

**TOWNSHIP OF VERONA**  
COUNTY OF ESSEX, NEW JERSEY



**MULTICULTURAL INCLUSION & ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**AGENDA**

**REGULAR MEETING 7:00 P.M. MAY 25, 2022**

**VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE**

Via the internet, please click the link below to join the meeting:

<https://zoom.us/j/94981408541>

Via telephone, please dial 1(312)626-6799 or 1(646)558-8656

Use Zoom Meeting ID: 949-8140-8541, when prompted for a Participant ID, press #

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**A. CALL TO ORDER**

**B. STATEMENT REGARDING PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT**

*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**

1. Maura Barrett - Term ends 12/31/2022
2. Carla Buglione - Term ends 12/31/2022
3. Kathleen Francis - Term ends 12/31/2022
4. Michele Gruet - Term Ends 12/31/2022
5. Verena Mikhael - Term ends 12/31/2022
6. Wesley Tahsir-Rodriguez - Term ends 12/31/2022
7. John Vajda - Term ends 12/31/2022
8. Deputy Mayor Christine McGrath - Council Liaison
9. Steven Neale - Director of Administration and Economic Development
10. Claudine Pascale- Director of Verona Library

**D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

1. Approval of Minutes from a Regular meeting held on April 27, 2022. There was a motion & a second motion made by Steven Neale and John Vajda.

## E. STANDING MEETING ITEMS

### 1. Updates from Library Director, Claudine Pascale:

- Weekly Rainbow story time
- Arts & Crafts on Wednesdays
- Family Event on June 1 "Love wins yard sign"
- DIY Pride flag event on June 20 at 5:30PM
- June 15 Montclair State University professor to provide a PRIDE related seminar
- In addition to the lunch time webinar for Juneteenth, there will be a webinar on June 9<sup>th</sup> in the evening.
- The library will plan story times & sensory sessions with CHILD
- Summer reading (oceanography theme)
  - Question to Claudine "How do your invites get sent around?"
  - Answer social media and weekly newsletter along with <https://myveronanj.com/>
  - Possibility of administering a paper newsletter to all residents
- Planning Lunch & Learns in-person with field experts and speakers along with light lunch, geared toward seniors.
  - Question to the group "How do we raise awareness amongst high school population?"
  - Idea - Share event with high school student council
  - Idea - Can we receive emails on updates
  - Response to idea - Resident would need to opt-in to email updates
  - Idea - For promotion to seniors, might be helpful to promote through houses of worships using their newsletters along with UNICO, the Lion's club, and The Women's Club
  - Goal - to have a resident handbook to include every nonprofit's social media page and links to their newsletter.

### 2. Discussion of multicultural calendar

- Wesley presented some of the tweaks that were made to the excel
- These edits reflect some of the brainstorming ideas that came out of last few council meetings
- Goal is to be cognizant of overloading on proclamations
- Events column needs to be aware of budget
- Proclamations need to be defined so it reflects what we want as residents & businesses
- In November Veterans Day Ceremony should be in events column
- Events are labor intensive, and we do not want to overload our resources
- Proclamations were heavy in the Month of May (meant to be photo ops goal is to raise awareness)
- Idea - At a new business ribbon cuttings we can amplify events there, instead of making that a stand-alone proclamation.
- Idea - We can recognize certain residents who are influential
- Idea - Flag raisings are to be done by resolution (example the Juneteenth Flag was approved; Italian Heritage Month Flag needs to be approved). These can be requested by residents of groups like UNICO
  - Goal is to have MIAAC maintain the excel list of events. Residents to request through contacting this group to be planned and there's minimal duplication
  - Goal for MIAAC to meet with the school principals and new superintendent to discuss this calendar.

- MIAAC to create a google doc so multiple people can work on one doc at a time (Goal is to send to the council).
- MIAAC to brainstorm different ways to bring awareness to the various events.
- Clarification – What is the difference between a proclamation and statement made (what has more impact)
- Question - Can we lean on business to include in the event process?
- Question - Is the goal to get the town to understand the importance of each proclamation?
- Answer – The intent is to raise awareness of a cause this can also include individuals who support the community.
- Research was done on Montclair's proclamations and 6 per month is too much at one time.
- Idea - Driver safety class for seniors sponsored by AARP for month May & Oct (individual event)
- Information - Junior women's club will be bringing back senior dinner (fall 2022).
- Goal of Calendar - to expand these ideas in the calendar and categorize the various elements.

### 3. Discussion of Pride event, June 7, 2022

- Maura & MIAAC have been coordinating this so it's more than just a flag raising event.
- We moved away from window painting since the KIND event was doing a similar event
- We may make our own playlist for the flag raising
- Discussed some crafts that we can do after the flag raising (paper plates with "Love is Love"
- Make rainbows with Chalk
- Claudine mentioned the crafts that are planned at the library, and she can share extra materials at our table. Library staff can help!
- Town Scoop may make an appearance MIAAC to confirm.
- Committee members should not buy materials, but town has amazon account if we need to. (50-100 materials to be safe).
- MIAAC needs Tables needed for arts & crafts
- Flag raising starts 6:30PM MIACC arrives at 5:30PM to help with setup
- Student representation from the high school at the event
- Flag raising is typically 30 minutes max
- Rain date is June 8
- 730PM end time
- Verona PD presence
- Suggestions for added promotion of flag raising event:
  - Posters can be displayed around the town
  - Posters in the school or a flyer that is taken home

## F. NEW BUSINESS

1. Discussion of disability inclusion in Recreation programs
  - Kristin Donahue co president of CHILd
  - Goal - Special services strategies for more inclusive environment
  - Suggestions for the town to be more inclusive in addition to adult programming:
    - Education advocacy and support
    - Recreation seems to be moving forward with a swim program
    - Pool programs with more needs
    - They tend to go to Livingston for programming

- We need more programming for disability students only
- Track program to be an inclusive program for children (fall program)
- Goal for Verona to always think about children with disabilities (lighting sounds space etc.)
- Inclusivity Week at the school
- Goal is to educate businesses on ADA compliance (example shopping for those with sensory issues)
- Sensory hour expanded to adults
- "disability" means so many things
- Steven Neale updated on behalf of Jim Cunningham
- New hire starts on 5/31 part-time recreation aide. This role is to help design programs.
- Idea – Volunteers can get trained so there are more individuals certified to support this population, even if it means walking around the town or running on a track next to the student with special needs.
- Mr. Blitz raised his hand in the chat and shared his thoughts on the following:
  - Lots of movement in past year.
  - Verona sport leagues do not have open advertisement for disabled children (soccer baseball)
  - There is legal obligation for everyone to be able to utilize the Verona fields
  - Soccer clinic for special needs children this summer
  - There needs to be more
  - Some programs need to be separate but also inclusive
  - Seniors and high school students who may want some experience volunteer to get trained.
  - Maybe every season has some sort of disability

## **G. PUBLIC COMMENT – no participation.**

## **H. ADJOURNMENT**

*The public may speak on any matter during Public Comment, listed on the agenda. At that time, anyone from the public wishing to speak will be prompted to raise his/her virtual hand. You may do so by pressing the "raise hand" button on your monitor or, if dialing in by phone, press \*9. You will be recognized and advised that you are unmuted.*