

Michigan Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission

Meeting Minutes - Draft

September 6, 2018, 2:30 PM – 4:30 PM

The Henry Hotel, Delegate Room

300 Town Center Dr., Dearborn, MI

Present: Asim Alavi, Anthony Chang, Hoa Dinh, Mi Dong, Sharon Dow, Lisa Gray, Jamie Hsu, Grace Lee, Kavy Lenon, Toshiki Masaki, Mahima Mahadevan, Kaushik Nag, Ryan Rosario, Joe Tasma and Jenny Wang

Staff: Denise Yee Grim, Outreach Coordinator and Nina Pu, Public Relations Assistant

Guests: Connie Dang, Roland Hwang, Sook Wilkinson and Karen Phillippi

Unable to attend: Scott T. Ayotte, Jin-Kyu Koh and Aditya Sathi

I. Call to Order and Introduction of Agenda:

Chair Jamie Hsu called the regular meeting of the Michigan Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission to order at 2:30 PM on September 6, 2018. Jamie introduced the public relations intern, Nina Pu, to commissioners.

II. Approval of June 9, 2017 Meeting Minutes:

Grace Lee, MAPAAC's secretary, submitted the draft June 9, 2018 meeting minutes for approval. Hoa Dinh commented that the June 9, 2018 meeting minutes did not reflect his suggestion of having the MPAAAC survey translated into different languages and making it accessible on MAPAAC Web site. Grace Lee commented to include Dinh's suggestion in the June 9, 2018 meeting minutes as a correction.

Hoa Dinh offered to translate the survey into another language and commented SurveyMonkey, the current survey platform for the MAPAAC survey, is not accessible for this purpose. Denise offered to send Dinh a word document of the MAPAAC survey text. Toshiki Masaki motioned to approve the meeting minutes and Asim Alavi seconded. Motion passed.

III. Budget Update:

Denise Yee Grim, Outreach Coordinator, reviewed the expenditures and allocation of funds as of August 29, 2018 and MAPAAC has spent \$83,411.13 of the \$137,400.00 budget, and the projected spending for the remainder of the fiscal year is \$26,234.82. Denise informed the commissioners that the 2018 budget report and projection was approved by Joe Tasma, MAPAAC Trustee.

Grace Lee questioned the amount of total projected balance and SIG 4 negative projected balance. Denise explained that some of SIG 4 2017 expenditure defaulted to the 2018 budget due to the SIGMA transition in finance, which caused SIG 4 negative projected balance.

Jenny Wang questioned if the projected balance is not exhausted at the end of fiscal year 2018, whether or not MAPAAC loses this amount. Denise explained that the remaining balance goes to the State of Michigan general fund.

Jamie informed new commissioner the origin and source of MAPAAC Rainy Day Fund—prior to receiving funding from the state of Michigan, MAPAAC raised funds via private donations. Rainy Day fund can be used by discretion in case of special occasions. Jamie informed the commissioners that the executive committee and LARA has approved of a pay increase of \$55.00 an hour for the outreach coordinator contract to reflect the quality and dedication of her services to MAPAAC, especially her leadership in organizing the 2018 New American Appreciation Gala and assisting the SIG groups activities.

Kavy Lenon asked how to do annual budgets differ across SIG groups? Jamie explained MAPAAC has preliminary budget planning each year, and budget allocation is according to SIG groups' budget proposals. All expenses for MAPAAC activities will be preapproved by Joe Tasma, Trustee, Jamie Hsu, Chair and LARA finance respectively. Early planning for all SIG's activities is encouraged.

Kaushik Nag asked about the amount of hotel-stay reimbursement. Denise answered if commissioners book their own hotel rooms, they will only be reimbursed \$75.00, the state rate of hotel stays. Grace Lee asked about the deadline of submitting travel expense voucher (TEV) form. Denise informed commissioner that TEV forms are expected by September 26, 2018. She shared the 2018 travel expense voucher (TEV) form and process of filling out the form. In addition, TEV rules and travel rate reimbursement information are provided to commissioner as references.

IV. Administrator Update:

Denise Yee Grim informed the updates of the commissioners' profiles on MAPAAC website are still in process. Jamie Hsu commented that providing commissioners' profiles should not be optional due to the State of Michigan's open information act.

V. 2018 SIG's Initiatives Report:

SIG 1: Mahima Mahadevan informed that SIG 1 have been engaging with APA Legislative Caucus and the Joint Legislative Ethnic Commissions. Due to the changes in election, SIG 1's engagement with legislature slowed down. Her report emphasized going forward, what needed to be done.

1. MAPAAC and SIG 1 should start to develop new relationships with new agency leads under the upcoming administration change. 2018 General Election is coming up in November, and SIG will focus on voter education and collaborate with the Asian and Pacific Islander American Vote – Michigan (APIA Vote- MI). She has contacted the Director of APIA Vote - MI. She proposed that MAPAAC partner with APIAVote - MI on their candidate townhall meetings and voter education townhall meetings.
2. The 2020 Census has come up and we want to make sure the APA's voices are heard. We should all participate in the 2020 Census. Jamie Hsu and Denise Yee Grim are on the MI Nonprofit Association Census Complete Count Committee. The committee was formed to create a statewide effort to encourage participation in the census of communities that are at significant risk of being undercounted. SIG 1 should attend the committee meetings.
3. APA Legislative Caucus: Mahima indicated that there will be substantial changes in the State House and State Senate, namely new representatives and new senators. The APA Legislative Caucus will change too. It is MAPAAC's responsibility to continue to participate as one of the key partners in the APA Legislative Caucus.
4. Discussion regarding Representative Scott's Racial Statements to Representative Chang: Mahima briefed commissioners with the following incident. On the election day, August 7th, Rep. Stephanie Chang's opponent Rep. Betty Cook Scott made explicit anti-Asian and anti-immigrant racial comments at the poll. Rep. Chang is in the State House currently and she is running for Senate. Mahima and Roland Hwang met with APIAVote- MI partners and Rep. Chang regarding this incident. Their conversation emphasized that Rep. Scott's racial comment surpasses the nature of a personal attack and stirs up anti-Asian sentiment.

Roland Hwang indicated the meeting was requested by Betty Scott and the apology was scripted by her lawyer. During the meeting, Rep. Scott said if she offended any Chinese, she didn't mean to. However, Scott failed to mention that other groups at large were also affected by her comment, such as Chinese Americans, Asian Americans, and people of color in general.

Hwang mentioned that he is trying to schedule meetings with Representative Sam Singh, House Democratic Chair, regarding the incident.

Mi Dong commented that according to news articles, Rep. Scott also called one of Chang's campaign volunteers an "immigrant" and [the immigrant] doesn't "belong here." Dong expressed that Scott's comment is anti-immigrant, goes beyond the scope of anti-Asian sentiment.

Mahima mentioned that Rep. Chang made it clear that this incident goes beyond personal level and further actions can be led by organizations like APIAVote- MI, ACJ, and other groups. The incident may create a division between the Asian and Black community. Thus, further inter-community dialogues are needed in this regard. APA Legislative Caucus has not yet made a comment on the incident. MAPAAC should engage and pressure APA Legislative Caucus to make a statement on this.

Sook Wilkinson commented that the incident is disappointing, and a public leader can be so ignorant. Sook sees a need in educating community and political leaders in general.

Jamie informed the commission that he had a conversation with MONA and the three ethnic commission chairs regarding this incident soon after the incident. In their conversation, Jamie suggested that legislators and the Governor to make a statement, whereas the other two chairs only wanted a public apology.

Jamie suggested MAPAAC can make a statement to condemn such behavior.

Commissioners unanimously voted for making a statement on Scott's comment on behalf of MAPAAC, emphasizing our discontent toward Scott's comment and advocating for a stronger community voice.

Jamie assigned SIG 1 to draft the statement within in a week and have all commissioner review it. Once the statement is finalized and approved within MAPAAC, other ethnic commissions will have the option to sign on. Toshiki Masaki motioned to approve to initiate the statement and Kavy Lenon seconded. Motion passed.

SIG 2: Jenny Wang talked about SIG 2's events and MAPAAC survey statistics, which addressed the financial challenges for community centers and fundraising/grants and understanding the culture and social differences.

1. On July 18, they hosted a *Capacity Building and Fund Development Event for Nonprofit Organizations* in Grand Rapids with West Michigan Asian American Assoc (WMAAA). The attendees were leaders of their Asian organizations. We had a total of 41 attendees. The presenter, Matt Downey, Johnson Center was knowledgeable about fundraising and his presentation was well received. The attendees provided mostly positive comments and showed interests in future workshops. Jenny suggested that community leaders such as WMAAA should take the lead on future workshops.
2. On August 28, they hosted *an American Etiquette: Culture & Social Differences* at the Novi Public Library. We had 52 attendees. The workshop intended to send a positive message and to serve educational purposes. Most event feedback survey results were positive and indicated the presentation was helpful in terms of career growth and professionalism. Jenny found the event to be informative and engaging. This event was in respond to one of the top 10 issues raised in last year's townhall meeting.

Jamie commented if there is a need in the community, MAPAAC will initiate a pilot event to address the issue. However, MAPAAC does not intend to compete with community organizations, but to support them. If there are more interests in this event, community organization should take the lead and MAPAAC will consider sponsoring their events.

Toshiki suggested to publicize the event on MAPAAC Web site and to record the event and share videos on our Web site with the approval of the presenter.

3. Since MAPAAC revisited the survey regarding the issues and concerns of the APAs in Michigan this summer, we have collected 120 surveys in total. This revisit intends to investigate whether there are new or existing issues that are needed to be addressed. The results should also be a guideline for SIG 2's future initiatives.

Sharon Dow commented that the initial MAPAAC survey were completed predominately by seniors at the Chinese Community Center. She asked whether there are survey participants from other age ranges. Jenny indicated that data analysis is still in process, but she believed that there is a substantial number of senior participants for the revisit of MAPAAC survey.

Mi commented that there may be some younger survey participants who are caregivers to their parents, which may result in them raising similar concerns as senior survey participants. They are also interested in what the State of Michigan offers to senior immigrants.

Jamie commented that survey results are just one of the inputs, but all commissioners represent community voices. Thus, they should also bring in more issues and concerns to MAPAAC.

SIG 3: Asim Alavi commented that Roland Hwang would provide updates on Fred Korematsu remembrance events for 2019 and Kaushik Nag will share information of forming an Immigration Center.

1. Roland Hwang informed that the Fred Korematsu remembrance event is scheduled in Dearborn High School at 12:15 PM, February 1, 2019. SIG 3 will host a Korematsu event in one of the Detroit Public Schools on January 30, the school is not confirmed yet. Last year, the Asian American Law Student Association at the University of Michigan had a session with a law professor recognizing Korematsu and discussing President Trump and his Muslim Ban. SIG 3 plans to have another session on January 30, 2019 at the Law School at the University of Michigan.
2. Kaushik Nag informed that he reached out to Michigan Immigration Resource Center (MIRC) regarding immigration issues. MIRC is excited to partner with MAPAAC and will have professionals come in and talk about immigration concerns. Considering the diversity of visas and immigrants, SIG 3's goal is to have different immigration lawyers acknowledge different immigrant audiences, including H1 Visa holders, refugees, and other. Nag has also talked to WMAAA and they are interested in partnering with MAPAAC with such events. We will implement events of immigration information panel discussion in the next three to four months. SIG 3 also plans to reach out to the Department of Homeland Security to participate on the panel. Immigration cases have also caused stress, and to some extent trauma to some immigrants. Hence SIG 3 is considering inviting a psychologist to speak at events as well. He commented that most people he reached out to have a preference to attend events during weekend. The topic of immigration is not unique to MAPAAC, so Kaushik suggested that potential collaborations with other ethnic commission can be formed.

Jamie commented that MAPAAC should collaborate with Karen Phillippi, MONA Director, and her group since their office works closely with refugees in Michigan. He also suggested that events of immigration information should be narrowed down to specific topics to avoid overly broad conversations. Jamie asked SIG 3 to draft a proposal to identify the topics they want to focus on for all commissioners to review.

Karen Phillippi commented that if MAPAAC needs attorneys to sit on a panel to discuss immigration law, she offered to provide professional connections. If the focus is on Federal Law perspectives, MONA can also provide connections from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Sharon Dow commented that if SIG 3 narrowed down to a few key topics of immigration, she will help promote such events to her communities.

3. Asim Alavi suggested to implement annually or bi-annually public hearings to discuss marginalization and discrimination in different settings on behalf of MAPAAC or Joint Ethnic Commission. We can invite APA Legislative Caucus to attend. Jamie suggested Asim to draft a one-page proposal of a pilot for this public hearing.

Sharon Dow proposed to do a big data exercise and do research on APA demographics in Michigan. MAPAAC should publish these data. Jamie commented that MAPAAC should wait for the 2020 Census.

SIG 4: Ryan Rosario informed that commissioners that the *Third Annual Leaders' Forum & Appreciation Dinner* will be on September 20. Ryan urged commissioners to utilize their connections and invite municipality officials and state officials to the event. Ryan indicated that Nina has a list of the invitation recipients and the list is available to be reviewed. Each commissioner may invite two guests. Sharon Dow suggested Nina to forward the invitation emails to commissioner, and the commissioner can reply within the email. Nina responded yes.

Jamie indicated that the Leaders' Forum & Appreciation Dinner primarily focused on community leaders and municipal leaders and state officials. Hence the invitation cap is not strict. He also mentioned the positive feedbacks he received from the Second Annual Leaders' Forum & Appreciation Dinner. Attendees were content with the networking opportunity and inclusivity of the event.

Mi Dong asked if MAPAAC could translate the e-newsletter—*MAPAAC Connects* to other languages and share with different APA communities. MAPAAC can ask specific ethnic group for an interview and better promote MAPAAC. Jamie mentioned that Grace Lee did an interview with Comcast on TV about MAPAAC. Lisa Gray proposed to conduct one-minute interviews with all commissioners as means to promote MAPAAC.

VI. MAPAAC Newsletter and Who's Who List

Jamie mentioned that the idea of having a MAPAAC newsletter was initiated six month ago and it is now inaugurated with the help from Nina. Nina indicated that the inaugural newsletter is included in the meeting agenda folder and it will be provided at the Third Annual Leaders' Forum & Appreciation Dinner. The newsletter content is to inform and engage the APA community with policies and programs implemented by the state of Michigan departments. It also showcases past MAPAAC initiatives and activities.

Jamie commented that more pictures of the SIG events should be included in the newsletter. Any suggestions and comments on the e-newsletter are welcomed. SIG groups can also contribute articles to the newsletter. Ryan Rosario suggested to put an event calendar on the e-newsletter. Kavy Lenon suggested to create a shared Google calendar among all commissioners and post all events and commission meetings on the calendar.

Who's Who List: Jamie commented that the purpose of the Who's Who list is to show appreciation and recognize the accomplishments and contributions of APAs in Michigan. Conducting such a list was inspired by the inaugural Leaders' Forum & Appreciation Dinner in 2016 when we were selecting awardees and attendees for the event.

Nina commented that there are currently 80 people on the Who's Who List including all MAPAAC commissioners and alumni, prominent professionals in multiple industries, and APA community leaders. Commissioners are welcome to submit names to the list, which is a shared spreadsheet available to all commissioners on Google Drive. Sharon Dow and Grace Lee suggested that the Who's Who List should be sorted by last name.

VII. Next Commission Meeting

Grace shared that the next commission meeting will be on Friday, November 30th at Novi Public Library, 9:00 AM – 12:30 AM. She asked commissioners to mark their calendars for the meeting.

Jamie commented that the new budget will be finalized in the next meeting. We can do some strategic budget planning for 2019.

VIII. New Business:

In an effort to make MAPAAC more effective and to minimize the workload of the four SIGs, Jamie suggested to leverage all existing APA organizations. He listed APIA Vote-MI, CAPA, ACJ, and APACC as examples for the four SIGs respectively. MAPAAC can sponsor these APA organizations for meaningful events. MAPAAC wants to help organizations in the APA community become stronger.

Jamie mentioned that he asked Mike Zimmer regarding (re)appointment of commissioners and how to keep talents here. Under the change of administration, Jamie asked commissioners to act on their reappointment, if intended. Hoa Dinh mentioned that the Hispanic want to join a MAPAAC commission meeting. Jamie said the meeting is open to public and all are welcome.

IX. No Public Comments.

X. No Announcements.

XI. Adjournment.

Asim Alavi motioned to adjourn the meeting and seconded by Lisa Gray.
Motion passed.

The meeting concluded at 4:33 PM

Minutes prepared by: Nina Pu, September 14, 2018.

Grace Lee, Secretary