



**Mayor's Multicultural Council of Stamford
Meeting held in person and via Zoom
Hampton Inn Boardroom -26 Mill River St, Stamford**

January 11, 2023

Attendance and quorum check:

Members attending the meeting: Eva Weller, Shobhna Bhatnagar, Meera Banta, Deborah Goldberg, James Hinton, Eva Padilla, Malinda Polite and Ana Gallegos. Peter Dao and Sonal Patel attended by zoom. Corey Paris, Shelly Nichani, Hayate Jandar, and Pilar Pelaez responded unable to attend the meeting.

Eva Weller, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:37PM.

Welcome:

Eva as Chair welcomed members and thanked them for attending the meeting in-person and virtually. She welcomed Yelena Klompus, ELL, Citizenship & Cultural Programs Manager, from the Ferguson Library.

Approve Summary:

Eva reported that November's virtual meeting date was changed on the advice of the Town Clerk's Office because Friday was a general holiday for the city government, so they didn't receive notice for Monday's meeting in time. Eva asked everyone to read the summary from November's meeting. Ana Gallegos made the motion to include the summary in January's minutes. Peter Dao seconded the motion. Motion was approved unanimously. The summary is below:

Programs proposed and recommendations:

1. Eva asked Deborah Goldberg for an update about the community read event "Building Bridges with Books". Deborah said it will be on January 24th at the Ferguson Library. The book that was chosen is *I'm Possible*. There will be reading groups to discuss the book by zoom and in-person. They are working with the Ferguson Library to finalize details. The Mayor's Multicultural Council is one of the co-sponsors of the event. Debbie recommended members read this very interesting book. She said it will encourage youth participation through groups such as Project Music or INTEMPO. She will keep us posted.
2. Stamford Day 2023. Eva Weller informed that she has been in communication with Mill River Park Collaborative. They suggested changing the date to May 21st since Mother's Day is May 14th. Eva added that 21st would be an appropriate day because this day is also World Day for Cultural Diversity.
3. Afternoon of Jazz. Eva Weller informed that three groups have agreed to participate on March 12th.
4. Salsa Nights. She said that Mill River Park Collaborative is interested in co-sponsoring again to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month and to add two additional sessions for a total of four for the entire month.
5. White Party. It is not clear that Mill River Park Collaborative will partner with us on this event. They want to hold a White Party event at Mill River, but not this year. There are different kinds of White Parties, so more research needs to be done. Some are held at different locations, such as in the park, boat, etc. James and Malinda will co-hair and will explore more options. One question was asked regarding charging for our events? Eva will follow up about this question.
5. Eva Weller said that Corey Paris, Shobhna Bhatnagar, Ana Gallegos and Eva Weller as officers of the MMC met with Mayor Caroline Simmons, Carmen Hughes, *Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (IDEAS)*; Janeene Freeman, Director of Partnerships and Community Engagement and Lauren Meyer, Director of Policy & Legislative Affairs. Eva reported that the Mayor complimented the work of MMC. She has attended our events and learned about the many co-sponsorships that we have developed. Carmen shared with us a year-long calendar to see on which events we can plan and work together. Eva said that they were surprised how much we do with the limited budget MMC is allocated. Eva brought a copy of the last budget proposal submitted and noted how the budget had been cut from 15K to 9K. Lauren Meyer will be the point person representing the Mayor's Office. She will review the list of Council members and their attendance. Carmen and Jeneene expressed their interest in planning some events with MMC this year.
6. Hayate Jandar shared that she is organizing an event at Inspirica. She is making cookies for children and families to decorate together. She will share more information as plans evolve. James offered to help with donating clothes and providing a clown as entertainment in support of the event.
7. Ana Gallegos shared that the Ecuadorian Civic Committee will hold *Fiesta de Navidad 2023* on December 11 at the Government Center. The ECCFC will give out 100 Christmas baskets and toys for families. They have been working with Parent Facilitators from the elementary SPS to register families and children.

Budget Report: Treasurer Shobhna Bhatnagar will provide an updated budget report next meeting.

MLK Events: January 15 & 16th

Eva reported about different events planned this year to celebrate the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

-Sunday, January 15th there will be a City-wide Community Celebration for Dr. Luther King, Jr. from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm at UConn Stamford. This will be a free event and open to everyone in our community.

-Monday 16th The Breakfast Scholarship & Juneteenth Fundraiser begins at 9:00 am in UConn Stamford, presented by Stamford Community Collective to raise scholarship funds. Rally and MLK March and free lunch starting at 10:00 am. it will start at Bethel AME Church and end at the Boys and Girls Club/Yerwood Center. This year's honorees are Angela Edwards, Co-Founder of WEE-ACT and Josephine Anderson. Supervisor of the Ferguson Library South-end Branch. Tiffany Polite, President of the MLK Committee of Stamford invited the MMC to join the annual MLK March and Program on Jan 16th, 2023. Eva asked members if they will be attending these events: Deborah, James, Shobhna, Eva P. Meera, Malinda and Ana will attend.

Building Bridges with Books: January 24

Eva asked Deborah Goldberg to give an update: Debby informed the book chosen is *I'm Possible: A Story of survival, a Tuba and the Small Miracle of a Big Dream*, Richard Antoine White. There will be the book discussion groups by zoom on Jan 15, Jan 18, & Jan 19 at 7:00pm, In person on Jan 22 at the Main branch 1:00 pm and on Jan 10 at the Bennett Branch at 3:00 pm. The culminating program will be in person or by zoom on January 24. Debby invited the Council to read or watch the documentary on YouTube.

Black History Month: Eva proposed for discussion the idea of holding a community conversation as a follow up to the Dr. Robert Livingston Conversation under SSAR. Donn Reid and others representing the Domus Equity Institute could facilitate. Other organizations that supported the event, like PLTI, The Ferguson Library and more could be invited to partner with us. James made a motion to hold the community conversation in partnership with other organizations and to invite youth and youth leaders" Eva Padilla seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously. Eva will talk with Donn and other organizations that have showed interest in holding the conversation.

MMC Afternoon of Jazz: Eva Weller informed that the Afternoon of Jazz will take place on March 12 at the Ferguson Library. She is confirming with groups that expressed interest in participating-- the Stamford HS Jazz Band, a Caribbean Steel Drum Group, a Latin jazz group and a traditional jazz group.

Stamford Day: Eva Weller informed the date was changed because of Mother's Day. Mill River Park Collaborative is excited to partner with us. Their organization is celebrating an anniversary and asked to have a special activity at the event. Stamford Day 2023 will follow the same popular format as last year.

World Fest/One City Eva asked Yelena Klompus to present about this event which MMC is co-sponsoring. She said that the library will invite as many different groups representing diverse cultures as possible and they will coordinate with MMC so different groups will perform at this event and Stamford Day. The library has a budget for food and refreshments. Yelena will share more information as the planning goes on.

White Party Eva asked James for an update and James said that it's discouraging that Mill River Park Collaborative does not want to partner on this initiative. He and Malinda plan to be creative about possible partners and venues. They are considering the Mall where several Council members work.

Rhythm & Rumba Salsa Nights: Hispanic Heritage Month Eva Weller said Mill River Park Collaborative is excited about Holding four Salsa nights to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month in the fall.

Special Guest: Eva Weller welcomed and introduced Carmen Hughes, Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion. Carmen thanked the MMC for the opportunity to attend this meeting and learn about the initiatives the MMC is planning. She said that it's amazing how much the MMC does with its small budget. She added the Mayor is also so grateful for all the MMC does for our community. Carmen said that Ana Gallegos is involved with IDEAS and it is great to work together. She invited the MMC with a special invitation to attend the Lunar New Year Vision Board Party to be held on Friday, January 20th for City employees. She said that it would be an opportunity to get to know each other and learn together. Everyone was impressed with Carmen's experience and passion and her desire to work with MMC. Carmen invited the MMC to complete the IDEAS committee demographic survey about the City's important necessary services.

Next Meeting: January 30, 2023

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 pm.

Submitted by: Ana Gallegos, MMC Secretary