



Cultural
Connections
Committee

Meeting Minutes October 28, 2020

I. Call To Order : Meeting was called to order by Chairwoman Deepa Mangalat at 9:00 a.m.

The mission of the Cultural Connections Committee is to facilitate communication between the community and city government by encouraging understanding and appreciation of culture, diversity and inclusion in the City of Nashua.

11. Roll Call: Secretary Elizabeth Lu

111 Members Present: Chairwoman Deepa Mangalat; Vice Chairwoman Jessica Ayala, of City of Nashua Public Health and Community Service; Bernadette Plante, Court Appointed Special Advocates(CASA); Sandra Pratt, Bilingual Service Coordinator of Gateway Community Services; Donna Marceau, of Nashua Soup Kitchen; Mark Hastbacka, of F.B.I.; Lauren Osowski, of Adult Learning Center; Amanda Martinez, Nonprofit and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Consultant; Jenn Hosking, Assistant Director of the Nashua Public Library; Shanta Bist, Nepali Community Member; Henry Harris, Client Services Director at Southern New Hampshire Services; Rosemary Ford, St. Joseph's Hospital- System Director of Interpreter Services; Fahmina Zaman, of Bridges; Samba Halkose; and Secretary Elizabeth Lu, Ward Six Alderwoman.

Also Present: Guest J. Mitchell Young, Americorp Volunteer

1V. Minutes to be approved: Bernadette Plante made a motion to accept the minutes of the meeting of October 28th, 2020, seconded by Sandra Pratt. Motion passed.

V. Communications/Presentations:

Report of the Chair:Reminder from Deepa Mangalat to spread the word among our network that the Master Planning meetings will commence in November. A graphic informational poster has been shared with all members by email for printing or forwarding. Also, Senator Shaheen, through Madison Lightfoot of the Senator's office has extended an offer to help any individuals in the area who are in need of assistance. Visa issues, PPE and Covid funding were the type of special assistance she may provide. Finally, Deepa extended a warm welcome to our new Vice Chair – Jessica Ayala who was voted in at the last meeting.

Presentation by J. Mitchell Young, Americorp volunteer who is working with English language students at both of the Nashua high schools. Mr. Young described a series of projects he is developing and initiating with the stated goal of increasing the student's familiarity with Nashua's business community and facilitating personal introductions of the students to members of the community. Projects in the works are: a Job Interview Seminar with representatives from local businesses doing mock interviews with the students; a Martin Luther King boot and coat drive; and a student created Video Production showcasing city shops, artists and venues. The presentation spurred discussion and offers to explore differing levels of partnering from several members of the committee.

Vice Chair Jessica Ayala presented her vision for the group, expressing her hope that we remain steadfast to the Mission, and continue to share ideas and bring about change while seeking how to do this within the unique challenges of a pandemic. She suggested we can continue outreach and community activism by inviting guests to hear our member's presentations remotely. Bernadette Plante requested clarification on whether Jessica is calling for a Strategic Plan to be developed. She proposed we each prepare for meetings with a "to do" item – such as identifying something to share with the group, i.e. 'an immediate struggle' – thereby using these as guides for developing action plans. One member mentioned that the Committee's previous affiliation with the 'Gate City Initiative' seemed to bring a lot of useful information that may have been lost when the transition happened.

Mark Hastbacka spoke about 'tagging' in Mine Falls. He asked that we contact him if this type of thing is observed, as it frequently is a sign of rival gangs making claims to the 'turf'. Deepa told about her recent personal experience of being targeted and shadowed in a public place and shared how it made her feel.

VI Old Business:

Bylaws and Mission and Purpose Statement A revision to the Mission Statement was adopted by unanimous vote. The new Mission Statement now reads as follows:

The mission of the Cultural Connections Committee is to facilitate communication between the community and city government by encouraging understanding and appreciation of culture, diversity and inclusion in the City of Nashua.

The next meeting of the Committee is November 18, 2020 at 9:00 a.m.

The December meeting has been scheduled for December 16, 2020.

Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 10:00.

Respectfully Submitted,

Elizabeth Lu