



Amherst Community Diversity Commission

Tuesday, April 9th, 2024 at 5:30 PM
Amherst Municipal Building, 5583 Main Street, Amherst NY 14221
Council Chambers – 2nd Floor

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 (via Zoom), Vice Chairperson, Zhen Liu, PhD, Secretary, Angela Marinucci (via Zoom), Amherst Town Councilmember and Liaison, Commission Members: Heidi Nicklaus Lefebvre (via Zoom), Melissa Abel (via Zoom), Ann Rohrer, Danessia Scott-Warren, Esq., Cynthia Bass, Dr. Mohammad Asghar Khan, Annette Herrman, Purnima Srinivasan Mohan. Martha Taggart, Amherst Town Secretary to the Supervisor.

ABSENT: JoAnn Balazs, Della Gray-Hailey, Yanhong Baranski.

GUESTS:

INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS: Annette Herrman and Purnima Srinivasan Mohan introduced themselves to the other members of the Commission.

MEMBERSHIP AND APPOINTMENTS:

Martha Taggart reported that the Commission now has 14 members and one vacancy.

OLD BUSINESS:

MARCH 12th MEETING MINUTES:

The motion to approve the minutes was moved by __ Zhen Liu__ and seconded by __Ann Rohrer__. Unanimously approved. Dr. Mohan Devgun, Cindy Bass, Dr. Mohammad Asghar Khan recused themselves from voting for not being present at the meeting.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF DR SANKOH AND MR. TOM LUCIA SERVICES:

Martha Taggart asked if Dr. Devgun could write the acknowledgement. Dr. Devgun agreed to do it.

PLANNING THE JUNETEENTH FESTIVAL:

Ann would send the flyer to the Amherst Bee. Annette suggested also have a press release.

Heidi and Melissa reported the idea to hold the festival at the Northwest Amherst Community Center rather than the Amherst Senior Center, in order to have a more inclusive event, for in the past the perception was that the festival was for the seniors. Heidi is the project coordinator of the NACC. She reported that the Executive Director Mary-Diana Pouli supported the idea too.

The discussion then covered the budget, the capacity to serve food, the cultural performance and entertainment, the need to have a pre-event registration, the need to schedule properly to avoid the conflict with school schedule, the staffing for the event, the charge of the venue, and if there is limited capacity to serve food, how to provide incentives for people to come and respect the Juneteenth's tradition. The Commission also discussed other options for the location and the date, and related town regulation, and so on. The preliminary choice of the schedule is Thursday, June 13th 6 PM-8 PM.

The discussion continued until the end of the meeting. The Commission decided to start an email chain to schedule a working meeting in the next week.

SCHOOL BOARD LIAISON REPORT:

Danessia Scott-Warren reported that she reached out to the Superintendents of Williamsville and Sweet Home.

TOWN LIAISON REPORT: There was no time left for the report.

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

FUTURE MEETINGS: Next Diversity Commission meeting will be held on Tuesday May 14th, 2024, at 5:30 PM at the Town of Amherst Building.

MOTION TO ADJOURN: First motion to adjourn the meeting by __Zhen Liu__ and second by _Dr. Devgun_. Unanimously approved. The meeting concluded at 6:45 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,

Zhen Liu, PhD

Secretary of Amherst Community Diversity Commission