

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

HELD AT 7:00 P.M. ON MARCH 25, 2026.

VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE

A. CALL TO ORDER *meeting was called to order at 7:05 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

Kathleen Francis

John Vajda

Rita Chevalier

Tovah Kopan

Diane DiGiuseppe – Superintendent of School

Cynthia Holland - Council Representative

Sinaileen Dacoff – Student Representative

Elissa Pena – Student Representative

Absent:

Michele Gruet

Naura Reynoso

P.J. Pimpinelli

Michelle O'Neill

Michael McMahon – Verona Recreation

Claudine Pascale – Verona Public Library

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting for the 3-25 meeting will be postponed until the May meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

REPRESENTATIVE UPDATES

Library - Update to be provided next meeting.

Recreation Department - M.McMahon sent an update to the committee regarding the Age-Friendly Community survey. The survey was completed and is being analyzed. The next step will be creation of an action plan in collaboration with consultant.

Integrated Healthy Community - Last week R.Tirado attended meeting regarding this initiative. A survey of the community will be created with focus on inclusivity of persons with disabilities. Survey will be available online and on paper and will also include focus groups. On April 15 first focus group was held and information from this event will be analyzed.

There was a public event last week at the VCC for young adults with disabilities/special needs and their caregivers.

Township Update - C.Holland informed the committee that on April 20th Council met and approved the budget. A few changes were made but none that impacted MIAAC. Cynthia gave the council an update on MIAAC projects. The council meeting also included updates on Everett Field and pool memberships. The latter appear to be on track this year but still being monitored. A pilot agreement was approved for development of 28 units at 885 Bloomfield Ave, 3 of which will be affordable units and 1 of which will be a 3-bedroom unit to accommodate special needs. C.Holland and C.McGrath opposed the agreement.

Schools Update - D.DiGuiseppe stated that the school system continued to make progress on inclusive practices in all Verona schools and attention to students with special needs and learning differences. The district is having to make difficult choices due to budget shortfall related to rising costs in the context of a revenue cap. This has led to reductions in force, with some director positions and other positions being eliminated and those duties transitioned to other personnel. Priorities will continue to include maintaining core instruction, attention to social and emotional learning, and meeting the needs of students with diverse learning differences. Some changes to traditional approach to special subjects (art, music etc) may be difficult for some in the community to adjust to. D.DiGiuseppe acknowledged and thanked MIAAC for their support of diversity and inclusiveness initiatives in the schools.

NEW BUSINESS

Pride Celebration – Event will take place on June 7th. A link will be available soon to order shirts to be delivered ahead of time. Shirts can also be ordered at the event but those will be delivered after the event. Volunteers are still needed for the Pride event. MIAAC has been emailing volunteers who previously added their names to our list, but we will probably also need friends and family to help out.

Older Americans Month – An event will probably take place on Wednesday May 20 in collaboration with the Verona Seniors Club, similar to last year. The subcommittee will meet soon to discuss ideas.

Disability Pride Month – Typically, disability month consists of efforts to raise awareness in the community. J.Vajda will be attending the Disability Expo on May 1-3 and will get some ideas to implement as part of our campaign.

Hispanic Heritage Month – The current plan is to partner with the VPL as was done last year.

Diwali Celebration – The Event will take place Thursday Nov 7. Because it is later in the year and colder, the event will be held indoors at the VCC. Organizers are reaching out to secure performers. Decorations and snacks have already been allocated in this year's budget.

Hanukkah – The subcommittee needs to meet. Date can be finalized after discussion with the Rabbi.

Fair in the Square – Event will take place December 5. MIAAC will support Fair in the Square as always and will host Sensory Santa again.

MEETING ADJOURNED

Meeting was adjourned at 8:00pm.