

**Michigan Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes**

June 8, 2020, 9:00 AM – 10:30 AM

Virtual Meeting: Microsoft Teams platform

**Present:** Chandragupta Acharya, Mehruba Akhtar, Asim Alavi, Anthony Chang, Hoa Dinh, Sharon Dow, Ayesha Ghazi Edwin, David Han, Amina Iqbal, Grace Lee, Kavy Lenon, Toshiki Masaki, Leena Mangrulkar, Suchiraphon McKeithen-Polish, Reginald Pacis, Kumar Palepu, Ryan Rosario, Soma Sekhar Suryadevara, Joe Tasma and Angela Wang-Beasinger

**Unable to attend:** Aditya Sathi

**MAPAAC Alumni:** Nasim Ansari, Lisa Gray, and Roland Hwang

**Staff:** Denise Yee Grim, Outreach Coordinator

**Guests:** Fayrouz Saad, Director of Office of Global Michigan, State Senator Stephanie Chang, State Representative Padma Kuppa, Emily Nguyen, Legislative Aide to Senator Chang, and State Senator Jim Runestad Runestad

**I. Call to Order and Introduction of Agenda:**

Chair Toshiki Masaki called the regular meeting of the Michigan Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission to order at 9:04 AM on June 8, 2020.

**II. Approval of February 28, 2019 Meeting Minutes:**

Chair Toshiki Masaki, submitted the draft February 28, 2020 meeting minutes for approval. Sharon Dow motioned to approve the meeting minutes and Soma Suryadevara seconded. Motion passed.

**Remarks from Senator Runestad:** Senator Runestad informed the commission that Rep. Kuppa approached him that MAPAAC was interested in forming a legislative committee to look at how legislation work and how policies get adopted. He invited Individuals to join the committee, which included Shenlin Chen, President of ACA, Gary Yang from ACA, and Sunny Reddy from the Detroit Tegula Association. He praised MAPAAC in organizing a committee of members of the Asian community to get involved in legislation. He will participate where he can and work with the committee.

David Han thanked Sen. Runestad for his recommendations of the additional APA leaders to the coalition.

**Remarks from Representative Kuppa:** When Representative Kuppa met with Denise and others regarding the APA coalition legislative priorities and she shared that her challenge as a member of the minority, is that without having a bi-partisan support of a bill, the bill is usually don't see a light of day. To address this matter, she sought out Senator Runestad to participate, to have his support and this staff's support to bring in bi-partisan support on policies. She thanked Senator Runestad for this participation and also the coalition to address the issues of all Asian Americans.

**Remarks from Senator Chang:** Senator Chang thanked the commission for all the work we are doing and support of the town halls with the Attorney General office. MAPAAC is playing an important role during COVID-19 and informing the community of who to contact for information.

### III. Budget Update:

Joe Tasma, MAPAAC Trustee, reviewed the 2020 budget report as of May 1, 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there were no activities or travel expenditures to report. As of May 1<sup>st</sup>, we only spend \$49,733.00. We have a balance of \$69,536.00 to spend to the end of the fiscal year, September 30<sup>th</sup>.

### IV. SIG's Report:

**SIG 1:** David Han, SIG 1 co-leader thanked Senators Chang and Runestad and Representative Kuppa in lending their support. He listed the organizations of the APA coalition addressing APA issue and concerns along with Sen. Rundsted and Rep. Kuppa offices. The coalition formed a subcommittee to draft of the document of the APA issues. He shared the subcommittee activities on Asian Pacific American policy issues and legislative focus ideas. The subcommittee with submit the document for discussion to the coalition and seek the help of Rep. Kuppa and Sen. Runestad staffers to help write the issues in a way that will be effective to influence policy changes. The three categories are Civil Rights, Language Access and Inclusion and Access to Education, Talent Retention and Economic Development. A consolidate document with these three categories and with the guidance of Rep. Kuppa and Sen. Runestad to get appropriate exposure and taking it further to the legislators and further to the state departments and governor's office.

Senator Runestad recommended Linda Hyaduck, District Director, point of contact. Senator Stephanie Chang volunteered participate with the coalition and Emily Nguyen, Legislative Aide. Representative Kuppa recommended Cynthia Paul, policy writer, to support the coalition subcommittee with the draft document.

Denise shared that MAPAAC is a supporting organization of the APIA Vote National 2020 Presidential Town Hall on June 27<sup>th</sup> Toshiki commented that there are number of national organizations besides APIA Vote that are hosting the town hall. It is a non-partisan event and it was a good opportunity to support voter's engagement.

**SIG 2:** Angela Wang Beasinger, SIG 2 leader, stated that due to COVID -19, SIG 2 activities are now virtual. She shared the 2020 Census status for the state of Michigan. SIG 2 continue sharing information and encourage APAs to fill out their census form. Fayrouz commented that APA response rate is slightly higher than the response rate for Michigan and share additional data of the census in Michigan.

Angela continued and announced that MAPAAC provided a statement recognizing APA communities and businesses supporting the healthcare professionals during COVID-19. The document was sent to the APA communities and posted on social media. MAPAAC collected information from individual APA organizations activities and created the statement to acknowledge them for their contributions.

An email inquiry was sent out to the APA community organization leaders to find out the needs of their community are during the pandemic and will share the information with LEO and other state departments with the possibility of hosting a virtual forum. Suggested topics include healthcare, mental health, employment, business, and discrimination.

Toshiki commented that Fayrouz has offered assistance to the APA community organizations express a need and connect with the appropriate agencies to address their need.

In the area of mental health, there are incidents based on prejudice. Toshiki suggested. Perhaps host a support group discussion. Maybe MDHHS can assist in these types of session. Chandru shared that SAAVI has an emotional support group and a help line to assist the APA community. Also, SAAVI have created community care packages for groups or individuals of needs.

**SIG 3:** Asim Alavi, SIG 3 leader, ask Roland Hwang, MAPAAC alumnus, to share information about the Fred Korematsu event. Roland shared that Dr. Karen Korematsu, daughter of Fred Korematsu, planned to come to Michigan on January 28- 29, 2021. She will be at a session at U-M Law School, hosted by the Asian Pacific American Law Student Association (APALSA) the evening on the 28<sup>th</sup> and during the day she will be meeting with the legislators and coordinate the meetings with Senator Chang and Representative Kuppas offices. On January 29<sup>th</sup>, Dr. Korematsu will be at Fordson High School in Dearborn at noon. We are waiting to see if schools will be open or classes will be virtual. Everything is tentative with the pandemic.

Asim and Denise gave a recap of the virtual APA community town hall on knowing your rights on April 29<sup>th</sup>. Over 90 people attended this informative session. Senator Chang and Rep. Kuppas hosted the town hall with the AG Hate Crime Director Sunita Doddamani.

Asim continued and announced that MAPAAC will be co-sponsoring an EMU Health Disparities, Innovations and Studies virtual town hall on *Empowering Communities in Responding to the Challenges with COVID-19*. The town hall will be on June 15<sup>th</sup> at 10 AM and he gave the details of the program agenda.

**SIG 4:** Su McKeithen-Polish and Sharon Dow are the SIG 4 co-leaders. Sharon reported that due to COVID- 19 pandemic, we were unable to have our annual APA Day at the Capitol. We did request a video greeting from Governor Whitmer recognizing APA Heritage Month and thanking the APA community for their support during the pandemic. The video was sent to the APA community leaders to share with their community and the video was posted on MAPAAC's Facebook page.

Sharon gave an update on the planning of the leaders' forum & appreciation virtual event. The date of the event is scheduled on September 24<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM. SIG 4 is working on the theme and title for the event. Su shared the concept of the program and asked the commissioners for suggestions.

#### **V. Administrative Update:**

Denise mentioned that she is sending out daily updates from the governor's office and bundle other state and federal related information related to the pandemic concerns. She thanked Fayrouz and Karen for their support in providing information to share with the commissioners.

#### **VI. Next Commission Meetings:**

Friday, September 11<sup>th</sup>

Friday, December 4<sup>th</sup>

**VII. New Business:**

Fayrouz shared that there is translation material from her office, Office of Global Michigan (OGM), and shared with the ethnic commissions to discriminate to their communities. She informed the commission that OGM can host virtual events to answer any questions within the communities on the pandemic. She mentioned that international health professionals can apply for a temporary license due to the pandemic. Toshiki thanked Fayrouz and Sharon for their continuous support.

Toshiki asked the commissioners to think about what we can do to support your respective community in addressing concerns during the pandemic. Also, share any community activities that may assist people who are struggling during the pandemic and email them to him or Denise. Depending on what we receive, the executive committee will review the information and it may assign to one of the SIGs.

**VIII. No Public Comments.**

**IX. Announcements.**

**X. Adjournment:**

Reginald Pacis motioned to adjourn the meeting; Asim Alavi seconded. Motion passed.

The meeting concluded at 10:36 AM

Minutes prepared by Denise Yee Grim, September 4, 2020

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Grace Lee, Vice chair