

**TROY ETHNIC ISSUES ADVISORY BOARD  
Minutes for March 2, 2010**

I. Call to Order 7:40 pm

II. Roll Call

Present      Kelly Jones  
                  Lily Huang, Student Rep  
                  Sharon MacDonell  
                  Karen Yelder  
                  Veena Rao  
                  Mayada Fakhouri  
                  David Guo, Student Rep  
                  Cindy Stewart, City Liaison

Absent        Reuben Ellis  
                  Michelle Haight  
                  John Witt  
                  Cathy Francois

III. Approval of Minutes – October 6, 2009

Motion by Kelly Jones  
 Seconded by Karen Yelder to approve the October 6, 2009 minutes.

IV. Correspondence - None

V. Old Business

a. Community Read

The group discussed the fact that the Community Read structured around the book "Stealing Buddha's Dinner," was an excellent event sponsored by the EIAB, Friends of the Troy Public Library, and Community Affairs with a grant from the Michigan Humanities Council. Fifty people were in attendance including Pauline Walker's AP English class from Athens High School. The survey responses show participants viewed the event as outstanding; participants provided excellent comments and clearly valued the experience. The Board members agreed to all come back in May with book suggestions for a fall Community Read.

Veena suggested also coming up with reading materials for the students in elementary and middle school, with the intent that book ideas can be incorporated into the monthly cultural connections.

b. Leonard Elementary School Cultural Celebration

This was the first event ever of this type for Leonard Elementary School. It had been suggested to Principal Mr. Cottone by Sharon MacDonell based on ideas/best practices from similar events at Schroeder Elementary and Smith Middle schools which were incorporated into Leonard's event. Twenty countries were represented in the gym with booths complete with food, a cultural "fashion show" with 62 students, and entertainment provided for the great crowd in attendance. Leonard has a fairly new Cultural Connection Committee.

Kelly Jones still would like to do a community wide Cultural Connection Celebration Event. She will contact all principals for their Cultural Committee representatives.

Smith Middle School is having a cultural event at the end of March. Troy High School's is scheduled for May 27, the first such event at Troy High in a while. Lily Huang will email the Board regarding this event.

c. MLK Celebration

The "Celebration of Freedom" Event held in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr., was once again a well-attended event. The keynote address made by Roop Raj, a FOX2 reporter and anchor and a graduate of Troy High School, was outstanding and very well received. The performance by the Troy Honors Choir was also outstanding. The essay contest theme: "What can we learn from Martin Luther King, Jr.'s peaceful approach to social issues and challenges?" provided a great tie between English classes in the schools and the event, drawing young minds in to reflect on Dr. King's legacy.

d. African American Support Group

The next meeting of this group is Monday, March 8 at the Troy School District Administrative Building. Oakland University Director of Nursing Dr. Frances Jackson will speak on the topic: "Are You a Victim or Victorious?"

VI. New Business

- a. Plans for 2010: on the heels of a successful Community Read the EIAB wants to pursue another one in the fall. The Board discussed the possibility of holding a dinner or some sort of volunteer recognition, but Kelly Jones commented that the focus should really be on bringing the diverse cultures together. Veena Rao said one large event would prompt the Board to focus only on one event instead of creating smaller events around the community, perhaps at places of worship, the Community Center, etc. It was noted that Troy has so many unique cultures that the community should be aware of and maybe they could be matched up with various locations around Troy on a Sunday afternoon or evening. David Guo will share information regarding an upcoming Chinese Dance event at the Chinese Community Center in Madison Heights. The Polish

Cultural Center sponsors numerous events with Polish Dancers, entertainers and food. Another idea is for the EIAB to help with World Peace/Sabbath Day every January.

- b. Special Millage Election: Kelly Jones expressed her concern about the Ethnic Issues Advisory Board being listed on a brochure mailed to residents in Troy advocating a position for the recent Special Election – specifically, a “no” vote. She noted that as a city sponsored board, members should not endorse a political agenda; members can do so as individuals, but not as a Board. Kelly said she was upset to see the EIAB name used as a political tool within the city. She reminded the Board that we represent all citizens of this community, and to mislead the public that we have a political affiliation is unacceptable. Individuals should use their names to endorse a cause, not mislead the public into thinking the board as a whole endorses a political campaign. To use your seat on a board as blanket endorsement is misleading and unacceptable.

Mayada Fakhouri said she was surprised that brochure came out listing the Ethnic Issues Advisory Board.

**Kelly Jones made a motion to pass a resolution to not allow the Ethnic Issues Advisory Board to endorse or take any political action using the name of the Ethnic Issues Advisory Board.** The motion was seconded by Karen Yelder.

Discussion followed with Kelly Jones reiterating the importance of the EIAB being a non-partisan board. Veena Rao wondered if the City Attorney should investigate whether the Troy Citizens United was allowed to use the name of the EIAB. A roll call vote was taken regarding the motion: Kelly Jones, yes; Sharon MacDonell, yes; David Guo, yes; Lily Huang, yes; Veena Rao, yes; Mayada Fakhouri, yes; Karen Yelder, yes. **The motion passed unanimously.**

VII. Adjournment 8:30 pm

Motion by Karen Yelder, seconded by Sharon MacDonell. Meeting adjourned.

**Next Meeting Tuesday, May 4, 2010 at 7 pm**

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Kelly Jones, EIAB Vice Chair

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Cindy Stewart, EIAB Recording Secretary