

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

September 11, 2020, 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Virtual Meeting: Microsoft Teams platform

**Present:** Mehruba Akhtar, Hoa Dinh, Sharon Dow, David Han, Grace Lee, Toshiki Masaki, Suchiraphon McKeithen-Polish, Reginald Pacis, Kumar Palepu, Ryan Rosario, Aditya Sathi, Soma Sekhar Suryadevara, Joe Tasma and Angela Wang-Beasinger

**Unable to attend:** Chandragupta Acharya, Anthony Chang, Ayesha Ghazi Edwin, Amina Iqbal, Kavy Lenon, and Leena Mangrulkar

**MAPAAC Alumni:** Connie Dang, Jamie Hsu, Roland Hwang, and Tsu-Yin Wu

**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 Diane Hyaduck, District Director for State Senator Jim 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 September 11, 2020. He informed the commissioners whose terms are ending November 30<sup>th</sup> and are interested in applying for another term, to go to the governor's website to apply. Also, if they know of anyone who would like to apply to be a commissioner, please share this website. Denise informed attendees that the meeting was being recorded.

**II. Approval of June 8, 2020 Meeting Minutes:**

Vice-chair Grace Lee submitted the June 8, 2020 draft meeting minutes for approval. Joe Tasma motioned to approve the meeting minutes and Reginald Pacis seconded. The motion passed.

**III. Budget Update:**

Joe Tasma, MAPAAC Trustee, reviewed the 2020 budget report as of September 3, 2020. The FY20 budget will end on September 30<sup>th</sup> and we will have spent 40 percent of the budget. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were unable to have 'in-person' events and meetings. Most events were virtual which did not require funds. We are currently waiting for the FY21 budget from LEO.

**IV. Office of Global Michigan and LEO Report:**

Fayrouz Saad shared the Future for Frontliners Scholarship program announced on September 10th. The scholarship program is for Michiganders without college degrees who worked in essential industries during the state COVID-19 shutdown in spring 2020 (April 1 – June 30). This scholarship provides these frontline workers with tuition-free access to local community colleges to pursue an associate degree or a skills certificate in the 2021 school year. The application period will open in October and close on December 31<sup>st</sup>. The goal is to have 13,000 applicants apply for the scholarship. She asked the commission to assist in getting the information out to the Asian community. There will be a toolkit available for the program. She will check on a brochure and a one-pager of the scholarships available and email it to Denise for distribution. If there is no brochure/one-pager, LEO Communication can create one for us. There is no precedent for translating beyond the three required translations (Spanish, Arab and Simplified Chinese). She will check with Doug Ross on Asian translations.

State Rep. Padma Kuppa joined our commission meeting. She is a sponsor of the scholarship program and invited the commissioners to contact her if they had any questions. She also mentioned that there is very poor turnout for the 2020 census and asked the commissioners to help the Hindu houses of worship to engage in the census to get a full count.

#### **V. Administrator Update:**

Denise shared that she purchased a ZOOM application through her LLC for MAPAAC usage. The Zoom platform can be used for SIG's monthly meetings and virtual events.

#### **VI. SIG's Report:**

**SIG 1:** David Han, SIG 1 co-leader, shared the activities of the past months. In partnership with APIA Vote-Michigan and the subcommittee, he presented the Asian American Engagement Coalition draft proposal that contains four policy recommendations. These are titled Discrimination Against Black, Indigenous, People of Color Communities, Increasing Accessibility for APIAs: Resources for Language Access, Increasing APIA Cultural Education Opportunities for K-12 Students, and Increasing Funding to Pandemic-disrupted APIA Workers for Career-oriented Training and Up-skilling for Re-employment. The members of the coalition are: APIA Vote-Michigan, American Citizens for Justice, Association of Chinese Americans, Rising Voices for Asian American Families, South Asian American Voices of Impact, West Michigan Asian American Association and MAPAAC. The draft was also reviewed by APA caucus members, Senator Chang, Rep. Kuppa and other senators and representatives, including Sen. Runestad's office.

From David's conversation with Diane Hyaduck, District Director for Sen. Runestad, he was introduced to Fayrouz Saad, OGM director, and she created a virtual information session to address career-training and upskilling during the pandemic with LEO's workforce development department and MEDC representatives. The session has been scheduled for September 30<sup>th</sup>. The flyer is in production and will be sent out soon.

David asked the commission to review the policy agenda and provide focus feedback by September 25<sup>th</sup> so the document can be presented formerly to the legislators and the state. SIG 1 will discuss the commissioner's input and summarize the information and come back to Toshiki with the recommendation at their next SIG 1 monthly meeting.

**SIG 2:** Angela Wang Beasinger, SIG 2 leader, gave a recap of the virtual APA Leaders' Forum on August 5<sup>th</sup> with 22 representatives of APA community organizations. Denise shared the 2020 state census report dated July 8<sup>th</sup> and how it related to the APA community. The forum was engaging and there was good discussion regarding current issues within communities affected by the pandemic. Angela gave an overview of each organization's activities to get the census count and other activities they are focused on. There were concerns surrounding distance learning and compliance -how to conduct distance learning for APA families.

Toshiki commented that he was pleased with the virtual participation of the community groups and the discussion of issues. He concluded by informing the commissioners that for the most up-to-date information about the census go to census.gov website.

**SIG 3:** Toshiki announced that Asim Alavi, SIG 3 leader, resigned at the end of August and Denise will schedule a virtual meeting with the SIG 3 members to select a new leader for the group. Toshiki gave the SIG 3 activity report. He gave a recap of the Eastern Michigan University Center of Health Disparities Innovation and Studies (EMS CHDIS) - Empowering Communities in Responding to the Challenges of COVID-19 Virtual Town Hall held on June 13<sup>th</sup>. MAPAAC was a co-host of this town hall. In addition, Denise and Toshiki participated in the formation of the EMU-

CHDIS brochure explaining what to do if APAs experience discrimination and hate crimes.

Roland Hwang, MAPAAC Alumnus, shared the plans for two Fred Korematsu recognition events on Friday, January 29<sup>th</sup>. One event will be at Fordson high school. He is working with the APA Law Student Association at the University of Michigan Law School in Ann Arbor to schedule the second. They are determining if the events will be virtual or in person. Denise will request proclamations in November/December to the Governor's Tribute office. Reginald Pacis mentioned the next SIG 3 monthly conference call is scheduled for September 14<sup>th</sup>, during which the members can discuss a new leader for the group and propose activities.

**SIG 4:** Su McKeithen-Polish and Sharon Dow are the SIG 4 co-leaders. Sharon reported the plans for MAPAAC's upcoming fourth annual event. This year's event will be called: APA Leaders Recognition Virtual Forum, Courage! Recognizing APA Contributions in Response to COVID-19. The webinar is scheduled for September 24<sup>th</sup>, from 7 PM – 8:30 PM. Sharon gave an overview of the event agenda and speakers. The invitations were sent to APA legislative caucus members, county and municipal leaders, state department directors and APA organization leaders. She asked the commissioners for their assistance in inviting their friends to the event and if they are associated with an APA organization, to remind the organizations to submit their contribution information during the pandemic to us. Sharon will be working on the video to recognize their contributions. Also, she asked the commissioners to think about questions for the keynote speaker.

Su shared the plans to make the webinar more interactive. There will be three survey questions to get to know more about our audience. The three questions are: Who are you? How do you communicate during the pandemic? and what type of innovative ways do they help their community during the pandemic? This will provide the audience a chance to interact and get a break from speaker's presentations during the webinar.

Denise shared the list of invitations to the public officials of municipalities and county executives and asked the commissioners to email her with any additional public officials we should invite to our webinar. Guests will register individually on Zoom.

#### **VII. Next Commission Meeting:**

The next commission meeting will be on Friday, December 4<sup>th</sup> at 9 AM. Denise will inform the commission if it will be in person or virtual.

#### **VIII. New Business:**

Denise shared the MDCR Protecting Your Rights one-pager to educate the APA community regarding the department of civil rights. The document will be translated in Bengali, Burmese, Hmong, Korean, Simplified Chinese, Thai, and Vietnamese. Once the translations are complete, she will email it out to the commissioners and APA community leaders. The civil rights department has Hispanic and Arab liaisons and Denise asked if any commissioners know of anyone in the Asian community who would like to be a liaison for the department.

#### **IX. Public Comments:**

Dr. Tsu-Yin Wu, program director of EMU-CHDIS, is promoting flu vaccinations for the underserved communities this fall. They have mobile clinics currently in Hamtramck and they are looking for more locations for increased access to provide flu vaccinations. She asked the commission for assistance in providing information regarding underserved Asian communities and locations by emailing her.

Roland Hwang mentioned that he is a proponent for SIG 3 and MAPAAC and wants them to consider a workshop on institutional racism. The information of the workshop was shared with SIG 3 and he shared the topics of the workshop. Toshiki commented to SIG 3 that these types of sessions must be aligned with MAPAAC's mission and that they should consider the structure of the session.

**X. No Announcements.**

**XI. Adjournment:**

Reginald Pacis motioned to adjourn the meeting; Aditya Sathi seconded. Motion passed.

The meeting concluded at 10:55 AM

Minutes prepared by Denise Yee Grim, November 24, 2020

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Grace Lee, Interim chair