



Amherst Community Diversity Commission

Tuesday, June 11th, 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, Angela Marinucci, Amherst Town Councilmember and Liaison, Commission Members: Danessia Scott-Warren Esq., Anne Rohrer, Dr. Mohammad Asghar Khan, Purnima Srinivasan Mohan, Della Gray-Hailey. Martha Taggart, Amherst Town Secretary to the Supervisor.

ABSENT: Annette Herrman, Cynthia Bass, Yanhong Baranski, JoAnn Balazs, Heidi Nicklaus Lefebvre.

GUESTS: No guests were present.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS:

MEMBERSHIP AND APPOINTMENTS: No update from the members

OLD BUSINESS:

May 14th MEETING MINUTES:

The motion to approve the minutes was moved by __ Anne Rohrer__ and seconded by __Zhen Liu__. Unanimously approved. Danessia Scott-Warren Esq. recused herself from voting for not being present at the meeting.

JUNETEENTH PROGRAM PLAN REVIEW:

The Commission discussed the brochure of the Commission. The first question was to clarify if certain activities listed were organized by the Commission or some other groups. Martha Taggart suggested to use in print “the Town’s activities” instead of “the Commission’s activities”. The Commission finally decided to delete the activities organized by other groups. The second question was about finding the past pictures of the Commission to be used in the brochure, which were found actually available.

Danessia Scott-Warren Esq. then reported on the food trucks at the event. Some were in the process of getting permits from the Town. She reported that they are minority owned businesses and the fees were too high given the mere two-hour window to sell the products at the festival.

The Commission discussed other topics, including

- inviting elected officials
- schedule of the programs
- the Colored Musicians Club of Buffalo, whose introductory video will need a portable screen
- budget
- clean-up at the end
- the amount of paperwork
- the copies of the proclamation
- the banner of the Commission
- the Commission will meet at 4 PM before the festival,
- involvement of town employees and the associated costs,
- participation of the Amherst Youth Consortium, YES program, the students from Park School and Nichol School (to help with the crafts)
- different ways to increase public awareness of the festival.

At the end, the Commission thanked Danessia for her significant effort organizing the festival.

PLANNING ACTIVITIES FOR 2024:

Anne Rohrer reported that she had talked with Heidi about holding library programs again in the fall and next spring. One of such events will be about rice, as the food-and-culture series continues.

SCHOOL BOARD LIAISON REPORT:

Dr. Devgun reported that he met with Dr. Brown-Hall, the Williamsville Central SD superintendent. He planned to invite him to the next meeting. The Commission supported the plan.

TOWN LIAISON REPORT:

Liaison Angela Marinucci reported the budget items for the Juneteenth Festival.

Dr. Devgun asked about Amherst Town Central Park project. Angela reported that the community theater project funded by tax was rescinded.

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

Danessia suggested to have a planning meeting to facilitate funding opportunities for more events.

Dr. Devgun invited the Commission to attend the Vaisakhi Festival on June 29th. Gul invited the Commission to attend the Eid al-Adha Holiday on June 16th.

Dr. Devgun said he will thank Malissa Abel for her contribution to the Commission in the past.

FUTURE MEETINGS: Next Diversity Commission meeting will be held on Tuesday September 10th, 2024, 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,

Zhen Liu, PhD

Secretary of Amherst Community Diversity Commission