



Amherst Community Diversity Commission

Tuesday, November 12th, 2024, at 5:30 PM
On Zoom

WELCOME & ROLL CALL: Chairperson Dr. Mohan Devgun welcomed all the attending members of Amherst Community Diversity Commission.

ATTENDEES: Dr. Mohan Devgun, Chairperson, Gul A. Rahman, Vice Chairperson, Zhen Liu, PhD, Secretary, Commission Members: Anne Rohrer, Purnima Srinivasan Mohan, Annette Herrman, Heidi Nicklaus Lefebvre, Della Gray-Hailey. Martha Taggart, Amherst Town Secretary to the Supervisor.

ABSENT: Angela Marinucci, Amherst Town Councilmember and Liaison, Dr. Mohammad Asghar Khan, Cynthia Bass, Yanhong Baranski, JoAnn Balazs (resigned), Danessia Scott-Warren Esq. (resigned).

GUESTS: Dr. Darren J. Brown-Hall, Williamsville Central School District Superintendent.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS: Dr. Darren J. Brown-Hall gave a presentation on the development of DEI in Williamsville Central School District. It covered the basic assumptions, the policy and its implementation at all levels, the organizational and demographic facts, and more recent updates. The Commission praised the presentation for its sincerity and thoughtfulness, as well as the achievement the district has made. Additional comments were on the district's DEI work done in the past, on educating the community, and on helping the district make educational content.

MEMBERSHIP AND APPOINTMENTS: No update from the members

OLD BUSINESS:

October 8th MEETING MINUTES:

The motion to approve the minutes was made by ___ Dr. Devgun___ and seconded by ___ Anne Rohrer _____. Unanimously approved. Della Gray-Hailey recused herself from voting for not being present at the meeting.

PLANNING ACTIVITIES FOR 2024:

Heidi Nicklaus Lefebvre reported Anne, Zhen, and herself met Beth at the Audubon library to prepare for the event on December 28th, 2024. The program will include 2 shared stories, 8-10 tables highlighting various cultures.

She asked Martha regarding the budget for food and beverage, in addition to donating books to the libraries. Martha agreed to check this.

Zhen also asked for and received permission from Heidi to share her contact with the candidate to represent Korean culture.

PLANNING ACTIVITIES FOR 2025:

Annette Herrman updated the draft she prepared for the informal planning meeting with the members. The draft included the demographic data of the Town of Amherst, based on which the meeting proposed four major cultural events to be supported by the Commission: 1. AAPI Heritage Month Celebration, 2. Juneteenth Celebration, 3. Vaisakhi Celebration, 4. Multi-Culture Programs at the library. The Commission discussed the plan.

SCHOOL BOARD LIAISON REPORT:

Dr. Mohan Devgun, Chairperson, asked if anyone could be the school board liaison. Zhen recommended Purnima. Dr. Devgun asked if she could approach all three school districts. Purnima agreed and accepted the appointment. The Commission thanked her for accepting this important role.

TOWN LIAISON REPORT:

Liaison Angela Marinucci was not present, and she did not relay anything to Martha to report.

NEW BUSINESS:**COMMUNICATION, IF ANY:**

Annette asked the Commission to review the brochure she designed for the Commission. Heidi suggested that the age group in the pictures needs to expand to include seniors. The Commission discussed other issues such as the list of past events supported by the Commission and planned to print the brochure using the 2024 budget.

Dr. Devgun reminded the Commission that if anyone's term is about to expire but wishes to continue to serve needs to send an email to Martha to get the approval from the Town Board.

FUTURE MEETINGS: Next Diversity Commission meeting will be held on Tuesday January 14th, 2025, at 5:30 PM via Zoom.

MOTION TO ADJOURN: First motion to adjourn the meeting by__ Dr. Devgun__ and seconded by __Zhen Liu_. Unanimously approved. The meeting concluded at 6:30 PM.

MISSION STATEMENT: The purpose of this coalition is to enhance and increase cooperation, understanding, and dialogue among residents of diverse cultural, religious, socioeconomic and racial backgrounds, and to promote inclusion throughout the town. Some of the responsibilities of the coalition will be to study the demographics of Amherst; promote town-wide events that foster cultural minority participation on governmental boards and committees and in the Town's workplace; and to facilitate meetings designed to promote a better understanding of who Amherst is as a community.

Respectfully submitted by

Zhen Liu, PhD

Secretary of Amherst Community Diversity Commission