



## **Amherst Community Diversity Commission**

Tuesday, September 9<sup>th</sup>, 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 Zhen Liu, PhD, welcomed all the attending members of the Amherst Community Diversity Commission.

**ATTENDEES:** Zhen Liu, PhD, Chairperson; Dr. Mohan Devgun, Chairperson; Commission Members: Anne Rohrer, Heidi Nicklaus Lefebvre, Purnima Srinivasan Mohan, Dr. Mohammad Asghar Khan, Yanhong Baranski, Martha Taggart, Amherst Town Secretary to the Councilmembers.

**ABSENT:** Angela Marinucci, Amherst Town Councilmember and Liaison, Solomon Joseph, Gul A. Rahman, Della Gray-Hailey.

**GUESTS:** Rianna Benjamin, a high school student from Williamsville East High School.

**INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS:** Rianna Benjamin introduced herself and explained the participation to fulfill her civic education requirement.

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

1. **SECRETARY:** Solomon Joseph, as Secretary for the Amherst Community Diversity Commission, was reviewed and unanimously approved by commission members.

The motion to elect Solomon Joseph as Secretary was made by Chairperson Zhen \_\_\_\_ and seconded by Dr. Devgun. Approved unanimously.

### **MEMBERSHIP AND APPOINTMENTS:**

1. The Commission discussed and agreed to enforce the requirement on attendance as in the Rules of Order, Section 10.S.1, starting from January 1st, 2026. The Commission also agreed that if any

member needs to miss a meeting with an excuse, the member needs to contact either the Assistant to the Town Board or the Chairperson before the meeting.

2. The Commission also asked everyone to review the Rules of Order and to discuss their revision at the October meeting.
3. The Commission asks everyone to send your short bio and photo to Marty at [mtaggart@amherst.ny.us](mailto:mtaggart@amherst.ny.us) if they are not posted on the website of the Town.
4. The number of current active members: 10, Inactive members: Della Gray, Resigned members: Annette Herrman, Cindy Bass.

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

#### **March MEETING MINUTES & May MEETING SUMMARY:**

The motion to approve the minutes was made by \_\_\_ Dr. Mohammad Asghar Khan \_\_\_ and seconded by \_\_\_ Dr. Devgun \_\_\_. Unanimously approved.

#### **COMMUNITY EVENTS:**

Committee members Zhen, Dr. Devgun, and Purnima shared their experiences attending the Williamsville Village Juneteenth event and Vaisakhi festival.

ACDC future program limitations include funding, sponsorships, and member commitment. We can focus more on education pieces like speaker engagement, library events, and luncheons, rather than festivals.

#### **PLANNING MEETING ON ACTIVITIES FOR 2026:**

The Commission discussed possible activities for 2026. Further discussions will follow.

- a. Children's Program over the February/winter break (similar to last year "Everybody Bakes Bread")
- b. Holidays Around the World Display Case at the Audubon Library in December
- c. Community Conversations of Immigrants' Stories in the new year at the Audubon Library

The Commission decided to hold a working meeting with the Audubon library on October 21<sup>st</sup> at 4:15 PM to discuss our next children's program.

Purnima mentioned the North Presbyterian Church has an Interfaith Immigration Coalition, which meets on Fridays. Zhen asked her to share more information with us.

#### **SCHOOL BOARD LIAISON REPORT:**

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

**TOWN LIAISON REPORT:**

Liaison Angela Marinucci was absent. The Commission expressed interest in hearing from her about any word of planning for next year's Juneteenth and how they can partner with Williamsville Village.

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

**FUTURE MEETINGS:** Audubon library on October 21<sup>st</sup> at 5 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

Solomon Joseph

Secretary of the Amherst Community Diversity Commission