

**MEETING MINUTES FROM A REGULAR MEETING OF THE
MULTICULTURAL INCLUSION & ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

HELD AT 7:00 P.M. ON MARCH 26, 2025

VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE

A. CALL TO ORDER *meeting was called to order at 7:04 pm by Roxanna Tirado.*

B. STATEMENT REGARDING PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT - read by Roxanna Tirado.

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

Present:

Roxanna Tirado

Michele Gruet

Kathleen Francis

AJ Kiernan

John Vajda

Tovah Kopan

Michelle O'Neill

Rita Chevalier

Christine McGrath - Council Representative

Michael McMahon – Verona Recreation

Diane DiGiuseppe - Superintendent of School

Absent:

PJ Pimpinelli

Claudine Pascale – Verona Public Library

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the February Meeting were approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

REPRESENTATIVE UPDATES

Library update – No update.

Schools update – D. DiGiuseppe updated committee on the three possible dates to celebrate AAPI month in May. The dates are 5/23, 5/30, or 5/31. The event will take place at the Verona Community Center or the high school.

D.DiGiuseppe discussed professional development opportunities for the Verona Public Schools, in the area of social justice standards, in a program called “learning for justice.”

In addition, D.DiGiuseppe announced the revised student Code of Conduct that is underway. The existing Code is 19 years old and needed to be modernized so that it aligns with the strategic plan, including a safer and inclusive learning environment.

Recreation – M.McMahon provided an update on the winter programs and stated that they went very well and had the highest enrollment thus far. M.McMahon stated that the arts and crafts program, led by Mrs. J included several neurodiverse children. M.McMahon stated that the basketball season was successful and that the 7th grade Suburban team won their division and they were recognized by council. Members of MIAAC thanked M.McMahon for his efforts in an excellent winter season.

M.McMahon stated that spring recreation programs are in progress. Track begins in early May and due to high enrollment, additional sessions had to be added.

M.McMahon stated that candidates for the recently approved position for the coordinator for disabilities closes tomorrow. Updates on hiring will be provided to the committee.

Town update - C.McGrath discussed questions around the processes for hiring for jobs and enrolling in recreation programs. Questions included where jobs and programs are posted and how they get communicated. M.McMahon stated he would verify if jobs get posted on Verona website.

M.Gruet asked a question related to the new playground and whether it has been determined if speed bumps will go in and if there were any updates on traffic safety related to the playground. M.McMahon stated that the traffic flow will change which

will force drivers to slow down. C.McGrath asked M.Gruet to email concerns to C.McGrath & Sullivan.

C.McGrath stated that the town budget will be voted on in 30 days. There does not appear to be any change in funding for MIAAC events. C.McGrath will provide an update on the passing of the budget.

All capital improvements have not yet been approved. Process to start in May.

A joint meeting with the Board of Education and the township of Verona will occur and the BOE will use the town's grant writing form for a drug and alcohol counselor.

C.McGrath discussed the occurrence at Palmetto Venues and stated that there have been some inappropriate posts online and via Zoom.

NEW BUSINESS

Women of Impact Panel – R.Tirado provided an update on the event that was hosted and stated it was amazing. MIAAC members in attendance reiterated the success of the event. There was an incredible turn out and great support. Sub-committee members, K.Francis, and M.Gruet, were thanked for their efforts.

Upcoming events:

May – AAPI event planned for May by Verona public schools and the town. May is also Older Americans month. The MIAAC subcommittee will meet soon to plan an event.

June – PRIDE event scheduled for June 1st. M.Gruet discussed ideas of getting the schools involved in the event. A.Kiernan will follow up on getting clubs involved. J.Vajda recommended having a MIAAC table at the event. M.Gruet will reach out to Towne Scoop.

Disability Pride Month & Hispanic Heritage Month – R.Tirado will email subcommittees to meet to discuss these events.

Town Grants – Sub-committee met on grants for AARP and R.Tirado met with Sullivan on microgrants. R.Tirado stated that we can apply and use the town grant writing firm for substantial items (100-200k).

Hiring People with Disabilities – M.Gruet will send out article on the hiring of people with disabilities to members of MIAAC. M.Gruet discussed the importance of this hiring and committee was in agreement. M.McMahon spoke of a successful experience hiring an individual identified as having disabilities. A sub-committee will be formed to further discuss.

MEETING ADJOURNED

Meeting was adjourned at 8:39 pm.