

**TROY ETHNIC ISSUES ADVISORY BOARD**  
**Minutes for Tuesday, October 14, 2008**

I. Call to Order 7:06 pm

II. Roll Call

Present       Michelle Haight  
                   Veena Rao  
                   Kelly Jones  
                   Mayada Fakhouri  
                   Grigore Buia  
                   Aries Tao, Student Representative  
                   Lily Huang, Student Representative  
                   Cindy Stewart, City Liaison

Absent         John Witt  
                   Karen Yelder  
                   Cathy Francois  
                   Reuben Ellis

Guest:         Lori Bluhm, City Attorney

III. Approval of Minutes – September 2, 2008

Motion to approve September 2, 2008 minutes by Michelle Haight, seconded by Mayada Fakhouri. Approved unanimously.

IV. New Business

a. Introduction of new members:

- Veena Rao has been a resident since 1996 and is a lawyer with Michigan Protection and Advocacy Service. She represents children with disabilities. She came from India at age 13 and has two children, ages 7 and 9, at Troy Union Elementary School.

- Aries Tao, Student Representative, is a senior at Troy High School. She has lived here since fifth grade. She is involved in Future Problem Solvers and is an Environmental Activist. She attended Chinese School and plays piano.

b. Legal Update: City Attorney Lori Bluhm shared her goal to provide Open Meetings Act guidelines to all City Boards and Committees. Lori passed out a reference book to all members. The book contains their mission and goals as well as information on the Michigan Sunshine Laws/Open Meetings Act & FOIA. Michigan adopted “sunshine legislation” as early as 1895.

She noted that “Public Body” applies when there is a quorum of Board Members and it can apply to a sub-committee. This applies to meetings, telephone conference calls or emails when you “reply to all.” The City liaison can send items “to all,” but Board members cannot.

“Open to the Public” means anyone can attend the meetings, tape or televise the proceedings. Keep the door to the meeting room open, and if you have to close the door due to outside noise, place a sign on the door. Regarding public comments, the EIAB can limit speakers based on time limits for the meeting. All meetings must be posted.

Board/Committee minutes must be kept with date, place, time, members present and absent. If a member is absent for long periods of time, the chair can talk to them regarding their absence. Council can replace members.

Every Public Body must comply with the Open Meetings Act because a person challenging this could take them to court. Intentional violations of the OMA are misdemeanors.

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) – Any documents in possession of a governmental body are open to FOIA. Emails, minutes, etc., are public documents.

c. Correspondence/Articles

America’s “whites” will become a minority by 2042, according to the Census Bureau – August 15, 2008.

“A Journey of Hope: Michigan’s Immigrant Experience” is September 27-November 23, 2008 at Macomb Community College.

- Teaching Tolerance Magazine – An article in the Fall 2008 edition has an article, “I Didn’t Know there were Cities in Africa,” that deals with the stereotypes on Africa and the Continent. There is a website: [teachingtolerance.org](http://teachingtolerance.org).

V. Old Business

- a. African American Support Group – Karen is attending this meeting tonight and will report on the meeting at the November meeting.
- b. Troy School District Updates – EIAB is working on opening dialogue with the School district. Kelly put together a proposal and sent it to Tim McAvoy. The proposal is to talk to PTOs/PTAs to encourage diversity within the PTO/PTA Boards. Next month Kelly will report on progress. Kelly is scheduled to speak at the Costello Board next month.
- c. Cultural Brochures – Information brochures regarding Arab, Indian, Chinese and Slovak immigrants will be highlighted initially. Regarding stores, specialty shops, cultural and religious holidays, there is a concern with accuracy. Michelle will send info to Cindy to disseminate to EIAB for input. Kelly had talked to the Sterling Heights liaison for the Diversity Board. Sterling Heights produces informational brochures to help teach tolerance and understanding and to celebrate our differences.

- d. Diversity Workshop - Padma Kuppa (Troy Interfaith Group) and Michelle Haight (EIAB) to present to all Troy administrators. Cultural Connections is four workshops beginning October 22 at Bharatyia Temple. "Arab and Indian Voice" speaking on their background, cultural traditions, addressing students needs. In December, at Shir Tikvah is "Chinese and Jewish Voice." In March 2009, African American and Muslim voice is scheduled.

EIAB has done a lot related to diversity, but they feel there is so much more to do. They feel good about the relationship with the EIAB and Troy Schools.

Staff Report: Thanks to EIAB for all of your support for Troy Daze. The weather was a complete disappointment. Cindy and Kelly sent thank you letters to all EthniCity participants. The subject of Troy Daze EthniCity will be on the November agenda to discuss the work involved and if EIAB can handle it in the future. The discussion will include a breakdown of responsibilities/duties expected of Board members.

VI. Public Comment – none

VII. Member Comment

- a. "Iqbal" by Francesco D'Adamo was assigned to be read by the entire Baker Middle School student body and parents were also encouraged to read it. The school then did projects related to child labor, equality and fair treatment. Michelle recommends the book to the EIAB.
- b. Kelly received a call from Willie Dechavez regarding the CAPA dinner on October 25. She will represent the EIAB at the dinner.

VIII. Motion to adjourn 8:20 pm.

**Next Meeting Tuesday, November 11, 2008 at 7 pm.**

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Kelly Jones, EIAB Chair

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Cindy Stewart, EIAB Recording Secretary