

Cultural Connections Committee: Meeting Minutes

May 15th, 2018, 3:30 PM – 5:00 PM

Room 208, City Hall

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

I. Call To Order : 3:35 pm by Chair Deepa Mangalat

Mission read by Sylvia Gale.

11. Roll Call : Secretary Bernadette Melton-Plante

In attendance: Sylvia Gale, Samba Halkose, Carlos Camacho, Mark Hastbacka, Jean Adie, Bernadette Melton-Plante, Patricia Piecuch, Celina Ulibarri, Lauren Osowski, Jenn Hosking, Deepa Mangalat, Paul Janampa, Zippy Elikanal, Laura O'Neill.

111 Minutes to be approved:

Motion to approve the Minutes of March 20th, 2018 CCC Meeting by Patricia Piecuch, seconded by Jean Adie, passed unanimously.

Motion by Jean Adie to approve the April 17th Special CCC Meeting/GCII March 28th Meeting Minutes with the following typos corrected: Paragraph # 3: 3rd line down, change "suspected of been.." to "suspected of being..". Paragraph #4: 5 lines down, remove the comma after "family" and replace with a period. Motion seconded by Sylvia Gale. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to pass the GCII April 25th Meeting Minutes made by Sylvia Gale, seconded by Lauren Osowski, passed unanimously.

Motion to approve of Current Agenda by Sylvia Gale, seconded by Jenn Hosking, passed unanimously.

IV. Report of the Chair and/or Subcommittee:

Chair's Report: The chair discussed efforts to update the email distribution to reflect current membership. Patricia Piecuch clarified who is currently in line for membership and which slots they are filling. She also named those members who are currently expired and need to reapply if

they want to stay on the committee. The committee can have 7-15 members. Standing slots that are vacant include a member of the interfaith community, private sector, and two slots for ethnic business members. Patricia went over the process for reappointments. Nominations must be sent to the Mayor's office. In terms of an interfaith representative, suggestions were made for Crossways as a possibility. Paul Janampa offered to bring up the matter at the next faith council meeting he attends.

The Chair invited the guests to introduce themselves. Zippy Elikanal introduced herself as a client advocate for Bridges, an agency that supported victims of domestic violence in Nashua. Laura O'Neill introduced herself as from the Office of Jean Shaheen. She talked about the efforts around New Hampshire to be welcoming of diversity and how Jean Shaheen is supporting those efforts. She offered herself as a resource.

Deepa Mangalat explained that a guest from the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was not available to visit our group today. She went on to give the committee some background on this community. They are a tolerant and moderate group, mostly from Pakistan and India. The group is organized in MA, but although there are members here in NH, there is no organized mosque. They are interested in becoming more involved locally.

Gate City Immigrant Initiative: Jenn Hosking/Lauren Osowski recapped the minutes and the current activities of Gate City Immigrant Initiative.

V. Communications and /or Presentation: Nashua's Multi-Cultural Welcoming Celebration/ Sept 15th, 2018: Cecilia Ulibarri talked about the program that will be held sometime during Welcoming Week: September 15-20. There are several planning committees. The event is slated for St. Patrick's gym with some events outside the gym on the green. Fund are being raised to help support food vendors, the fiscal agent is United Way. The next meeting will be May 23rd in the City Hall Auditorium. Patrica Piecuch asked to be included, although she cannot make the next meeting.

Cecilia also reported that Nashua is now a Welcoming Member and can be found on the Welcoming America website. She will be attending a conference in June to learn more and will share with us when she gets back for the next meeting.

VI. Old Business: A discussion was held to determine the next forum in July. The Mayor will not be available for that forum. The Chair suggested the representative from the Transit System come. The committee discussed the best possible format for public forums. Some felt the questions needed to be vetted more, while others cited that a public forum allows freedom of speech. There was a suggestion that maybe the forums do not include a presentation, or a specific topic, but just a person providing a service in Nashua, and opening it up to general questions, which the committee members could get started. It was generally agreed that the Transit system could be the next forum. Another forum was suggested for health.

V11. New Business: New Officer Nominations/Vote will be at the next meeting in June. It was clarified that 5 voting members need to be present at the meeting to vote in the officers: Deepa Mangalat, Chair, Bernadette Melton-Plante, Secretary, and Paul Janampa, Vice Chair.

V111. Other Business: Samba announced the Adult Learning Center would be having two events, Graduation on June 19th, and the World Refugee Day on June 20th. A flyer was distributed for World Refugee Day.

1X. Discussion Items. None

Respectfully submitted by Jean Adie.