

**CIVIC CENTER COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
April 3, 2015**

Attendees:

CCC Members: Chair Commissioner John Budd, Commissioner Lowell Alexander, Commissioner John Harrity **Absent:** Commissioner Jim Knowlton & Commissioner John Brissette

City: John Odell & Candee Raphaelson

Guests: Ashish Cowlagi & Puneet Kohli – India Society of Worcester

SMG: Sandy Dunn, James Moughan

Minutes Prepared by: Paige Williamson, SMG

1. Call to Order:

Chairman Budd brought the meeting to order at 9:05am.

2. Rent Credit Request Follow Up – India Society of Worcester / August 15, 2015

Chairman Budd thanked John Odell and Candee Raphaelson for being able to organize an additional Commission meeting on such short notice.

Chairman Budd welcomed Mr. Ashish Cowlagi & Mr. Puneet Kohli representing the India Society of Worcester for taking the time to present to the Commission this morning in support of their rent free request for an India Society of Worcester Festival on August 15th, 2015 from 2:30pm – 8pm in the DCU Center Exhibition Hall space.

Mr. Cowlagi & Mr. Kohli provided a brief history on the India Society itself stating the organization originally formed in 1963. The festivals began at Worcester State College, some 27 years ago, then relocating to the Italian/American Center. Two years ago, they celebrated their 50th anniversary and launched a strategic plan to continue to grow and strengthen the culture, keeping it alive and thriving in the Commonwealth (currently, the second largest minority group in the state of Massachusetts). This year's event would include an additional twenty-six (26) smaller groups to add to the overall attendance and the festival would be highlighting free health services, cultural programs, ethnic food, music and dancing. Their goal is to grow the attendance for this year from 2,000 to 5,000. By the year 2020, attendance goal is focused on potentially 8,000 - 10,000 attendees.

Commissioner Harrity stated the obligation and responsibility of the Civic Center Commission is to the City of Worcester and to ensure that there are no additional costs to the tax payer which is taken into consideration when approving/denying a request. This includes overhead costs like air conditioning and heating expenses of the facility. Commissioner Harrity asked Sandy Dunn about how food and beverage would be handled. Ms. Dunn responded that a Food & Beverage buyout would be part of this event agreement due to the unique nature of the cuisine and that this would likely cover the utility cost. No liquor would be served, unless supplied by in-house Savor Catering. Chairman Budd stated that he definitely wanted to see a long term commitment from this organization should the rent free be approved.

Mr. Cowlagi continued that he has only seen more growth in his organization and has received backing with sponsorship support. The intention of this year's request would be to "get footing on the ground", with some partial assistance possible for next year, but beyond that, the goal is for self-sufficiency.

Commissioner Alexander motioned to grant the Rent Free Day to the India Society of Worcester for their August 15th, 2015 Festival; seconded by Commissioner Harrity. (3 Yeas, 0 Nays) *Motion Passed.*

Mr. Cowlagi & Mr. Puneet Kohli were very appreciative of the Commission's support for their upcoming celebratory event.

3. Adjournment

Chairman Budd motioned to adjourn; seconded by Commissioner Alexander. (3 yeas, 0 nays)
Motion passed.

Meeting Adjourned – 9:35am