

Syria-Antigonish Families Embrace (SAFE) Society
Annual General Meeting

March 22, 2022
6:30-8:30pm
Conference Room A, Keating Millenium Centre

Present: Qasim Azaiza, Mark Ballard, Jack Beaton, Bronwen Cooke, Harry Daemen, Lucille Harper, Dwight How, Sami Hudhud, Anuj Jain, Jyotsna Jain, Helen Lebel, Kenzie MacNeil, Carrigan Martell, Kirsten Mueller, Cindy Murphy, Mike O'Brien, Sue O'Brien, Sheila Sears, Othman Soufan, Michael Steinitz, Norine Verberg, Peter Wade, Gary Wong

Minutes

It was acknowledged that we are holding our meeting in Mi'kmak'i, the ancestral land and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaw people. We recognize that we are all treaty people. We thank the Mi'kmaw people for caring for and nurturing their lands and waters and for sharing with all people who live here.

Agenda Item: Welcome and Introductions

Lucille Harper

Agenda Item: Financial Review Engagement

Sheila Sears

Discussion:

Sheila Sears presented the Financial Review Engagement, with a brief synopsis. Heather Murphy from the accounting firm of MacDonald and Murphy Inc. performed the review and concluded that the proper accounting practices were adhered to according to standards for a charitable organization.

A full financial audit will be conducted this coming year, as per requirements of the IRCC. In future years SAFE will submit a request to IRCC that SAFE completes a full financial audit only every 5 years due to the very high cost of an audit for a small organization such as SAFE.

Actions:

The Financial Review Engagement report will be filed on the SAFE website for public access.

Sheila Sears moved to adopt the Financial Review for 2021.

Seconded by Harry Daemen.

The Financial Review Engagement report was accepted unanimously.

Sheila Sears moved that a financial audit be conducted by MacDonald and Murphy Inc. for 2022.

Seconded by Peter Wade.

All in favour.

Agenda Item: Resettlement: The Joys, Surprises, and Heartfelt Moments of Volunteers

Discussion:

Norine Verberg, Bronwen Cooke, Jack Beaton, and Peter Wade spoke about some favourite moments and memories of volunteering with SAFE.

Agenda Item: How Do I Get Involved with SAFE?

Discussion:

A discussion took place around looking more closely at the transition that families make into feeling more a part of the community of Antigonish. What does the Town of Antigonish think about having a more diverse community? How do we make it easier for families to feel like they are a part of this community? Person-to-person interactions are at the core of what creates relationships and understanding between all community members.

Members of SAFE have been working to create a Rural Resettlement Model that would support some of the unique settlement challenges of a rural setting.

Agenda Item: SAFE Highlights for 2021

Committee Chairs

Discussion:

An annual report was circulated. Lucille Harper provided a summary of the SAFE Annual Report.

Bronwen Cooke presented a report on behalf of the Settlement Committee.

Jack Beaton presented a report on behalf of the Education Committee.

Peter Wade presented a report on behalf of the Housing Committee.

Mary Ballard presented a report on behalf of the Health Committee.

Mark Ballard presented a report on behalf of the Employment Committee.

The work of SAFE depends on the generous contributions of volunteers. The Steering Committee thanks the many volunteers who have given their time and talents to support families as they make Antigonish their new home.

SAFE AGM Business Meeting

Agenda Item: AGM Minutes 2021 Approval

Lucille Harper

Actions:

Michael Steinitz moved to approve the AGM Minutes from 2021.

Seconded by Othman Soufan.

All approved.

Agenda Item: Fundraising Goals for 2022

Sheila Sears

Discussion:

A goal has been set to raise \$8,000-\$10,000 in 2022. This amount will provide enough funds to pay for a financial audit and to bring a small BVOR family, which will require approximately \$29-\$30,000. The SAFE Auction is currently open. It is a major fundraiser for SAFE. Please encourage donors to make donations by e-transfer or through Canada Helps.

Agenda Item: Committee Reports

Lucille Harper

Discussion:
Committee reports were tabled.

Agenda Item: Election of Steering Committee

Jack Beaton and Othman Soufan

Discussion:
Currently 10 members sit on the Steering Committee. There is room for a total of 12 members. All members have a 3 year term and are allowed to serve for 2 consecutive terms. Appointment to the Steering Committee has been staggered to ensure staggered timing of members leaving the Committee. Three current members have reached the end of their first 3-year term—Harry Daemen, Mary Ballard, and Bronwen Cooke.

Alaa Hadhad and Osama Sulaiman have stepped forward to be nominated to the Steering Committee.

Othman Soufan spoke about the issue of possible conflict of interest when sitting on the Steering Committee. If members have a conflict of interest due to discussion of their own family members, the SAFE bilaws will be adhered to.

Actions:

Jack Beaton made a call for any other nominations to the Steering Committee.
On behalf of the Nominations Committee, Jack Beaton moved the nomination of Bronwen Cooke, Harry Daemen, Mary Ballard, Alaa Hadhad and Osama Sulaiman to the Steering Committee.
Jack Beaton made a second and third call for nominations to the Steering Committee.
 Seconded by Othman Soufan.
 All in favour.

Agenda Item: Meeting Close

Discussion: The meeting was adjourned.