

Asian American Festival 2007



Daley Center Plaza/Chicago

In Celebration of Asian American Heritage Month
Hosted by the Pakistani American Community/May 21-25

9th ANNUAL ASIAN AMERICAN FESTIVAL 1ST PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING

MARCH 13, 2007
MINUTES

The first Planning Committee Meeting of the Asian American Coalition of Chicago for the 2007 9th Annual Asian American Festival, was held at the Sabri Banquet Hall 6424 N. Western Ave. Chicago, IL 60645, March 13, 2007. The meeting was called to order at 6:50 p.m. by Sharmeen Younus, 2008 AACC Chair.

The Pakistani American Community is the 2008 host community.

ATTENDEES

Syed Wahaj Ahmed, Trisila Davidge, Naisy Dolar, Waqas Durrani, Nick Gakhal, Harjinder Khaira, Hameedullah Khan, Sunny Kular, Handoko Kusumo, Lucy Kusumo, Prem Lalvani, Leonard Louie, Nyoman Mahartayasa, Adnan Mehmood, John Miller, Roosy Miller, Gulzar Multani, Sandra Otaka, Faisal Rashid, Moh Saini, Fahad Sami, Kiran Siddiqi, Afzal Sodagar, Alvin Sulaiman, Younus Suleman, Nadia Wilson, and Sharmeen Younus

I. Welcome and Introductions – Sharmeen Younus, 2008 AACC Chair

II. Old Business- No Old Business

III. New Business

Committees Introduction

a. Committees- **Officers, Committee, and Committee chairs were introduced as follows:**

- Corporate Sponsors: **Waqas Durrani and Anita Bower**
- Secretary: **Fyza Parviz**
- Programming: **Nadia Wilson, Nida Maniar and Kiersten**
- Technical/Webmaster: **Tariq Hasan**
- Volunteers: **Kiran Siddiqi**
- Program Book: **Fahad Sami and Saad Sami**
- Vendors: **Sharmeen Younus and Nadia Akhtar**
- Decorations: ?
- Community Outreach: ?

b. Administration/Planning Update – Pam Leeming, Sharmeen Younus, and Nadia Akhtar

- Provided all updates on permits and status of application.
- Daley Plaza has been reserved for the Asian Festival, Pam and Sharmeen are working with Mecca Perry for all permits and certificates
- Few changes this year, MB realty making changes on how the electricity will be set up and the city wants to use their own company for cleaning rather than the AACC hiring an outside company due to issues in the past. We are waiting to get quotes on that.
- The board of directors for this year has been changed with the IRS and we will from here on use Tax ID obtained by John Miller for the AACC for this year moving forward. This documentation will be passed on from year to year to avoid unnecessary delays
- Brief overview was given on how the program will run this year. It will be similar to past years with programming sessions falling between 11:30-1:00PM
- Another concern for this year is lining up the stage in a way so it doesn't get too hot. Will check with tent company to see if they can provide something to cover the stage with .



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Administration- Continued

- Bank accounts (one for festival and one for annual gala) have been opened. For anyone donating /sponsoring Festival will need to make checks out to "Asian American Festival 2007"
- Vendors: approximately 15-20 vendors (12 merchandise and 10 food vendors)
- Cost of vendor is as follows: Food Vendor: \$1200 + \$300 security deposit Merchandise vendor: \$700 +\$300 security deposit. Suggestion from member of community was
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A.

- Updates on the dinner planning are posted at our website: www.aacchicago.org.
- The block of reserved hotel rooms at the discounted price will expire Feb 12th.
- On Feb 22nd, most of the funds for the guarantee is due to Hyatt; please fund all ads and tables as soon as possible.
- Tonight is the deadline for sponsors and ads, which should be funded as soon as possible.

B. Floral and Décor – Irene Cualoping reporting for Judy Yuen

- Still seeking volunteers to assist early on the event day. These volunteers can also assist as part of the Reception Committee.

C. Ticket Sales –

- 62 tables have been sold so far. Tickets are available for sale at the meeting.
- Dinner entrees are a medallion of beef and fish combination or vegetarian. Purchasers should indicate how many vegetarian servings are needed otherwise the default selection will be the combination.

D. Finance – No report today due to transition.

E. Sponsorships – Woon-Wah Siu

- The following corporate sponsors have committed: Harris Bank (\$3,000.00), Bell, Boyd & Lloyd (\$1,500.00), DeVry (\$1,500.00) and Baker & McKenzie (\$1,500.00).
- Working on many others.
- It would be helpful if each organization can get two full-page ads for the program book.

F. Programming – C.W. Chan

- Two lion teams from the Dragon Association will lead guests into ballroom.
- The opening piece will include a dragon dance, singing of The National Anthem by Kelly Uchima and posting of colors by the Chinatown American Legion Post. More community representatives are needed for the National Anthem and interested individuals should contact Jelly Carandang.
- Program after dinner will include the keynoter (Laureen Ong – President of National Geographic Channel) and awards to be followed by the Unity number, "Our Silk Road."
- Program after dinner will be about 20 minutes and focus on our unity. We want dancers from each community to participate in dance based on two songs ("This Land is My Land" or "God Bless the World"). So far, we have dancers who are Chinese, Filipino, Indian, Indonesian and Korean.
- Federal elected officials and State Constitutional officers will be the only government officials invited to speak during the program on the mainstage
- Program rehearsals for performers will be from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. at Furama Restaurant (2828 South Wentworth Avenue, Chicago) on Thursday, February 8th and Thursday, February 15th; and at the



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Hyatt O'Hare on Wednesday, February 28th. Refreshments will be provided. Sound and tech call is for 3 p.m. on day of event, Saturday, March 3rd at the Hyatt.

G. Awards – C.W. Chan

- An email has been sent out announcing the awardees of the Pan Asian American Ping Tom Memorial Award, Grand Asian American Award, Community Service Award and Youths Who Excel Award. As we wanted to announce the awardees at the January press conference, the final Awardee decisions were made at the December committee meeting.
- CW Chan described some of the questions he raised to the committee:
 - Who is eligible to vote (all those who volunteer to serve on the committee or one representative from each community)?
 - Which communities are eligible to give out a Community Service award?
 - Is the Grand Asian Award given for a person's potential to help the Asian American community or past accomplishments helpful to our community?
 - Should the Ping Tom Memorial Award be given to someone active with AACC or someone outside of AACC?
 - Should the committee consider knowledge of nominee outside of the information on the application?
- Youths Who Excel Award – The quality of the nominees is improved. Unfortunately, the Japanese community nominated someone who was ineligible (older than college freshman) and have not nominated someone else.
- Grand Asian Award – The Hon. George Van Dusen was the only nominee. He has been supportive of the event and it is good to recognize mayors of smaller towns with large Asian American populations.
- Ping Tom Memorial Pan Asian American Award – There were two nominees (Kamran Khan of the Pakistani American community and Mohinderjit Singh Saini of the Indian American community) with Moh Saini selected as this year's awardee. Since a number of committee members were absent, Chan sought a consensus decision so that if those absent were present and had voted differently, the results would be the same.
 - Rashid Chaudary expressed his disappointment with the result of the Ping Tom award. Although Mr. Saini is a deserving candidate, Kamran Khan had the vision that this award be named for Ping Tom. Khan was previously selected for the award twice and both times, he humbly declined. The Pakistani AACC members urged him to allow his nomination this year and are disappointed that he was not selected. Chaudary recommended that the host committee make award decisions rather than an award committee. If an award committee is used to make decision, it should consist of past chairs rather than whomever volunteers to serve on this committee.
 - Chan commented that while one quality nominee would result in everyone being happy, we should try to have multiple candidates but not allow the decision to become a divisive issue. There is merit in having the host committee decide on awardees but seems to be less democratic. The issue of who makes award decisions should be addressed so that future awards will be handled in a manner acceptable to everyone.
 - Chaudary proposed that the Ping Tom Award be made by the Host Committee. C.W. asked if that was binding on future host committees. Paul Park said that the Executive Committee can propose a new procedure on future awards but for this case, he supported the decision



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even though he voted for Mr. Khan for his impact on Asian American empowerment locally as well as nationally.

- Younus Suleman suggested that the practice that the Ping Tom awardee not come from the host community be changed so that Mr. Khan could be nominated next year. Mr. Chan felt that procedures should not be changed based on an individual case.
- Prem Lalvani said that the executive committee consists of former chairs and that this committee can formalize certain procedures. This Awards Committee allowed people sign up for the committee and become voting members and allowed more than one vote from certain communities. Last year, the Awards Committee procedures were formalized – one person from each Asian ethnic group. Mr. Chan said that those who signed the committee roster did not necessarily have a vote. Lalvani felt that nominees should be disqualified if they “seek” the award.
- Leonard Louie supported the idea that the Host Committee select the Ping Tom award. This award should bring people together rather than be a source of division. In the future, we should broaden the nominee pool by asking local ethnic media to publicize the nomination process and deadlines. Jin Lee supported the recommendation of chair (decision by the host committee). He also felt that the nominees shouldn't come from just within the AACCC members.
- Irene Cualoping stated that this discussion reminded her about Ping Tom's spirit. In fact, he was not selected the first year that he was nominated. He said that he was honored simply by being nominated.
- Roosy Miller asked whether awardees will receive complimentary tickets. A memo with instructions to awardees was sent out via email about purchasing tickets and congratulatory ads. The Chair stated that each community should invite the Awardee as their guest. This would apply also to any of their own local media. After discussion, Woon-Wah Siu graciously offered Bell, Boyd & Lloyd's table for youth awardees.

H. Program Book and Advertisement Sales – Esther Wong

- The committee is working hard on the program book and the ad deadline is today. Ads need to be digital and sent to programbook@aacchicago.org and need to be paid as soon as possible.
- The email about congratulatory ads will be resent to awardees tomorrow.

I. Communications and Media – Irene Cualoping

- The recent press conference on the dinner/celebrity presenters/awardees and the Mike North/Senn athletic field issue was attended by three TV networks and reached 1.7 million Nielson households. Ad equivalency cost of this airtime would be almost \$100,000 if we had to purchase it. The only major stations not covering the press conference were NBC and CLTV. Although John Kass' article in the Tribune was not supportive of our position, it brought attention to the issue, since it appeared on Page 2.
- The “Chicago Tribune” did a follow-up story by a different reporter on January 11, 2007.
- The Committee has been reaching out to the community press on both Senn issue and the celebration. Recent press rounds were made on Devon Avenue; in addition to the downtown press conference and Chinatown outreach. We hope to do Korean press rounds in the near future.
- We are working on ftp access for those working on the Program Book.
- Joanne Moy will assist Irene Cualoping with scripts. The Committee would like assistance in getting the correct pronunciations for all of the awardee names.
- ABC7 and FOX Chicago TV (pending corporate approval) are committed to buying tables; working on others.
- Laureen Ong, our outstanding keynote speaker, is the president of the National Geographic Channel which was founded in 2000. The channel has grown from 10 million to 56 million



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subscribers. She spent 7½ years in Chicago, was named one of the 100 most influential persons in cable TV and served as the only Asian Pacific American holding a general manager position in a top 10 television market. Please help spread the word.

- Outreach – Susan Ng-Harroun
- The Chinatown Chamber has been using its various channels (website, newsletter, Chinatown special events calendar, email blasts, etc.) to publicize the event. The Chamber also serves as the hotline for inquiries.

III. New Business

No new business.

IV. Adjournment and Next Meeting Date

The next meeting is Wednesday, February 21, 2007 at CASL Senior Housing (2108 South Princeton), and the walk-through, rehearsal on-site is Wednesday, February 28, 2007 at Hyatt Regency O'Hare (9300 West Brwn Mawr, Rosemont). The meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

David Wu, Secretary

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