

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

**FROM A REGULAR MEETING OF THE
MULTICULTURAL INCLUSION & ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
HELD AT 7:00 P.M. ON MARCH 23, 2023
VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE**

A. CALL TO ORDER *meeting was called to order at 7 pm by Michele Gruet.*

B. STATEMENT REGARDING PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT - read by Michele Gruet.

The notice requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act have been satisfied with respect to this meeting of the Multicultural Inclusion & Accessibility Advisory Committee which is being held via Zoom video conferencing. This information, along with the public internet link and telephone call-in information was posted in the Municipal Building, and sent the official newspapers of the Township, the Verona-Cedar Grove Times and the Star Ledger and MyVeronaNJ.com, TAPinto and the Patch, the official online news source(s) of the Township, at least 48 hours preceding the start time of this meeting. A public comment period will be held in the order it is listed on the meeting agenda and instructions on how to comment will be provided at the appropriate time.

C. ROLL CALL (Wesley)

Present:

Michele Gruet (Chair)

John Vajda

Steven Neale

Kathleen Francis

Wesley Tahsir-Rodriguez

Kristen Dunleavy

Michelle O'Neill

Maura Barrett

Verena Mikhael

Andrew DiChiara

Sarvenaz Singh

Absent:

Diane DiGiuseppe

Emma DePaul

Carla Buglione

Claudine Pascale

Approval of March 22, 2023 Meeting Minutes:

Michele Gruet asks the Committee if there are any questions/changes to the March 22, 2023 Minutes. Minutes from the March 23, 2023 meeting are approved unanimously.

Public Comment:
None

Updates:

Superintendent of Verona Public Schools (Diane DiGiuseppe absent, Update provided via email dated 3/20/23, Michele Gruet provided update)

- Verona Public Schools has a new Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (“DEI&B”) website that is front and center on the district website.
- The district’s next DEI&B meeting with committees is scheduled for April 3, 2023, in the VHS Learning Commons. The meeting will begin at 7pm and end around 8:30pm. The itinerary for the DEI&B meeting is as follows:
 - Development of a draft equity statement;
 - Compass Point Activity
- Four learning sessions were completed with Ken Shelton (students, parents/community, and staff sections). Michele attended session, as well. Itinerary is on the DEI&B website under News).
- The district DEI&B priorities and Action plan are also on website.

Library (Claudine Pascale absent, Update provided by Christine McGrath)

- Women of Impact Panel – to be discussed under New Business
- Japanese Tea Ceremony presentation in May.
- Display of books for AAPI Month in May.
- More to be announced soon

Recreational Update (Andrew Dichiara absent, Update provided by Michele Gruet)

- Michele in touch with Jim Cunningham to set programs for 55+, which was identified as a high need age group for recreation.
- Michele will email group the list of programs.

New Business:

Women’s History Month (Update provided by Michele Gruet and Christine McGrath)

- Women of Impact Panel will be held on March 26, 2023 from 3pm to 4:30pm;

- Committee consists of Claudine, Wes, Kathleen, and Carla; Claudine will be the host; Carla and Jr. Women's Club will be the moderators and they will ask panelists questions;
- 29 nominations were received and 5 panelists were chosen and have been notified;
- Panelists will be provided with questions in advance of event;
- Moderators have met and have carefully planned out questions and timeline for event; Introductions will be done first, followed up discussion (45 minutes), and an open forum (15 minutes);
- Refreshments ordered; Michele to follow up regarding set up of room; Wes will handle pictures; Steve will be there at the beginning of the event and will provide camera;
- Event will be live-streamed;
- Christine asked for photos to be taken of all women, council people, and Claudine

Volunteer Recruiting (Michele Gruet, Steve Neale, and Christine McGrath led discussion)

- Michele stated that she would like a sub-committee that would assist with volunteer recruiting.
- Discussion was had regarding how to reach out regarding recruiting and setting up a QR code;
- Sarvenaz stated that she could recruit participants from the Jewish community;
- John stated that Fair in the Square may be a good opportunity for recruiting;
- Christine advised that using a google form and social media could be an effective way of recruiting;
- Sarvenaz requested transparency regarding budget and fundraising; Steve stated that there is currently no set budget but teams should follow the guidance of about \$500-\$2,000 per event
- Michelle, Verena, and Kathleen volunteered to be on sub-committee for Volunteer Recruiting.

Discussion of Events in April, May, and June 2023 (Michele Gruet led discussion)

- Kristen developed google form for volunteer sign up;
- April - no events were currently scheduled
- May - Older Americans month will be acknowledged;
 - A luncheon is currently being discussed and the MIACC is hoping to partner with the Jr. Women's Club for their annual dinner that is scheduled for May 9, 2023;

- A survey was also discussed by committee and whether this can be distributed tactfully during the dinner; The committee discussed asking questions such as what help do you need, we want to hear from you;
- John V. is taking the lead on a technology seminar for seniors; The library will facilitate and John offered to help; Topics that were discussed were how to use a cell phone; Wes commented that it may be a good idea to include internet threats, scams, or conversations about cybersecurity, in general;
- Christine stated that it would be a good idea to use high school volunteers; Committee discussed best contacts at high school to facilitate this;
- Michele to reach out to provided contacts: Mr. Mahr, Mr. Wertz, and Mr. Atkins
- Committee for Older Americans month consists of John, Kathleen, and Verena;
- Additional information to be provided at next meeting
- Additional Events on Calendar
 - Irish American flag raising
 - Earth Day April 22
 - Driver safety course through Rec Dept. May 11
 - Memorial Day Parade
 - National Disability Awareness Month – Subcommittee moving event to July
 - PRIDE Month- explore whether Tentatively June 11

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 8:30pm. **The next meeting is scheduled for: May 4, 2023.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Michelle O'Neill
Secretary, MIAAC