

# **Nassau Community Connections, Inc.**

## **Minutes**

**Tuesday March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021 7:00 PM**

**Via Zoom**

### **Attendees:**

Chaplain Michael Needham, President; Lori Clark, Treasurer; John Imhoff, Secretary; Jean Wagner, Nassau resident; Shaykha Sheila DS Foraker, AQRT Sufi Order; Diana Murphy, Nassau Resource Center; Pastor Dion Marquit, Grace United Methodist Church; Carol Siver, Grace United Methodist Church; Joseph Gil, Nassau resident; Dana Salazar, Esq.; Lori Goldberg, Nassau resident.

### **Meeting Minutes:**

Opening prayer led by Shaykha Foraker .

The committee approved the minutes from the February 2021 meeting, with the clarification that henceforth, the committee shall be identified as Nassau Community Connections, Inc., the official name of our organization.

### **General Announcements**

Chaplain Needham indicated that upgrades to the resource guide were finalized. The guide has been published on the Nassau Community Connections, Inc. website and hard copies have been laminated for distribution with a cover letter. Lori Clark will provide access to a Google document, listing the locations where the guide will be distributed and members can put their name next to those locations they would like to distribute the guides to.

Most of the items that had been placed on the Grace United Methodist Church - House porch for taking or disposal have been disposed of with the exception of the top right piano. The piano will be moved back into the building unless there are members who they have contacts would be interested in taking it away.

Carol Siver indicated that there are four filing cabinets in the back of what will become the Community Center space that need to be disposed of. Two are filled with choir music, some of which may be as old as the church. She hates to see the music go to waste, so if anyone is interested or knows of someone who might be interested in it, please reach out to her.

Joseph Gil indicated that the bulk of his revisions to the Nassau Community Connections website were complete. The site has been restructured and updated with a new theme. Some of the committee met a week ago and agreed on proposed changes and many of those changes have already been made. Joe is also working on info graphics that can be added to our Facebook page, and maybe an Instagram account that will include more content and get the word out to more people about our group and our events. The committee would like for the webpage to include an interactive calendar that members of the community can use to identify planned community and the committee can plan events on. The committee would of course moderate the use of the calendar to prevent misuse.

### **Assistance Provided**

Community Child Care has been a part of the Nassau community for 35 years and was dangerously close to having to close its doors. Currently the center is caring for a handful of children some of whom have learning

disabilities. Diana Murphy reached out to Chaplain Needham and some other personal contacts and asked about communicating the need for assistance with payroll to get the center through until the Fall. Nassau Community Connections, Inc. helped raise almost \$5,000, and Diana was able to raise more than \$5,000 from other donors. These donations coupled with the almost \$6,400 received from the State's Payroll Protection Program will help them make it through the hardship caused by the pandemic. Diana and the Center are very grateful for all the contributions and the show of confidence demonstrated by the community.

Chaplain Needham spoke about a recent situation involving a woman in desperate need of housing. The individual works hard and earns just a little too much to be entitled for assistance and she is currently sleeping on a floor. There was a lead on an apartment for her but the opportunity did not work out. Lori Clark indicated that another apartment had been found, that the woman was scheduled to look at it this Friday, and hopefully this will all work out.

### **Grant Writing**

There was a good discussion amongst the committee regarding the creation of a sub-committee to pursue available grants. Goal to see what is available for the purposes of community outreach, transportation, and housing. Joseph Gil volunteered to write grants, indicating that he had already did Stewarts Holiday Grant and identified the need to see what grants are available, and then to prioritize our needs. Subcommittee of volunteers to work on grants includes Chaplain Needham, Joseph Gil, Diana Murphy, Pastor Marquit, and Jean Wagner.

Discussions later in the meeting focused on the types of grants we would pursue. Grants that we will focus on will help with running the community center, with supporting transportation needs in the area, and assist with the bigger picture goal of having money available for food distribution and/or to assist organizations such as the Sunshine Fund, or even to help specific individuals. Ultimately, the goal would be to find grants to fund sheltering options or affordable housing in the area.

### **Community Connections Email**

Lori Clark raised a discussion around email accounts specifically for the Nassau Community Connections group for general inquiries for information or to announce social events, etc. Discussions were also had regarding the officers having individual emails associated with the organization so they were separate from personal email accounts. Suggestions were raised for having volunteers monitor the organization email accounts and around the possibility of assigning a rotation for responding to emails so the responsibility didn't fall on a single person. More discussion on this to come on this.

### **A New Webmaster**

Joseph Gil has been extremely helpful in revamping the Community Resource Guide, designing our new letterhead and business cards, reorganizing and editing our website and Facebook page. In recognition of his efforts, John Imhoff nominated him as the Nassau Community Connections Webmaster. The nomination was seconded by Chaplain Needham and unanimously agreed upon by those present. Mr. Gill graciously accepted the appointment.

### **Nassau Community Connections Inc. Committee meeting Schedule**

A motion was raised by Lori Clark to have the NCC committee meetings on the second Tuesday of each month at 7PM. The motion was seconded by Chaplain Needham and carried by majority agreement.

## **Community Outreach**

On Saturday March 27<sup>th</sup> a drive-thru food drive to benefit The Gathering Place and the Nassau Resource Center will be held by the Nassau Youth Committee. The event will be between 11 AM and 1 PM at the Town Hall. As a special treat, the Easter Bunny will be there to see the children. Chaplain Needham has invited some of the Community Connections members to come and participate in the event.

Last year's drive-through chicken BBQ event was very successful with proceeds going to Nassau Resource Center, The Gathering Place, and the Sunshine Fund. We plan to do this again this year and we'll and we need to start talking about that date soon as there is a lot of work to do and planning involved. We will probably need to have more kitchens involved as well in order to support the event. Lori Clark also suggested that this year some of our fundraising go to NCC. The committee can decide how the money generated from fundraising events is distributed as long as the funds go to helping the community.

Pastor Marquit raised the idea of an outdoor food cabinet to make food and supplies available in a location 24/7 as they are doing in North Chatham. The committee discussed that this was a very worthwhile goal, but that it would be very difficult to maintain such a cabinet in Nassau at this time. This might be a point for further discussion when the Community Center is up and running.

Giving Tuesday – At the end of the year Facebook offered a platform for setting up a fundraiser for a charitable organization. Lori Clark and Susan Sweig (sp?) both chose to highlight NCC and then promoted it to their friends and raised a lot of money. Many of the donations came from people who had moved away from the area but loved supporting our cause. Facebook also contributed about \$100. Lori will be doing this again next year and hopes others will join her.

## **Mission Statement**

Chaplain Needham discussed the need for the group to have a mission statement, that we could have on our website's landing page. This mission statement will define who we are, and what our purposes are. This will ultimately lead to our vision statement which will define where we want to go in the future including goals and strategies. A subcommittee of volunteers was organized to start developing the mission statement that included Shaykha Foraker, Pastor Marquit, Joseph Gil, Lori Clark and John Imhoff.

Dana Salazar, Esq. reported that she had a draft of the NCC bylaws ready for review and would get them to Chaplain Needham tomorrow.

The meeting was closed with a prayer led by Pastor Marquit .

Next Meeting – Tuesday April 13, 2021