



MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, February 12, 2019
Patrick Henry Building - 1111 E. Broad Street
Richmond, VA - West Reading Room
1:00pm – 5:00pm

Meeting Minutes

In Attendance: Ms. Julia Chun; Ms. Atiqua Hashem; Mr. Eric Lin; Ms. Vicki Mirandah; Mr. Rumi Mohta; Ms. May Nivar (Chair); Mr. Osman Parvaiz (Vice Chair); Mr. Sunny Shah; Mr. J.R. Smith (Treasurer); Ms. Karla Soloria; Mr. Leonard Tengco; Ms. Komal Mohindra (Secretary); Mr. Patrick Mulloy; Mr. Hassan Ahmad;

Not in Attendance Mr. Razi Hashmi

Guests: Ms. Shannon Taylor (Henrico Commonwealth Attorney), Mr. Chris Tsui, Owner (EAT Restaurant Partners), Mr. Vinay Patel (Secretary, Asian American Hotel Owners Association), Mr. Sanket Acharya (Vice President, Eastern VA Franchise Owners Association), Mr. Jonathan Zur (President & CEO, VA Center for Inclusive Communities)

Staff & Counsel Mr. Justin Bell- Assistant Attorney General, Ms. Meryem Karad – Staff Liaison, Mr. Saman Aghaebrahim – Director of AAPI Outreach

Meeting Agenda

1:00 p.m. Welcome & Agenda Overview, May Nivar, Chair

1:05 p.m. December Meeting Minutes, Komal Mohindra, Secretary

1:10 p.m. 2019 Calendar & Attendance Policy, Komal Mohindra, Secretary & May Nivar

1:20 p.m. Overview of 2019 Focus Areas & Committees, Oz Parvaiz, Vice Chair

- Business and Trade, Rumi Mohta
- Civic Engagement, Eric Lin
- Education, Mona Siddiqui
- Public Safety, TBD
- 501(c)(3) Formation, J.R. Smith
- Community Leader of the Year, Leonard Tengco
- Town Halls
 - Roanoke, Sunny Shah
 - Tidewater, Karla Soloria
 - Northern VA, TBD

1:30 p.m. Annual Report, Meryem Karad, Governor's Liaison & Julia Chun, Immediate Past Chair

1:50 p.m. 2020 Census, Eric Lin, Member of VAAB and VA Complete Count Commission

2:05 p.m. Governor's Update, Meryem Karad

2:20 p.m. A Focus on Public Safety, Oz Parvaiz

2:30 p.m. Shannon Taylor, Commonwealth's Attorney, Henrico County

2:45 p.m. Break

3:00 p.m. Community Panel Discussion

- Chris Tsui, Owner, EAT Restaurant Partners
- Minesh Patel, Chair, VA Asian American Store Owners Association
- Vinay Patel, Secretary, Asian American Hotel Owners Association
- Sanket Acharya, Vice President, Eastern VA Franchise Owners Association

3:45 p.m. Debrief

4:00 p.m. Jonathan Zur, President & CEO, VA Center for Inclusive Communities

4:45 p.m. Round Table

5:00 p.m. Adjourn

Welcome from Chair, May Nivar

- Chair, Ms. Nivar called the Meeting was called to order at 1:05pm.
- Ms. Nivar asked Board members to review proposed meeting minutes from the December 13, 2018 VAAB meeting.
- Mr. Shah proposed a motion to approve the VAAB meeting minutes of the December 13, 2018 VAAB meeting. A second to the proposed motion was made by Mr. Smith.
- The Board approved the meeting minutes unanimously, pending the correction to the spelling of Mr. Parvaiz' name throughout the minutes.

Presentation by Delegate Sam Rasoul

- Delegate Rasoul addressed the Board and provided updates on recent legislative initiatives.
 - The tax conformity bill will be signed by the Governor in next day or two. The purpose of the bill is to conform with federal tax law changes. This will result in additional taxpayer savings for Virginians (\$220 or \$110), with some money set aside in a fund. It will also eliminate the earned income tax credit and raise the standard deduction for families next year.
- Delegate Rasoul shared an update about upcoming trade missions by Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) to India, South Korea and Japan. Several pipeline deals will be closed during the mission.
- Delegate Rasoul also shared the Governor's message about being open to equity and inclusivity, and on addressing these issues broadly to build a bigger coalition of support.

He indicated the Governor's openness to ideas on how to move forward with regard to these principles.

Governor's Office Update (Ms. Meryem Karad)

- The Governor is ensuring focal points are assigned for issues pertaining to African Americans, women, Latinos and the AAPI community. There is a news release on this.
- Mr. Saman Aghaebrahim has been appointed in the newly created position of AAPI Community Outreach Director. It was discussed that the role could be beyond serving as an inward focal point for the AAPI community, but also being a source of "intel and ins" on what is happening in the administration to highlight opportunities to the VAAB (e.g., aging plan).
- The Governor signed legislation to give effect to the recent Amazon HQ deal. Ms. Karad indicated that the Board can receive additional details from Commerce if there is interest.
- The Governor has initiated "On the [square.va](#)", a new initiative to get state employees out in the square of the Richmond area to interact with the Governor and one another (e.g., via a run, a walk with the First Lady, a farmers' market, etc.). The discussion amongst the Board noted that there remains an issue with the level of AAPI representation in the state's workforce.
- Ms. Karad offered to share the full legislative agenda and tracking at the next meeting, as well as an update of fair housing.
- Secretary Qarni spoke and reiterated the focus on equity in education, and on increasing diversity in schools and colleges, citing biases in testing, tuition "value for money," and faculty composition as examples of areas for improvement. There are still several underserved communities in Virginia. Secretary Qarni offered his participation in town halls and meetings to help engage on this issue.

Annual Report Discussion

- Mr. Parvaiz updated the Board on the annual report and the completion timeline. He indicated that the annual report should be a byproduct of our Board's work, not the focus, and that the report should be a "dynamic" document throughout the year. Committee updates will be a standing agenda item at VAAB meetings.
- The plan for including committee leads during the Executive's weekly teleconferences was agreed, and a schedule for the calls and committee participation was handed out to members.
- The draft report will be due April 26 so the state's policy team has an opportunity to conduct an advance review before submission to the Governor. Prior to that, Board members will be receiving emails requesting final inputs. The data disaggregation topic will be merged under the census section of the report.
- For the next report, the Board agreed that equity and inclusivity could be a cross cutting theme to frame the report (and the committee's work).

- Mr. Parvaiz shared an update on recent crime statistics and data collected by Asian Americans Advancing Justice. There was agreement on including a committee on public safety going forward.
- On May 10, the 2018 VAAB Executive Committee and committee chairs will present the Annual Report to the Governor, along with Ms. Karad and Secretary Qarni. Additional cabinet and policy team AAPI members will be there, and a roundtable will be conducted for Q&A.

Complete Count Commission Update (Mr. Eric Lin)

- Mr. Lin provided an update on the Complete Count Commission which has 34 members, including Mr. Lin and Mr. Hashmi. Seven out of 34 commission members are Asian American (up from 3 in 2010) and four are Latinos. The purpose of the Commission is to: (1) assist Virginia with achieving as complete count as possible for the AAPI communities in the Commonwealth; and (2) get more accurate data on the AAPI and other immigrant communities in the Commonwealth.
- According to a preliminary survey, the AAPI community expressed that 55% intend to respond (78% in 2010). The reason may be related to the citizenship question, as 41% have expressed issues with confidentiality (Note: Japanese internment was driven via questions on the census of the time); 41% fear repercussions or being singled out; 41% distrust government. Following the Japanese internment experience, the “rule of 76” was passed, prohibiting disclosure for 76 years, as well as Title IX.
- The Commission intends to: develop an AAPI network to reach our hard to count populations; develop resources for education and support of the 2020 Census; form alliances with the other hard to count communities such as the Latino population; and seek additional funding to conduct Census education initiatives with community partners.
- The Commission’s initial activities are focused on the following:
 - have AAPI CCC members serve on specific CCC subcommittees
 - identify Hard to Count populations or areas with expected Low Response Scores within the AAPI communities. (ROAM)
 - build candidate list for local CCC’s.
 - establish our own APA network to coordinate education and support.
 - collect or develop in-language resources
 - create a 501(c)3 entity (and approach funders)
- In addition to serving on the Virginia CCC subcommittees, the CCC members should also focus on outreach to the AAPI communities. The Virginia CCC will have set subcommittees in the areas of: government, workforce development, faith-based community, education, media, technology, community organizations, and business.
- Identify community resources and organizations that we can partner with for the purposes of education before 4/1/2020, and support after the 2020 Census has commenced. i.e. NAKASEC, APIAVote, Virginia New Majority, OCA, JACL, NaFFAA, chambers of commerce, mosques, temples etc.
- Community organizations are already working on in language educational materials.

- As the \$1.5 million earmarked for census initiatives will be limited, the VAAB has plans to create a 501(c)3 foundation to raise funds for census partnership initiatives. Funding can be sought from national and local census funders. If enough funds are solicited, the Commission can provide grants to community partners for Get Out the Count Initiatives (GOTC).
- The VAAB townhalls can be useful for conducting census information sessions.

Townhalls & Listening Tour Discussion

- Mr. Aghaebrahim provided an update on upcoming listening tours, office hours, initiatives to recognize birthdays.
- The Northern Virginia AAPI townhall was identified as an area of collaboration with Mr. Aghaebrahim.

Public Safety Discussion & Panel

- Mr. Parvaiz provided opening remarks including statistics on crime and incidents from AAAJ and he introduced the panelists.
- *Ms. Shannon Taylor* (Commonwealth Attorney for Henrico County). Ms. Taylor described her office's strong community engagement, including with religious places of worship, leaders, etc. There are strong efforts to try to overcome some of the cultural concerns with law enforcement. She highlighted that representation is critical, and she highlighted the interrelationship between education, mental health and public safety. Ms. Taylor also highlighted that the county manager is also committed to public safety and cultural sensitivity.
- *Mr. Vinay Patel* (Secretary, Asian American Hotel Owners Association) – Mr. Patel shared his background in this industry, and on his experience and observations with overzealous municipal inspectors in some regions of Virginia, and with vandalism and racial slurs which aren't always reported, as well as other challenges business owners in his industry are facing.
- *Mr. Sanket Acharya* (Vice President, Eastern VA Franchise Owners Association): Mr. Acharya shared his experience from the Norfolk and Newport News area, and particularly highlighted challenges for small, unfranchised hotels (example: 30 day rule for stays). He shared his experience with gun violence at his business. He highlighted that the community is not vocal or forthcoming with authorities about issues, and the lack of diversity with city employees, who are generally Caucasian or African-American, but with little AAPI representation.

- *Mr. Chris Tsui*, Owner (EAT Restaurant Partners). Mr. Tsui shared his experience with a burglary where he, as an Asian business owner, was targeted based on stereotypes of having high amounts of cash and/or gold.
- The Board and panelists engaged in a discussion where the Board reiterated that it can be involved in supporting policy changes that can address challenges to public safety. The “cost” of such incidents was also discussed, such as costs for private security, private school, “flight” from a high crime community. Ms. Taylor highlighted the importance of community-authority communication.

Equity Board Discussion (Mr. Jonathan Zur)

- Mr. Zur presented his observations and lessons learned from his work over the past few year. He reiterated the importance of creating a climate of asking and encouraging questions.
- Mr. Zur also discussed the issue of institutional bias, and the issue of access to institutions. He highlighted the importance of helping agencies be diverse and inclusive, the importance of ensuring there are champions for state agencies, and the importance of training activities and improved engagement and outreach.
- In the context of the events of the preceding few weeks, Mr. Zur discussed the importance of speaking out against microaggressions, reaching out to the community and building trust, and having open communication. He also spoke about the importance of mitigating against unconscious bias and building cultural sensitivity.

Summary & Action Items

- Review of Townhall & Meeting schedule
- Finalization of Annual Report
- Leonard to lead Community Leader of the Year process

Meeting was adjourned at 5:01pm.