

Nashua Cultural Connections Committee
Special Meeting Minutes: April 17th 2018.

Nashua Public Library

Call To order: The special meeting at Nashua Public Library was called to order by Chair Deepa Mangalat at 3-38PM. Deepa thanked all members of the committee for attending and welcomed special guests Mayor Donchess, Chief of Police Andrew Lavoie and Superintendent of schools Dr Jahmal Mosley. Deepa provided the guests with a little history of these special meetings which started in October 2017. The objective of these informal forums is to have open honest conversations with the Mayor, the Police Department and the Nashua School District. These meetings are held quarterly one was held in January 2018 and the meeting today was the third. Deepa explained the Nashua Library was selected as a good location for guests and committee members.

Members present: Deepa Mangalat Chair, Sylvia Gale Vice Chair, Bernadette Melton Plante (Secretary) Tom Lopez, Dominique Boutaud, Adelina Hernandez, Jenn Hosking, Samba Halkose, and Patricia Piecuch. Excused absence : Mark Hastbacka

Patricia Piecuch read the mission of the committee.” The Mission of the Cultural Connections Committee is to encourage understanding and appreciation of Ethnic Diversity in the City of Nashua and to facilitate communication between the Ethnic Community and City Government”.

1. Deepa addressed the group stating we would have about an hour for questions and discussions then a group of students from diversified backgrounds would be presenting to the guests and committee members three new Apps they had developed through a program called Thinkable that specifically focused on Problem solving and also getting to know the City of Nashua.
2. Mayor Donchess welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for everyone to introduce themselves. The Mayor stated he was happy to see so many people at the meeting. The Mayor stated he was so pleased to have and meet Juan Felipe Herrera the poet from California at the Adult Learning Center and that the work continues to make Nashua a successful “ Welcoming City”. A brief discussion was held in regards to the objectives of a Welcoming City and that the goal is to assist groups and local government in supporting the immigrant population having the City of Nashua welcoming New Comers. The group all introduced themselves with over 35 people attending the informal forum individuals were from varied backgrounds and Countries as well as business owners. Attendees shared with the Mayor how grateful they were that Nashua was a Welcoming City and shared some of their positive experiences and how friendly they found Nashua.
3. A concerned citizen spoke about their concerns that people in Nashua were been targeted by both the Nashua Police and ICE. Chief Lavoie was clear that both him and the Nashua Police Department are not out to check immigration papers or are they interested in stopping people suspected of been in the Country illegally. The Chief was clear that ICE is not outside the Adult Learning center. The Chief spoke about the meeting he held at Nashua High School to discuss these very concerns. The Chief stated that the Nashua Police Department continues to focus on trying to lessen the uneasiness among people in Nashua who are not in the country legally. The Chief stated if you are a victim in of Crime you should feel comfortable reporting it. The Chief was clear that people’s immigration status should not prevent them from reporting a crime.
The Chief discussed with the group that the Police will pull over any person if there is reasonable suspicion like headlights out on car erratic driving were a couple of examples that were given. If it is discovered that a person has fake Driving license or fake papers they likely will be arrested.

4. Dr Jahmal Mosley spoke to the group he has been in Public Education for over 19 years and did state he was looking forward to the spring. He is just about to complete his first year as Superintendent Schools. Dr. Mosley spoke generally about his students and the struggles they experience some of which included high levels of anxiety that exist in immigrant communities how the stress affects the whole family, Dr Mosley spoke about the importance of creating systems within the school environment so those difficult conversations can take place. Some of the community members raised concerns about students who cannot access AP classes due to language barriers, the need for students to be educated on how to fill out driving licenses applications, the difficulties some students have getting involved in outside school activities. Dr Mosley did express his focus is on working within the district to break down Cultural Barriers. Concerned citizens spoke about the challenges some families have when the only way to register for sports is on line. Dr Mosley stated he would like to see more educators in the Nashua school system who speak different languages and educators who understand the different cultures in the City of Nashua.

5. Dr Mosley stated he is very open to hearing from people in the community who can provide suggestions and input to improve systems within the school district.

6. The meeting ended with a great presentation from the students who are working and have developed an App for emergency services along with an App on getting to know Nashua. These 14 students approach was based on Problem solving, what is a Problem and how can this be resolved. The students worked at the Arlington Community Center over February school break to enhance their App.

7. Refreshments were served after the meeting and everyone had an opportunity to socialize. The next Cultural Connection Meeting will be on May 15th 2018.

Respectfully Submitted

Bernadette Melton – Plante.