

**City of Sterling Heights
ETHNIC COMMUNITY COMMITTEE**

Official minutes of the Thursday, August 29, 2022 regular meeting.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mohammed Alomari
Kelechi Anyaogu
Dunia Arif
Abbott Basal
Willie Dechavez
Kozeta Elzhenni
Naketa Jones
Susan Kattula
Iqbal Singh
Vipul Tripathi
Carmen Williams

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Community Relations Services Specialist Sue Giallombardo

1. Call to Order – Chairperson Kozeta Elzhenni
2. Roll Call
3. Approval of Agenda: MOTION by Alomari, SECONDED by Williams.
Approved 11-0
4. Approval of Minutes: MOTION by Dechavez, SECONDED by Alomari.
Approved 11-0
5. Communication from Citizens:
 - Giallombardo stated that the Breakfast of Nations is on Friday, Sept. 16 at 7:30 a.m., at the Chaldean Community Foundation. She stated that she e-mailed the flyer to members, and if members would like to be reimbursed for their ticket, they can submit the receipt.
 - Giallombardo reminded members about the Cultural Celebration at Schuchard Elementary, taking place on Nov. 4. Giallombardo added that some members participated at their first annual in 2019. Any members interested in participating may reach out to the school's principal, Mr. Steve Slancik by email at stephen.slancik@uticak12.org or call 586-797-6925.
6. Communications from the Sterling Heights Police Dept.-Sgt. Kevin Reese – None
7. Agenda
 - A. Approval of Meeting Dates for Fiscal Year 2022/2023

- Giallombardo shared the proposed regular meeting dates for the upcoming fiscal year; MOTION by Basal to approve the dates as listed, SECONDED by Alomari
 - Approved 11-0

B. Building Bridges

- Singh set up an Indian display at the Community Center, with the help of Dechavez; attended Sterlingfest, and attended the India League of America event.
- Tripathi said that he attended the city's Naturalization Ceremony; Sterlingfest and also the India League of America event.
- Williams shared that she worked on a voter registration campaign; attended the Naturalization Ceremony and a Juneteenth Black Awareness event at the ICRJ.
- Dechavez stated that he visited Sorsogon, Philippines, he is continuing to bring attention to their sister city relationship with Sterling Heights, and working with their feeding program. Dechavez continues to help coordinate the efforts to bring nurses to the area and would like committee members to help welcome them, details to follow. Dechavez attended a USP4GG event in Warren, a cultural event in Novi, the Memorial Day parade, flag raising ceremonies, the Thai Fest and Sterlingfest.
- Elzhenni stated that she continues to administer the Ethnic Community Committee's facebook page, the page has over 300 followers. Any members that would like to share information or events can post to the page or forward the information to Giallombardo or Elzhenni.

C. 2022 Diversity Distinction Awards Dinner

- Giallombardo stated that sponsorship are going well and ticket sales are coming along. She added that adwork for sponsors is due by September 2, and tickets can be purchased until September 6.
- Giallombardo stated that the dinner will be buffet style, and she met with the manager and chef at the Macedonian Cultural Center. Due to the price increases, chicken was not an option; the menu will be a vegetable stir fry with rice, halal meatballs, pasta and two sauces, salad and a cookie assortment for dessert. The price is \$23 per person.
- Basal asked if it would be more cost effective to rent a hall and use a caterer. Giallombardo stated that it would likely cost about the same, and added that we would be responsible for cleaning after the event.
- Williams stated that she would like to see more variety on the menu, Giallombardo said we could explore other venues for 2023. And suggestions will be welcome, but we have to remain within a budget.
- Elzhenni stated that she would like to bring in hummus and baklava that would be donated; Giallombardo stated that she will call the venue and ask.
- Jones asked if venue give non-profits pricing, and Giallombardo said that the owner of Century Banquet gives very fair pricing, so if other venues in the city would like to host the event, they will typically match the lowest price.
- Giallombardo listed the awardees and asked if members would like to present an awardee with an award. The following was determined:
 - Tripathi will present to Jawaad Khan
 - Anyaogu will present to Dr. Gehan Girgis
 - Alomari will present to Larsa Palace, Faris Yono
 - Elzhenni will present to Ishtar Restaurant, Ali Ghali Majeed
 - Williams will present to Detroit Glamazon
 - Kattula will present to Sarah Itoh

- Elzhenni said that she will be happy to MC the presentation.
- Giallombardo asked members to arrive to the venue around 5:45 to assist with set up, welcome guests and assist with seating if necessary. She added that she will keep everyone up to date via e-mails.

8. Old Business:

- Dechavez stated that he continues to work on the committee assisting nurses that will be coming over from the Philippines. He asked members to consider being a part of the committee when details are made available.

9. New Business:

- None

10. Adjournment. Meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.