

Cultural Connections Committee Minutes

Location: City Hall Auditorium

Date/ Time: 4/29/2026 12:00-1:00PM

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 12:00PM by Chair Iraida Muñoz.

2. Roll Call and Introductions

Roll Call and introductions were conducted by Chair Iraida Muñoz at 12:01PM.

3. Attendance- 25 people

- **Members in Attendance (In-Person): 9**

Bernadette Melton Plant, Donna Marceau, Marina Vaz, Iraida Muñoz, Xiannglan Zhu, Meta Vornehm, Babara Costa, Denial Healey, Bob Cioppa

- **Non-Members in Attendance (In-Person): 12**

Jodan Barnett, Alejandro Urrutia, Carlos Salinas, Irvin Perez, Cesar Rodriguez-Enriquez, Anya Gretchell, Jessica Hagg, Jonathan Spira- Savett, Ruben De Jesus, Rabbi John, Priscilla Colón, Emily Vassar.

- **Members via zoom: 1**

Elizabeth Berry

- **Non-Members Attending via Zoom: 3**

David Holt, Joslyn Kuchinski, Nonny Egbuonu

4. Approval of January and February 2026 Meeting Minutes

Donna noted a revision of March meeting minutes.

“Donna shared that the Council for Community Transportation monthly meeting will be held on March 26, and announced the upcoming bicycle sale on May 2, 2026.”

With that correction, the minutes were approved by all attending members.

5. As an opening activity, attendees actively shared and discussed their goals in response to the prompt, “What is one goal you want to accomplish in April?”

6. Multicultural Festival Update

- Originally scheduled for September 12. Rabbi John explained the conflict with Rosh Hashanah and the need for rescheduling.
- After consultation and coordination with the Mayor's Office and stakeholders, the event was rescheduled to **September 26 (Saturday)**.
- Time: **12:00 PM – 5:00 PM**
- Location: **Renaissance Park of Nashua**
- Planning committee continues to meet; further updates forthcoming.

7. Guest Speaker Presentation – Struggle, Strength and Freedom

Speaker: Richard Haines (University of New Hampshire Admissions)

Key Topics:

- Personal life story emphasizing perseverance and education
- Importance of education as a pathway to opportunity and success
- Barriers faced by underrepresented and first-generation students

College Admissions Insights:

- Academic transcript is the most critical factor
- Importance of Core courses (Math, Science, English, Social Studies, Foreign Language), extracurricular balance, strong writing and essays and letters of recommendation.
- Increasing trend toward test-optional admissions
- Encouragement for students to:
 - Research programs early
 - Contact admissions counselors
 - Build academic discipline and long-term goals

Discussion Highlights:

- Alejandro raised concerns about students with lower GPAs but strong effort not receiving recognition. Richard responded by discussing expanded scholarship opportunities and holistic review practices.
- Irvin asked about how to learn and choose career paths. Richard advised researching online, reviewing program curricula, and contacting admissions counselors.
- Iraida talked about some open questions as cultural, language, and systemic barriers affecting students' admission.
- Emphasis on outreach and engagement, especially for underserved communities
- Appreciation expressed for student participation during school vacation.

8. Community Announcements

- Alejandro from the Rotary Organization presented electronic recycling drives to fund scholarships.
- Donna shared that the Council for Community Transportation monthly meeting will be held on May 28 and bike sale is on May 2 starting at 9am. Address 17 Airport Rd, Nashua. Anyone, especially those high schoolers who want to have a voucher or a free bike, can email Donna directly.
- Meta shared Window Dressers which is an organization that help people build low-cost window inserts for insulation for their homes or apartments. America's turning 250 this year, and there's going to be a religious liberty, religious freedom event that her church is hosting on June 14th.
- David from Welcoming NH shared International Workers' Day event on May 1. It will be from 11- 1pm at the State House. Welcome NH meeting will be on May 14. They will have the executive director of the New Hampshire American Friend Service, talking about mutual Aid and finding resources for immigrants.
- Nonny shared "Let's Talk" Zoom meeting every first and third Thursday of the month. When: 1st & 3rd Thursdays
- Time: 12 noon-1 pm
- Eastern Time (US and Canada)
- Join Zoom Meeting
- [Join our Cloud HD Video Meeting](#) Meeting ID: 876 1895 6985 OR: Dial 1 (646) 558-8656 Meeting ID: 87618956985
- Joslyn shared Juneteenth celebration planning it's in its early stages. Organizers are seeking volunteers, performers, family-friendly activities, music, and food vendors. Interested individuals can join the planning committee via a WhatsApp group by contacting the organizer.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:08 PM.

Next meeting will be on Wednesday, May 27th, 2026 at noon- Nashua City Hall Auditorium with a virtual option for nonmembers as needed.