



Cultural Connections Committee

Minutes of March 24, 2021 Meeting: 9-10 am

The mission of the Cultural Connections Committee is to facilitate communication between the community and city government by encouraging understanding and appreciation of culture, diversity and inclusion in the City of Nashua.

Meeting was called to order at 9:02 by Deepa Mangalat, Chairman.

Roll Call: Secretary Elizabeth Lu

Present: Adelina Reyes Hernandez, Barbara Costa, Bernadette Melton-Plante, Deepa Mangalat, Donna Marceau, Elizabeth Lu, Eric Drouart, Margaret Loret, Mohammad Arif, Nonyem Egbonu, Samba Halkos, Angela Wesson, Bruno Soares, Fahmina Zahman, Mark Hastbacka, Matt Giftos, and Henry Harris.
Also present: Jenn Annand of Great American Downtown; Julie Glosner of NH Small Business Development Center; Paul Shea of Great American Downtown and Wendy Hunt, Incoming President and CEO GNCOC.

Donna Marceau moved to accept the minutes of the January 27th meeting, seconded by Bernadette Melton-Plante.

Chairman's Report: Deepa spoke about the anticipated planning for this Commission's participation in the Welcoming Week activities. She has learned that Mayor Donchess has not determined whether this will be held in a traditional way in 2021. This committee may need to pivot and plan otherwise. To be discussed in April. Deepa also restated a call for members to submit holidays or dates of significance that are observed by members of the Nashua community that commemorate their cultural heritage. The Committee has included in its 2021 goals, recognition of these days to bring attention to the tapestry of our shared community and the culture we embody. Deepa welcomed Wendy Hunt, the incoming President and CEO of the Greater Nashua Chamber of Commerce.

Presentations: Paul Shea spoke on the mission and contributions that Great American Downtown provides to our community. Discussed were Holiday Stroll, Downtown Holiday Lighting and Decorations, Farmer's Market currently held Sunday's on City Hall property; a 32 bed Community Garden; Seasonal Banners on street lights along Main Street; and the GAD's robust website with a calendar open to the community to post on (with 72 hour notice). Jenn Annand, also of GAD, spoke to say that they are considering "visiting vendors" be included in the Farmer's Market, for small growers who may not be able to sustain the costs or produce for a full season stall. In answer to an inquiry, it was stated that vendors are fully vetted to ensure they do grow the produce they sell. Jenn also told the group about the ART TOUR –a free app based activity (DISTRX) which has fifteen stops on Main Street to view and learn about sculptures and murals.

Julie Glosner spoke about her role with NH Small Business Development Center, which is funded by NH Business and Economic Affairs. The organization provides small NH businesses all type of assistance, whether it be how to make a business plan or what resources can be accessed for Covid-19 financial stresses. Julie shared information about the 'New American Loan Fund'. The current mission of this organization is to seek out businesses in the community that are not being adequately reached –they strive to make contact with breadth of the diversity of the NH business owners. They have limited foreign language assistance.

Old Business: The Nashua Pride parade and festival was discussed briefly.

Other Discussion:

Donna Marceau, of Nashua Soup Kitchen and Shelter restated the availability of a \$600 loan for businesses in these difficult times. The loan application is found at AXUDA.COM

Bruno Soares reported that our community will be the subject of a Labor Trafficking study, which will begin in about two weeks. Interviewers will speak with undocumented individuals who have resided here for three years. The study seeks to gather data on labor abuse victims and trafficking.

The next meeting is scheduled on April 28th at 9:00 a.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:12 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by Elizabeth Lu, Secretary