



CMEAA
COMMISSION ON MIDDLE EASTERN
AMERICAN AFFAIRS
M I C H I G A N

Meeting Minutes

September 6th, 2018, 2:30 P.M.

THE HENRY HOTEL

300 Town Center Drive, Dearborn, MI 48126

ATTENDANCE:

Commissioners Present:

Manal Saab, Chair

Sharif Hussein, Second Vice-Chair

Lina Hourani-Harajli, Treasurer

Suzanne Sukkar, Secretary

Susan Dabaja, Trustee at Large

Dave Abdallah

Haifa Fakhouri

Fadwa Hammoud

Martin Manna

Adel Mozip

Nabeel Obeid

Commissioners Absent:

Michael Romaya, Vice Chair

Fay Beydoun

Ronald Haddad

Abe Munfakh

Staff: Mike Zimmer (Cabinet Director, Gov), Ron Robinson (Assistant Attorney General), Karen Phillippi (Interim Director, MONA), Nick Payne (Cabinet Liaison, Gov), Raya Fares (CMEAA Coordinator), Lilian Boufakhreddine (CMEAA Coordinator Volunteer Trainee)

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Saab at 2:30 p.m. Roll call was taken, and a quorum was present.

Chair Saab welcomed Commissioner Martin Manna to the CMEAA.

Chair Saab welcomed Director Karen Phillippi and issued the following statement:

“I would like to welcome Director Karen Phillippi and offer our sincere congratulations on her appointment to head the Michigan Office for New Americans. I believe I speak on behalf of the commission on Middle Eastern American Affairs in pledging our

support for a productive cooperation for the benefit of all Michiganders.”

Chair Saab briefed the commissioners on the 2018 GALA check in process.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: Commissioner Abdallah moved to accept the agenda. Motion supported by Commissioner Hussein. Motion passed unanimously.

III. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

MOTION: Commissioner Fakhouri moved to edit the minutes of February 8^h, 2018 to correct the location. Commissioner Mozip moved to accept the updated minutes. Motion supported by Commissioner Hourani-Harajli. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. TREASURER’S REPORT

Commissioner Hourani-Harajli provided the Commission with both an updated spending plan and expense report and reviewed financial details with the Commission. Commissioners were reminded that the 2018/2019 budget will remain at \$125,000.

MOTION: Commissioner Sukkar moved to accept the CMEAA Treasurer’s Report. Motion supported by Commissioner Hammoud. Motion passed unanimously.

V. LARA/MONA DIRECTOR’S UPDATE

Cabinet Director Mike Zimmer reminded the commissioners of the strength in collaborating with other ethnic commissions and proposed utilizing joint meetings to adopt new procedures to better facilitate the Commission’s work.

VI. ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDY STATUS UPDATES

Chair Manal summarized the quantitative and statistically rigorous approach of the Economic Impact Study through Wayne State University. As a reminder, the study’s purpose was to illustrate the economic impact of Middle Eastern Americans in Michigan. During previous discussion, Commissioners expressed concerns with 2010 census data since we now know, 8 years later, that we had an influx of roughly 30% more representation in the Middle Eastern American community in the State of Michigan. In order to properly proceed with Phase 2 of the study, the Commission would need another \$1 million-\$1.5 million.

Commissioner Hourani-Harajli states that the \$65,000 used for this study was not enough to use updated information of the Michigan Middle East Community, but the budget was maximized to its full potential and thereby debunked the rhetoric used against Middle Eastern Americans in Michigan.

Commissioner Mozip suggested that infographics be created to help spotlight findings from the study to better disseminate information to the public. Commissioner Mozip volunteered to spearhead this effort with Commission approval prior to publication. A lengthy discussion followed on how to best publicize the results of the study. Commissioner Dabaja and Commissioner Obeid suggested to highlight a summary of the study that can be utilized as a communication tool and issued in a formal press release.

Chair Saab suggested that the Commission consider reengaging Wayne State University immediately to discuss best practices of disseminating the study findings.

The Commission was unanimous in moving forward and preparing an outline with oversight by Commissioner Mozip, Commissioner Obeid, and Commissioner Dabaja by working with Wayne State University to develop an outline and presenting it at the December 5th meeting.

Cabinet Director Zimmer asked that Communications Director Jason Moon be invited to attend the December 5th meeting to facilitate and prepare Commissioners on appropriate talking points.

VII. NATIONAL ARAB ORCHESTRA

The National Arab Orchestra presented an update in their progress since the February 8th meeting.

MOTION: Commissioner Sukkar moves to continue funding the National Arab Orchestra with \$25,000 for the 2018/2019 budget year. Commissioner Dabaja seconds the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

VIII. 2019 MEETING SCHEDULE PROPOSAL

- Chair Manal will host March 1st meeting at 501 Bar and Grill.
- Commissioner Lina will host the June 7th meeting at The Annex.
- The September 19th is a Joint Ethnic Commission luncheon, Lansing.
- Commissioner Manna will host December 2nd meeting, Sterling Heights.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

None.

X. NEW BUSINESS

Coordinator Raya Fares stated that Richard Olivarez from the Michigan Agency for Energy will be providing energy saving tips in Arabic for the Commission to disseminate to the Middle Eastern community in Michigan.

Commissioner Hammoud expressed concerns that new legislation affecting the Middle East community are not being brought to CMEAA's attention as they have in the past. Additionally, Commissioner Hammoud would like to propose an avenue to bring state representatives to the table to better understand legislative collaboration.

Commissioner Manna suggested working with the lobbyists who work with community organizations such as ACCESS, CCF, and ACC on informing CMEAA commissioners on recent legislation affecting the community.

Commissioner Hussein reminded the Commission of the Joint Legislative Committee, which works with HLCOM, MAPAAC, and MONA to advocate legislation in favor of the ethnic communities.

XI. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 1:48 p.m. by Chair Saab.

Suzanne Sukkar, Secretary

Manal B. Saab, Chair