

MINUTES

GOVERNOR'S ETHNIC AMERICAN ADVISORY COUNCIL

August 18, 2006 – 3:00 P.M.

Jim Thorpe Building – Conference Room G-91
2101 North Lincoln Boulevard
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73105

Advance written notice of regular scheduled meetings was filed with the Secretary of State on December 14, 2005. The agenda for this meeting was posted with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). This meeting was conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Open Meeting Act, Section 301 through 314 of Title 25.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Dr. Sandra Kaye Rana, Chair
Dr. Riaz Ahmad
Malaka A. Elyazgi
Mohammad Farzaneh
Dr. Basel S. Hassoun

MEMBERS ABSENT

Marjaneh Seirafi-Pour, Vice-Chair/Secretary
Dr. Fayyaz H. Hashmi
Dr. Mohammad Karami

OPM STAFF PRESENT

Brenda C. Thornton
Linda Williamson

VISITORS PRESENT

Mohammad Elyazgi – Oklahoma Department of Transportation
Pamela Wilcox – Programs Coordinator, Cultural and Heritage Tourism,
Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department
Judy Gibbs Robinson – Reporter, The Oklahoman

A. CALL TO ORDER.

Dr. Sandra Rana, Chair of the Governor's Ethnic American Advisory Council, called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

B. INTRODUCTION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS, STAFF AND GUESTS.

Chair Rana introduced special guest, Pamela Wilcox, who serves as the Programs Coordinator for the Oklahoma Department of Tourism and Recreation's Department of Cultural and Heritage Tourism. Council members were asked to provide self-introductions. Chair Rana introduced and thanked OPM staff members, Brenda Thornton and Linda Williamson, for their support and assistance. Chair Rana welcomed everyone and thanked each for attending.

C. REVIEW OF MINUTES FROM THE MAY 19, 2006, MEETING.

The minutes of May 19, 2006, were presented and reviewed. Because no quorum was present, this item was tabled until later in the meeting. Upon revisiting this item, the minutes for May 19, 2006, were approved as presented following a motion by Dr. Riaz Ahmad; second by Dr. Basel Hassoun.

D. DISCUSSIONS.

The council reviewed and discussed Enrolled SR 125, which created the Legislative Task Force on Illegal Immigration. Also discussed was Representative Terrill's Interim Study on State Immigration Reform. Chair Rana noted that to his credit, Rep. Terrill's Task Force was created as a result of his meeting with concerned citizens who informed him of their concerns, the possible ramifications, and their recommendation that he should consider some type of review and study of the impact on the state resulting from his proposed legislation on immigration reform. Chair Rana recommended that the council continue to monitor the Task Force and be informed of the results and findings.

Dr. Ahmad made a motion to invite a representative or representatives of the Task Force to the December 1, 2006, council meeting and to extend an invitation to attend to the other governor's advisory councils; second by Dr. Hassoun. The motion carried unanimously. Chair Rana further noted that this meeting would allow the councils to be informed on the findings, results, and what action is being taken, as well as give the councils an opportunity to share resources and offer their assistance.

E. TRAINING REPORT: OPEN MEETING ACT AND OPEN RECORDS ACT

Mohammad Farzaneh attended the training held at OPM and conducted by the State Office of the Attorney General on the Open Meeting Act and Open Records Act. He gave an overview of the training with emphasis on those items of particular interest to and impact on the council. He commented that he found the training very informative and interesting.

F. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

It was acknowledged that the Governor's Ethnic American Advisory Council's second anniversary was on May 27, 2006. Dr. Ahmad made a motion to send a letter to Governor Henry expressing their appreciation for his having created the council; second by Mr. Farzaneh. Motion carried unanimously.

Chair Rana acknowledged the upcoming Ramadan holidays beginning September 25, 2006. Malaka Elyazgi made a motion that Mr. Farzaneh be placed in charge of the scheduling and arrangements for the Iftar dinner; second by Dr. Hassoun. Motion carried unanimously.

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS.

Dr. Hassoun asked for an update on the project of documenting the Middle Eastern history that began with the presentation by Dr. R. Michael Bracy, Historian and Professor of History at Oklahoma State University (OSU). Chair Rana suggested that individual groups might want to start collecting information and material for possible exhibition at the Oklahoma History Center.

Mr. Farzaneh brought to the table for discussion the vacant council position created by Karen Bak's resignation. Mr. Farzaneh made a motion that the council send a letter to Governor

Henry recommending that Waseem Salous be appointed to the council; second by Dr. Ahmad. Motion carried unanimously.

H. NEW BUSINESS.

Ms. Thornton commented on the documents that were included in their meeting folders -- the HR Exchange, OPM's Annual Report and an article on OPM's EEO/AA Status Report. She noted that in an effort to make the statistics available to everyone in the state, the EEO/AA Status Report was available on line.

I. COMMENTS FROM VISITORS.

Chair Rana invited Pamela Wilcox to make a brief presentation about her job at the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department. Ms. Wilcox is responsible for coordinating and developing a program that will give a clear understanding of the true culture and heritage of Ethnic Americans in Oklahoma so that this culture and heritage can be shared with those visiting Oklahoma. She asked the council for their assistance in collecting any information, even more accurate census type data, which would enable her to give an accurate portrayal of how the state has truly evolved.

J. ADJOURNMENT.

Chair Rana adjourned the meeting at 4:55 p.m.