

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

HELD AT 7:00 P.M. ON DECEMBER 17, 2025

VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE

A. CALL TO ORDER *meeting was called to order at 7:03 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
John Vajda
Rita Chevalier
Kathleen Francis
P.J. Pimpinelli
Tovah Kopan

Absent:

Tovah Kopan
Michelle O'Neill
Christine McGrath - Council Representative
Naura Reynoso
Michael McMahon - Verona Recreation
Claudine Pascale - Verona Public Library
Diane DiGiuseppe - Superintendent of School

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting for 11/19/25 were approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

REPRESENTATIVE UPDATES

Library update – Update to be provided next meeting.

Schools update – D.DiGiuseppe provided a written update regarding a tribute to an 11th grade VHS student, Cecilia (Cece) Manis, who received the NJ Chinese Teacher’s Association (NJCTA) Youth Leadership Award. An email was previously sent to all committee members. R.Tirado suggested contacting Cece to see if she would like to assist with the Lunar New Year celebration.

Recreation – Update to be provided next meeting.

Town update - C.McGrath provided several updates. The first was related to a council meeting held on 12/15/25 where there was an incomplete discussion regarding renomination and reappointment of members of various township committees. C.McGrath stated that MIAAC was one committee whose three nominees for 2026 were all approved. The two high school student volunteers were also approved for one year terms.

C.McGrath recommended that the age-friendly communities project and the integrated healthy communities projects be added to future MIAAC meetings as standing agenda items.

Age-Friendly Communities Project – C.McGrath stated that project members from various township committees and departments met last week, continuing to review drafts of a survey to be launched to the township residents probably in February. C.McGrath and J.Vajda are both involved in the project. MIAAC may have an important role in helping to disseminate the survey to town residents and encouraging them to fill it out, e.g. by attending religious services and other gatherings and sitting in back with the survey, or sitting in the library on weekends with the survey and asking residents to fill it out. Teen volunteers could also help with this.

Integrated Healthy Communities Project (IHCP) – C.McGrath stated that this is on hold until the results of the survey from the Age-Friendly Project are returned and analyzed. IHCP will need community members with various disabilities and spanning various age groups to participate, although the exact process of choosing participants is not finalized. MIAAC can assist by helping to recruit people with disabilities to join this project.

There is grant money available to work on accessibility improvements at the Verona Community Center, based on MIAAC's walk-through assessment of needs some time ago.

An update was given on the Streetscape Project, as well. The design phase will begin after ongoing discussions with stakeholders is completed.

After the recent township election in November, there will be a township reorganization meeting on January 19 to choose a new mayor and there may be changes in council participation in various committees.

In addition, MIAAC will also need to reorganize at our January meeting on Jan 28, choose a new chairperson etc.

NEW BUSINESS

Q4 events - R.Tirado provided an update stating all went well with Fair in the Square and the Quiet Session with Santa. R.Tirado thanked M.O'Neill and J.Vajda. R.Tirado read a thank you letter from a grateful parent who attended. J.Vajda and E.Northrope stated that it would be useful going forward for MIAAC to have a table at Fair in the Square to raise awareness of our work.

Hanukkah celebration held on 12/16/25 was also very successful, with at least 65 attendees. MIAAC volunteers assisting E.Northrope included P.Pimpinelli, T.Kopan, R.Tirado and K.Francis. Rabbi Tobin led prayers and songs outdoors while the Menorah was lit and others enjoyed being indoors. The band was excellent, and children were very involved in craft activities. Once again, the percolator malfunctioned, and the committee discussed having our own percolator. K.Francis will look into donating an extra one she has.

2026 events - R.Tirado stated that these all need to be scheduled by February at the latest. R.Tirado recently sent out sign up sheets for subcommittees so planning can begin as quickly as possible. The goal is to choose dates for 2026 events at the January 28 meeting.

Q1 events include:

-Lunar New Year. Township will be running the event and MIAAC will assist.

-Black History Month

-Women of Impact - this requires significant advance planning due to the timing of nominations and selection of panel members.

Concerning Q2, P.Pimpinelli reiterated the need to select a date for Pride Celebration early to secure vendors in time. There were previous discussions about making the 1st Sunday in June the recurring date for Pride. Timing will be after 1 pm so religious leaders can participate.

MIAAC meetings in 2026 will again be on the 4th Wednesday of every month except there will be no meeting in July and the meetings in November and December will be on the third Wednesdays

of the month to avoid conflict with Thanksgiving and Christmas. Motion to approve this meeting schedule was unanimous.

Volunteer recruiting - There is a list of volunteers who signed up on the Google form or on a physical sign-up sheet at Diwali. Once we have dates for 2026 events we can contact the volunteers to check their availability for those events and also to assist with the Age-Friendly Project surveys and the Integrated Healthy Communities recruitment.

MEETING ADJOURNED

Meeting was adjourned at 7:52pm.