Stamford Meeting held virtually

MINUTES
September 27, 2021

Attendance and quorum check:

Members attending the meeting: Eva Weller, Shobhna Bhatnagar, Sandra Jean Barrett, Peter Dao, Deborah Goldberg, Khadija Hamran, James Hinton, Francise Jean-Louis, Eva Padilla, Sonal Patel, Pilar Pelaez 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.

June 28 & August 30, 2021, Minutes:

Eva reported the June 28 minutes weren't approved at the August's meeting because we didn't have a majority of members who attended that meeting. Eva, as Chair, asked members to review and approve the minutes from the June 28th, meeting. Debby Goldberg made the motion to approve the minutes. Eva Padilla seconded. Minutes were approved unanimously. Then Eva asked to review and approve the minutes from the August 30th meeting. Shobhna Bhatnagar made the motion to approve the minutes. Khadija Hamran seconded. Minutes were approved unanimously.

Budget Report:

Shobhna, as treasurer informed that there are no updates from the MMC approved budget of \$9,000. To date, the only expense, which was approved at the previous meeting, is \$250 to sponsor the SPEF MarcUS for Change event. Shobhna reported the total amount remaining is \$8,750.

Projects/Events:

MarcUS for Change: September 20th: Eva reported that SPEF invited the MMC to be a co-sponsor again this year and the co-sponsorship was approved. Eva served as MMC team captain for the event and said it was a pleasure. She expressed her gratitude to members and friends who participated and delightful to walk with Sandra, Shobhna, Hayate, Ana, Khadija and her daughter, Eva P., Corey, Sonal, Pilar, Malinda and her friend Patricia Claybourne. She said although Mayor Martin planned to be part of our team, he could not join us due to a schedule conflict. Eva also thanked Francise and Debby who registered and made a donation, but couldn't make it that evening. She mentioned that Ana's family also participated on another date. Ana said her family walked and made a donation to SPF supporting the MMC. She said that most people completed the 5K. Eva thanked Ana for helping with coordinating and for posting photos on the MMC Facebook page. Ana replied that she is happy to help.

Stamford Stands Against Racism: Eva invited Shobhna to share updates about the book "Caste" and the film "Reflecting on Anti-Bias Education in Action" as possible projects for MMC to present to the community. Shobhna said that unfortunately Anup Gupta has not responded yet. She added that the first time she contacted him; he was very enthusiastic about the idea of the webinar. Shobhna summarized the project. She said that she learned about Anup Gupta because he was one of the panelists on Oprah Winfrey's Show which featured the book, "Caste" by Isabel Wilkerson. Anup Gupta is an author, speaker and has his own podcast. Anup Gupta was invited to present or be interviewed about the book to get the community interested in reading the book. Shobhna shared that the book relates to the caste system which dates back four hundred years in India and relates similarities to the Nazi's treatment of Jews and the treatment of African-Americans in USA. We would invite different groups to discuss the concepts in a facilitated discussion. The discussion can be done at the library in person or by zoom. Debby asked if there is a date for this event because in January the MMC will be participating in a community book read that some members are helping to plan. Shobhna replied that we can plan a date when we hear from Anup Gupta. Eva asked about the film "Reflecting on Anti-Bias Education in Action: The Early Years". Shobhna said that she hasn't heard any feedback from the members. Ana thanked Shobhna for sending the link to the movie and agreed to send the link after the meeting.

Walk for Unity in our Community: October 10th: Debby is also a member of the United Jewish Federation of Stamford and informed the *Walk for the Unity in Our Community* will take place on Sunday October 10, 2021 from 12:30 to 3:30 at Cove Island Park. Rain date will be October 17th. Registered people with an assigned number will be asked to quietly walk and sit in different areas. They expect a diverse mix of people. It will

start with an icebreaker to encourage people to talk each other. Participants can bring a special object and share with the group what it means to them. Participants don't need to be part of a group. People will be asked to bring food for the picnic for themselves and to share with others. Debby indicated that volunteers for registration and greeters are needed. Debby thanked Ana for posting the flyer and asked her and members to share the updated flyers in English and Spanish with their contacts and social media. She suggested the flyers could be shared with information about the upcoming Mayoral forum. Eva thanked Debby, Malinda and Pilar for representing the MMC as part of the event planning committee.

New Business:

Publicity Committee Eva said that it would be helpful if MMC members will agree to send and share information, flyers of our events and other information as needed to their networks. Khadija Hamran asked if we can create an Instagram account and offered to help create the account. Pilar said that we can't create it because of regulations of the Mayor's Office. Ana informed that Arthur Augustyn, who was the Special Assistant to the Mayor for Communications said that if we want, we can create an Instagram account if the posted information benefits our community. Ana will contact the Mayor's Office to ask about this option, since Artur no longer is in that position. Eva said that it has been so helpful to partner with other organizations and asked the members to think of ways to improve MMC publicity and outreach. She said that with new ideas to consider this fiscal year, it may be possible to reach a wider audience. Ana said that members of the Publicity Committee are Debby, Malinda, Francise, Eva W., Ana and Khadija, who agreed to join the committee at the meeting. Eva asked if others are interested in joining the committee to let her know.

Eva suggested a new program which could be co-sponsored with the Ferguson Library. She proposed inviting the author of the book *A Beginner's Guide to America*, Roya Hakakian to present about her experience as a teenager and new immigrant who fled Iran to the USA with her mother in 1985. When she has more information will share with the Council.

Eva opened the conversation about new ideas. Shobhna said we have done Afternoon of Jazz in person and virtually, last year, so we can do either way. Eva said that she had contacted the church and currently they are not having services in person, but she will talk with the pastor. Eva also reached out to Lou Ursone Curtain Call Director and he would consider working with the MMC again this year. Eva said the MMC has to vote first on the various events and then it can be decided how to proceed. The Afternoon of Jazz event was live streamed from Curtain Call and we reached a much larger audience than in person. James mentioned that Jordan, the videographer, moved to Washington D.C. and if we want him for the event, we must let him know in advance. He suggested blending the event by streaming and holding in person at Curtain Call following Covid-19 guidelines, checking ID and vaccination cards, use of masks and a limited number of seats. Eva said that Stamford Day was another event that was successful and the MMC had wide exposure in the community, with many participating organizations, new partners, guests and large community attendance. Shobhna said we should plan both events: The Afternoon of Jazz and Stamford Day. Eva asked if the members agreed with supporting both events. All in attendance agreed to continue with both events. Eva asked members to let her know which event planning committee each member would join.

Announcements:

Eva asked the Council to review the film sent by Ana and give feedback about sponsoring the film in the community.

James asked what would happen with the MMC with a new Mayor. Eva thanked the members for their support and hard work. The new Mayor will decide the future of The Mayor's Multicultural Council. The Council can be ready to present plans for this fiscal year and how we hope to have a positive impact on the community.

Ana shared that REACH Prep is receiving nominations of fourth grade talented African-American and Latinx students to register for the program. She asked permission to share the information in the Facebook page and with the Council. Eva said that she knows that the organization has giving minority students the opportunity for a better education and that the MMC's role is to share events and opportunities to benefit our community.

Peter shared that the official budget for the MMC, according to the official Fiscal year 2021/2022 Program Budget Detail Report, is \$9.500. Eva and everyone thanked Peter for this important information for the MMC. Shobhna amended the budget to \$9.250 instead of \$8.750.

Next Meeting: Monday, October 25, 2021, at 6:15 pm. Via zoom.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:29 pm.

Submitted by Ana Gallegos MMC Secretary