



**ASIAN AMERICAN PACIFIC ISLANDER (AAPI) WORKGROUP
APPROVED MINUTES
Thursday, October 14, 2021**

Meeting occurred via WebEx Teleconferencing

Meeting called to order at 6:09 p.m.

Work Group Members Present: Richard Le, Cpl. Kyu Lee, Soo Park, Jodie Wang, Devang Shah, Pravin Ponnuri, Bob Zhang, Senator Clarence Lam, Young Smith, Samiyah Hira, Ashley Hou, and Sue Song

Staff Present: Safa Hira, Yolanda Sonnier and Wanda Cao

Public Attendees Present: Dr. Teresa Colella and Sara Gravelyn

I. Welcome by Co-Chair: Ning Richard Li

- Richard thanked everyone for attending this meeting.

II. Approval of March 12, 2021 and July 14, 2021 Minutes

- AAPI workgroup did not go over the minutes for March. Richard motioned to approve July Minutes. Young 2nd. Minutes were approved.

III. Executive Liaison Report

- Yolanda stated that Angela was unable to make it, but Safa will substitute.
- Safa stated the General Assembly was able to secure \$500,000 for the new cultural center. The funds can be for a smaller renovation or towards a larger center and possibly temporary space. Angela is currently talking to see what AAPI specifically needs regarding AAPI groups needs of a flexible, multipurpose space and availability on the weekends.
- Richard asked if there's a guideline for what type of usage this center will be used for. Senator Lam stated there is top level guidance. Generally, it has to be real property and tangible. Funding usually has 7 years to apply for planning before using bond dollars from the State. But that is high level funding from state. There has to be a matching commitment to funds. It is usually a requirement.

- Bob added before sending this out, we must figure out what is the best way for our community to use it and the terms and conditions of it. Bob wants to know what county's perspective and if they are preparing or how they are planning to use this fund. Richard added to Bob's points, and asked if there's a timeline and point of contact for AAPI community? Safa stated that Angela is the lead on the initiative and has all the details. She will circle back with Angela for further details and information.
- Yolanda stated Wanda can take all the names that are interested and will give them to Safa to pass along to Angela.
- Safa welcomed Cpl. Kyu Lee to the group as Ofc. Stella Dieu was transferred to the Commercial Property Crimes Unit. Cpl. Lee introduced himself and stated that he was happy to be here and that he hopes to be of assistance to the group. Pravin asked if Cpl. Lee can share his contact information just in case the community needs it.
- Cpl. Lee shared his contact information in the Webex Chat:
 - **Cpl. Kyu Lee (Howard County Police Department):**
 - **Email:** kylee@howardcountymd.gov
 - **Phone:** 410-313-0275
- Young is excited for the cultural center and thanked Safa for filling in for Angela.

IV. Committees Discussion & Reports

- **Business & Economic Development Committee**
 - Soo stated they had a meeting with the County Chamber of Commerce to try to develop a program specifically for the AAPI community so that the community can be more engaged with the Chamber of Commerce. He is in touch with other non-profit organizations and is in the works planning an AAPI Business Conference some time in March or April of 2022.
 - Yolanda asked what support is needed for this Business Conference? Soo stated they have not gotten that far yet. Soo believes the Conference will be in-person.

- Richard congratulated Soo for The Korean Talk opening ceremony and stated that it was a great event.
- **Government Access and Community Engagement**
 - Young is still working with vaccination projects. On Sept 25, 2021, they had vaccinations for Korean, Chinese and all of AAPI communities at the Lotte parking lot. They also had the Chinese School participate and promote vaccinations.
 - In September they had over 300 people vaccinated. With recent booster shots, the Lotte parking lot was jam packed. They had approximately 80 seniors and day care centers with vaccination booster shots.
 - Today and tomorrow they will have the day care center. On Saturday from 10 and 2 pm they will have the Lotte parking lot again. Young states that they are expecting over 100 people this weekend.
 - Korean festivals have been cancelled in October. Young suggested having an Oktoberfest for cultural events and have been talking about it and looked at venues. They found out that most venues are solid booked. Young believes that it would be good to do it next year in May of 2022.
 - Richard is one of the members of Young's committee and stated on September 11 and 25th, they had more than 100 vaccinations and it was wonderful. The Chinese school were handing out flyers and the Lotte owner came out giving the kids drinks outside of the shop. It was a great experience for the community. The Asian American Health Center (AAHC) also provided vaccinations. This coming Saturday, the Chinese School plans to do another round of vaccinations at the East Columbia Library. 2 weeks ago, they visited a senior center and provided 40 shots to the seniors. On the September events, there were language translations for Chinese and Korean.

- Richard believes Young's festival idea is great. Planning for next May is great idea as there is enough time to plan and advertise the event. If any member is interested to take part to join these efforts, Young and Richard are putting together a committee to plan this event. Richard expressed his excitement and stated he is excited to join.
- Pravin asked if the county would provide any funding for the festival coming in May of 2022. Yolanda stated that it depends on what is being planned. Yolanda stated her office has a budget for outreach activities but will have to work with Angela and Safa on it. Safa stated we can look at budgetary requirements and see how much we have. Devang asked if there is a county facility that we can use? Yolanda stated it depends on what we are planning, but we do have community centers and parks that we can utilize.
- Richard stated one of the reasons why they pushed it off was because they the areas would need time for reservations, such as the theatre at Centennial Park. Devang asked if there are any ethical violations if we had sponsorship? Pravin stated we have private connections all the time. Yolanda stated the office does have partnerships quite often in order to have a wider reach for the audience. Devang asked if there is a sponsor that wanted to give \$10,000, if that would be a problem? Yolanda stated they would have to go to Purchasing and see. Devang suggested that we should know how much we have first before we plan, and not the other way around. Richard stated in general let's not put any limitations or restrictions on funding right now.
- Bob stated this cultural event will have displays? Richard states that there will have showcases, displays, contests, museum, dance, and perhaps the event can run for more than one day. Bob stated maybe we can combine it so that we can make it one huge event. Devang added that there can be restaurants and Young added they can have booths and other offices come out as well. Richard stated the festival can be over multiple days, with multiple settings, and multiple formats.

- Everyone will email Richard and Young regarding the AAPI Festival and they will kick off the initiative.
- The Government Access & Community Engagement Committee hasn't set up their next meet up yet until after they communicate with Angela. Safa stated they have a green light to start planning for May. Sue stated that this sounds good and stated we should make a reservation now if its going to be in May and if it's going to be outside. Safa stated if they know the dates, then to send it over to Yolanda, Wanda and herself so that they can secure the dates if possible.
- **Health, Wellness & Safety**
 - Mabrooka was unable to make it. Pravin will be speaking on behalf of Mabrooka. They sent out a survey and had 63 responses. One of the questions, "what is it that concerns you the most," had the most answers involving Mental Health, Bullying, and Domestic Violence as a concern.
 - The other question, "what is holding you back from accessing resources," showed that most people stated that they do not know about the resources.
 - Language barrier was the 2nd most answer.
 - The questions, "is your community or culture a factor for you seeking out mental health support," showed that 57% said it was not and 46% stated that is was indeed their culture.
 - The committee suggested that maybe the county government can have individual outreach for the community that may help break these results. They suggested that there should be one central spot for community members to go to for all information. Pravin explains that anyone in their community can be the representative for their ethnic group and provide support and share information to the rest of their specific community. He explains they are thinking about having a 2-tiered support system for the central person, "health champion," and then the county.

- Richard stated this is very good firsthand information. This is great to use to make into action. He suggests if there are any county government office/agencies that could be open for us to reach out to them to hear their opinion and public information. They should have what government resources have.
- Richard stated the next step is to identify the right counterpart in the government and start something meaningful. The main focus is to how to identify those people that need these resources and how to effectively show them the availability of those resources.
- Safa added that she knows where the resources are and perhaps can give the layout of all the resources she knows of and can share it in the next meeting.
- Cpl Lee stated anything relating to domestic violence or crime, that they can reach out to the police department. The police also work with grassroots and have a mental health section as well that can give referrals or resources. It is also on their website too, at www.hcpd.org. Safa stated that they can reach out to her, via email, social media, phone, and is available to assist anyone.
- Pravin stated that the idea is to train about 50 people in the community to be the main point of contact so that people can reach out to them. Safa reiterated that Pravin wanted more of a training for the community, and that way they can share the information among their community. Pravin said that is correct. Jodie stated that she understands what Pravin is stating because people may be afraid of talking to people outside of their community and it'll be great to have a representative from each ethnic group.
- Pravin stated that an example of this fear is that if someone goes to the police, that it becomes an official report on their record. Cpl. Lee clarified that people can call the police just to talk and that a report is not always taken right away. Safa stated her and Cpl. Lee can work together to put a training and logistics for the community.

- Richard stated that the survey is for them to find a structured solution. Sue agrees and states that if we had that type of system of a general hub. Then someone can call or report to their different ethnic group for assistance and we can then see the problems and various barriers. Sue states that she hopes we can tackle this problem in such a way where its more consumer friendly. Pravin stated that when “you’re too good, it can be detrimental you,” for example, being Asian may be seen as a model minority, but it can hurt you because not every Asian person is a genius or a multi-millionaire.
- Jodie stated that there is a free film, “Each and Every Day,” regarding youth’s mental health showing next Monday, October 18, 2021 at 6pm, from the Film Festival, through Horizon Foundation.
 - Yolanda shared the film festival links in the webex chat:
 - <https://watch.eventive.org/horizonmhfilmfestival/play/613e5f2029513200c887188e>
 - Each and Every Day Film - <https://watch.eventive.org/horizonmhfilmfestival>
 - Try Harder Film - <https://watch.eventive.org/horizonmhfilmfestival/play/613e467a9b8c6e0053d108c3>

V. New Business:

- **Lunar New Year**

- Safa stated that they are looking to host it and work with Government and Engagement Committee. Safa will reach out to Young regarding it. They are looking at January 5th, or 29th, of 2022 as Lunar New Year is on February 1, 2022, the year of the Tiger. Safa stated perhaps AAPI may have table there. Richard stated if the Chinese School have performances, if they recommend them for the celebration? Safa stated absolutely. This goes for any other Asian communities. Safa stated the celebration will be from 1pm to 3pm at the mall, a total of 3 hours.

VI. Announcements

- Jodie stated that each group may have not much interaction in between the meetings. Because of this, she was thinking there should be an open discussion on certain topics that may not be on agenda. She stated that we do not have to reach a conclusion, but any members can bring up any topics or discussions, and that can investigate if needed. Jodie stated that if they deem the issue is really important, then that is when they can set it up as an agenda item. She believes it may bring out more brain storm ideas for each group.
- Sue asked Jodie if she was talking about certain issues and Jodie stated that there are no particular issues. Richard asked Jodie if she was looking at social media for the group to make suggestions and to talk about things? Jodie clarified that she was saying if they can have a few minutes to have free discussion time during the meetings.
- Safa chimed in and asked if Jodie meant like an open discussion time? Yolanda also wanted to know if Jodie wanted a public component. Jodie stated it's up to the members to decide that, but believes it'll be better for the audience if they have any questions. Richard clarified that Jodie meant like more of an open floor session just for the audience/general participants to talk.
- Bob had another update and stated how proud he was because that they finally received a letter to officially be a Non-Profit, that promotes Horse Sports, the "Equestasian Sports Association of Maryland." Today is first date to host the Maryland 5 Star, the highest level of this sport in the world where we are the 7th one. Ashley asked to share website and Bob said he will.
- Jodie asked if next meeting should be in person or virtual. Sue said it should depend on location and how big the location is. Yolanda said it probably will not be outside. Yolanda states this decision is up to workgroup members. Pravin states we should stay virtual. Young agrees. Richard states we'll leave this question for later.

VII. Closing Remarks

- Safa stated she looks forward to working together. Yolanda was glad to hear all the work the committees have been doing. She told the workgroup to let us know how we can support you and the committees with what you are trying to do. Richard thanked everyone. Bob chimed in his appreciation.
- Pravin asked has any work been done on the cultural center? Safa stated Angela is currently working with Public Works to figure all that out. Bob stated Angela may call for another time for us to meet for details about that. Safa stated its in its early stages. Richard asked what type of timeline we are looking at? Safa stated she will touch base with Angela.

The meeting concluded at 7:39 p.m.

WORKGROUP MEETINGS: (2nd Thursdays Quarterly)

All meetings will be virtual until further notice.

2022 Meeting Dates
Thursday, January 13, 2022 at 6 pm (TBA)
Thursday, April 14, 2022 at 6 pm (TBA)
Thursday, July 14, 2022 at 6 pm (TBA) – Final workgroup meeting

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Business & Economic Development	Health, Wellness & Safety	Government Access & Community Engagement
Soo Park, Co-Chair	Mabrooka Chaudhry, Chair	Young Smith, Chair
Jodie Wang, Co-Chair	Pravin Ponnuri	Ashley Hou
Answer Hasan	Sue Song	Richard Li
Bob Zhang	Richard Li	Cpl. Kyu Lee
Devang Shah		Samiyah Hira
Matthew Lee		Sanjay Srivastava
Michael Zhao		Marianne Brackney
Charley Sung		