



## **Amherst Community Diversity Commission**

Tuesday, March 11, 2025, at 5:30 PM

Amherst Municipal Building, 5583 Main Street, Amherst NY 14221  
Council Chambers – 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

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

**ATTENDEES:** Dr. Mohan Devgun, Chairperson, Zhen Liu, PhD, Secretary, Angela Marinucci, Amherst Town Councilmember and Liaison, Commission Members: Anne Rohrer, Purnima Srinivasan Mohan, Annette Herrman, Dr. Mohammad Asghar Khan, Martha Taggart, Amherst Town Secretary to the Supervisor.

**ABSENT:** Gul A. Rahman, Vice Chairperson, Cynthia Bass, Della Gray-Hailey, Yanhong Baranski, Heidi Nicklaus Lefebvre.

**GUESTS:** Solomon Joseph

**INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS:** Solomon Joseph introduced himself. He was a guest also in 2024. He updated that he is now an Amherst resident. Dr. Devgun asked if Solomon would apply for membership of the Commission. Solomon confirmed it and was thanked by the participating members.

### **ELECT THE OFFICERS-RULES OF ORDER:**

1. **CHAIRPERSON:** Dr. Devgun nominated Anne, Anne declined the nomination. Zhen nominated Dr. Devgun, Annette seconded it, but Dr. Devgun declined the nomination. Anne nominated Zhen, Annette seconded it, and Zhen accepted the nomination. The Commission unanimously approved the nomination. Zhen thanked the Commission.
2. **VICE CHAIRPERSON:** Dr. Devgun nominated himself. Anne seconded it. The Commission unanimously approved the nomination.
3. **SECTARY:** No nomination was made. The seat was vacant for the time being.

Marty raised the question whether the current meeting time works well for the members. The Commission discussed the need and procedure to change the meeting time.

**MEMBERSHIP AND APPOINTMENTS:** The Commission discussed the terms of the current members. Angela agreed to check the record.

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

#### **November 12<sup>th</sup> MEETING MINUTES:**

The motion to approve the minutes was made by \_\_ Dr. Mohammad Asghar Khan \_\_ and seconded by \_\_ Dr. Devgun \_\_. Unanimously approved. Dr. Mohammad Asghar Khan recused himself from voting for not being present at the meeting.

#### **COMMUNITY EVENT ON DEC. 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024:**

Anne reported that Heidi, Purnima, Zhen, Annette, and herself were at the event. Estimated 150 people came to the event. Annette commented that the room was full of energy, and the Commission should elaborate on it in the future. Anne suggested that the period around Christmas is too crowded. So, next time it needs to be done during some other period.

Anne also shared the idea for the next event: Food around the world. Annette also pointed out that it is about what Amherst has to offer, not just showing about other countries. She became aware of various community groups who should be known by more people in the town. Dr. Mohammad Asghar Khan commented on how good the ethnic foods in New York state are, and that the state is ranked at the top in that aspect.

#### **PLANNING MEETING ON ACTIVITIES FOR 2025:**

Zhen updated the working meeting where Heidi proposed the community conversation series. Angela reported the conversation with the town on the planning. The response was that no formal approval is needed, but communication is preferred. Anne added that the facilitators from the League of Women Voters can be immensely helpful in terms of keeping the order of the meetings. She had been working with the organization on this. Purnima updated her contact with the superintendents of three school districts.

The Commission also finalized the next working meeting's schedule.

Dr. Devgun mentioned the coordination with the Williamsville Village on the Juneteenth event this year. The contact persons are Village Mayor Christine Hunt and the Community Development Aide Sophie Kephart. The exact date of the event is still pending. The location is Island Park.

The other events discussed are AAPI Heritage Festival on May 18th, Multiculture event in winter, and Vaisakhi Festival in June.

**SCHOOL BOARD LIAISON REPORT:**

Purnima Mohan reported that nothing new except her communicating with the school districts for the first community communication event.

**TOWN LIAISON REPORT:**

Liaison Angela Marinucci had no report.

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

Anne asked the Commission to read the email template written by Gul Rahman for communications with the general community.

The Commission discussed the brochure about the Commission, specifically changing the list of past events supported by the Commission.

**FUTURE MEETINGS:** Next Diversity Commission meeting will be held on Tuesday April 8th, 2025, at 5:30 PM.

**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