

Minutes of the Cultural Connections Committee Meeting November 18, 2020

Chairwoman Deepa Mangalat called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Present: Chairwoman **Deepa Mangalat**; Vice Chairwoman **Jessica Ayala**, Nashua Public Health and Community Services; **Bernadette Plante**, of Court Appointed Special Advocates(CASA), Program Director; Margaret Loret; **Donna Marceau**, of Nashua Soup Kitchen; **Bruno Soares**; **Jen Hosking**, NPL; **Shanta Bist**; **Henry Harris**, Client Services Director at Southern New Hampshire Services; **Rosemary Ford**, St. Joseph's Hospital- Dir. of Interpreter Services; **Fahmina Zaman**, of Bridges; **Samba Halkose**; **Eric Druart**, **Jessica Gorhan**, Director Greater Nashua Food Council; and Secretary **Elizabeth Lu**.

Also Present: **J. Mitchell Young**, Americorp Volunteer; Madison Lightfoot, Special Assistant for Policy & Projects, from the Office of US Senator Jeanne Shaheen.

Bernadette Plante made a motion to accept the minutes of the meeting of October 28, 2020, seconded by Fahmina Zaman. **Motion passed.**

Communications:

Donna Marceau announced that Thanksgiving meal boxes will begin to be available starting November 19 thru the following Wednesday. She also provided information on two assistance opportunities the Soup Kitchen is administering – one through Digital Credit Union which involves zero percent loans up to \$600 with payback terms within one year with a two-month grace period.

Jessica Ayala gave a Health Department update, including a new case count in Nashua of 40. Testing on Tuesdays continues, and anyone in the area can register online for a time slot. Coronavirus Hotline is 603-589-3456.

Madison Lightfoot asked for input on how or whether minority businesses have been inadequately served in the Covid relief. She also provided an update on the proposals and bills introduced recently (Heroes Act/ \$40M in "Lifeline Grants"/ nascent Minority Business Development Agency/ the Covid19 Access Act/ \$20M

for area agencies to support those elderly served by independent living councils). To reach Madison email her at Madison_Lightfoot@Shaheen.senate.gov

Discussion On Homework Assignment – Three Goals for this Committee for 2020

Bernadette Plante suggested expanding membership and seek to get more minorities on the Committee, Promote the Role of the Committee – perhaps through the formation of a subcommittee for strictly that purpose, have guest speakers in to speak on how Covid has effected the long/short term goals of their agency, then brainstorm together on common issues. She also suggested compiling a calendar of all holidays.

Donna Marceau suggested this Committee could address the needs of people who are in our community but cannot fully participate or benefit from the social supports systems because they “don’t have status”.

Bruno Soares recommended we become familiar with the following sight which is a resource for newcomers and is part of the “Welcoming NH” effort.

www.newamericaneconomy.org/new-hampshire/

Nonni Egbuono talked about what she sees in her role – people that have come to the Interfaith Group – Elderly, needing attention, they want to live and there are a number of fellow elders holding on, hoping. She encourages the group to consider “how do we care for strangers in our midst?”

Famina Zaman announced that she just became involved with Nashua Bail/Bond and she recommends anyone with time/interest – they do need volunteers.

The next meeting of the Committee is December 16, 2020 at 9:00 a.m.

Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 10:20.

Respectfully Submitted,
Elizabeth Lu