

## ICC Meeting – June 10, 2015

### Attendees

1. Farhang Farid
2. Behrouz Amouzgar
3. Bijan Ahmadi
4. Soudeh Ghassemi
5. Shahram Namvarazad
6. Arshak Shojaei
7. Mitra Saffari
8. Arsalan Kahnemuipour
9. Reza Ghazi

### Agenda

1. Approval of the minutes of last meeting
2. Appointment of officers
3. Conduct of Meetings
4. Follow up re event of the Islamic Society of York Region
5. Mostafa Azizi
6. Forming the committees
7. Membership Management
8. Avidah Motmaenfar's Letter to BOD
9. Communication and PR
10. Maryam Rashidi's incident in Calgary
11. Appreciation of IC2

#### 1. Approval of the minutes of the last meeting

Amendments were suggested to the minutes of the previous meeting.

#### **Motion M-20150610-1**

*Moving board member:*

Farhang Farid

*Motion Text:*

Minutes of the meeting of June 1, 2015, with all the suggested revisions, be approved and posted on the organization's website.

*Status:*

Motion carried unanimously.

## 2. Appointment of officers

Members of the board, were asked to nominate board members for the following officer positions:

- President
- Vice-President
- Secretary
- Treasurer

### Appointment of President

#### **Motion M-20150610-2**

##### *Moving board member:*

Behrouz Amouzgar

##### *Motion Text:*

Arsalan Kahnemuyipour to be appointed as the President of the ICC.

##### *Discussion:*

In support of this nomination Behrouz Amouzgar Mr. Kahnemuyipour has been one of the most active members of the ICC in the past few years, and one of the main critics of the previous boards. Mr. Amouzgar stated that he has worked extensively on the bylaws of the organization as an active member of the bylaw revision committees in the past two boards and his familiarity with the bylaws and the structural challenges of the organization allow him to adopt internal policies to address the structural issues. Behrouz Amouzgar added that provided the above and Mr. Kahnemuyipour's academic background, he is the most appropriate choice for the position of President.

Arshak Shojaei nominated Shahram Namvarazad for the position of President.

Mr. Shojaei provided that Mr. Kahnemuyipour, in his opinion, is not an appropriate choice as he does not have the required community experience. He added that Mr. Namvarazad has worked with this organization closely for a period of one year and as a board member who has worked with the old board, he is familiar with the issues of the ICC. He stated that Mr. Namvarazad is active politically and has been very active in fundraising activities related to combatting cancer.

Mr. Farid added in spite of being a past board member and a former Vice President of the organization, Mr. Namvarazad has not been a member of the ICC for long as at the time of his election to the board, a motion was presented to the members to make an exception in his case as he lacked the required criteria of having been a

member of the organization for a period of one full year. Mr. Farid provided that Mr. Kahnemuyipour has been one of the active members of IAUT a non-profit organization with valuable contributions to the community. He also added that Mr. Kahnemuyipour's active role in the bylaw revisions committee and his familiarity with the structural challenges make him a good candidate for the position.

Mr. Namvarazad provided that many of his activities have been for non-Iranian communities. He was a board member of the College of Opticians of Ontario for a period of 3 years.

Bijan Ahmadi provided that in the 6-8 months that he has worked with Mr. Kahnemuyipour, he has learned that one of the strongest qualities of Mr. Kahnemuyipour is his respect for those who oppose his views. Mr. Ahmadi added that given the polarized nature of our community and its diverse views on various matters, respect for the views of others is an important quality. Bijan Ahmadi also stated that given his profession as an academic, he has the sophistication to fulfill this role effectively.

In response to the concerns raised by Arshak Shojaie with respect to operational qualifications of Mr. Kahnemuyipour, Reza Ghazi stated that while operational qualities are very important, we have enough people in the board that have the operational qualities who can assist Mr. Kahnemuyipour. He stated that for the reasons provided by Mr. Ahmadi, he believes Mr. Kahnemuyipour is the best choice.

Soudeh Ghasemi stated that Mr. Kahnemuyipour has qualities that allow him to act as a bridge between the younger and the older generations and the connection is very much needed in the context of the ICC and therefore she is also in support of his presidency.

Mr. Shojaei disagreed with Mr. Ahmadi as he believes that Mr. Kahnemuyipour was one of the members who was causing crisis for the previous boards with his criticisms and as such he will not be able to attract members from the two sides of the spectrum. Mr. Shojaei believes that the previous board was the most productive board in the history of the ICC and that the criticisms of Mr. Kahnemuyipour about the previous board were unfounded.

In addition to Mr. Namvarazad, Mr. Shojaei also nominated Mr. Ghazi for the position of President.. Mr. Ghazi refused to accept the nomination for personal reasons.

After the above discussion, board members voted for the position of President.

Board members in favour of Mr. Kahnemuyipour's presidency:

- Behrouz Amouzgar
- Farhang Farid
- Reza Ghazi
- Soudeh Ghasemi

- Mitra Saffari
- Bijan Ahmad

Board members in favour of Mr. Namvarazd's presidency:

- Arshak Shojaei

Mr. Kahnemuyipour thanked the board for appointing him as the President. He clarified that in his view, the structure of the board of directors is not hierarchical and as such he will be working alongside all the other board members to fulfill his duties. He also added that criticism from the outside is positive and should be welcomed.

Status:

Motion carried.

### Appointment of Vice President

#### **Motion M-20150610-3**

Moving board member:

Farhang Farid

Motion Text:

Soudeh Ghasemi to be appointed as the Vice-President of the ICC.

Discussion:

Mr. Farid nominated Soudeh Ghasemi for the position of Vice President.

Mr. Namvarazad nominated Arshak Shojaei for the position of Vice President.

Mr. Farid provided that one of the most important movements in the history of the ICC was the I am Iranian Canadian Too campaign. He has worked with Ms. Ghasemi in both the I am Iranian Canadian Too campaign and for the campaign of Mr. Kaveh Shahrooz and as such he is confident of Ms. Ghasemi's operational qualities. He also added that it is very important to have a female figure for this role.

Mr. Ahmadi provided that in the 6-8 months that he worked with Ms. Ghasemi at the I am Iranian Canadian Too campaign, he witnessed Ms. Ghasemi's operational qualities. She effectively managed close to 40 volunteers at the I am Iranian Canadian Too campaign.

Behrouz Amouzgar provided that Ms. Ghasemi obtained the highest number of votes and her appointment to this position would be a gesture of respect to our members and all who came to the polls in large numbers and voted for Ms. Ghasemi.

Mr. Namvarazad stated that Mr. Shojaei has been very active in the community and is a very good team player. He always stands up for what he has to stand up for and while this organization is not a political organization, but the concerns of the Iranian-Canadians are directly linked with the concerns of Iranians in Iran and we need an individual who holds these concerns close to heart such as Mr. Shojaei.

After the above discussion, board members voted for the position of Vice President.

Board members in favour of Ms. Ghasemi:

- Behrouz Amouzgar
- Arsalan Kahnemuyipour
- Reza Ghazi
- Bijan Ahmadi
- Farhang Farid

Opposed: Mitra Saffari

Board members in favour of Mr. Shojaei

- Shahram Namvarazd

Status:

Motion carried.

#### Appointment of Treasurer

#### **Motion M-20150610-4**

Moving board member:

Shahram Namvarazad

Motion Text:

Reza Ghazi to be appointed as the Treasurer of the ICC.

No one else expressed interest in the position of Treasurer.

All board members were in favour of Mr. Ghazi as the Treasurer.

Status:

Motion carried unanimously

#### Appointment of Secretary

**Motion M-20150610-5**

*Moving board member:*

Shahram Namvarazad

*Motion Text:*

Behrouz Amouzgar to be appointed as the Secretary of the ICC.

No one else expressed interest in the position of Secretary.

All board members were in favour of Mr. Amouzgar as the Secretary.

*Status:*

Motion carried unanimously

**3. Conduct of Meetings**

**Motion M-20150610-6**

*Moving board member:*

Farhang Farid

*Motion Text:*

Regular meetings of the board of directors to be held on Wednesdays at 7 pm at a public meeting facility, depending on availability, or any other location convenient for the members of the board of directors.

*Seconded:*

Motion seconded by Behrouz Amouzgar

*Status:*

Motion carried unanimously.

**Motion M-20150610-7**

*Moving board member:*

Behrouz Amouzgar

*Motion Text:*

The board to adopt a mechanism to allow board members to introduce motions electronically and through email, such motion to be valid only if at a minimum 7 of the 9 board members participate in the electronic vote and refrain from requesting a discussion to be held in person.

Seconded:

Motion seconded by Soudeh Ghasemi.

Opposed:

Motion opposed by Arshak Shojaei and Shahram Namvarazad.

Status:

Motion carried with the approval of Farhang Farid, Bijan Ahmadi, Soudeh Ghasemi, Reza Ghazi, Arsalan Kahnemuyipour and Behrouz Amouzgar.

Mitra Saffari abstained.

#### **4. Follow up re event of the Islamic Society of York Region**

Discussion:

Behrouz Amouzgar pointed out that Mr. Namvarazad and Mr. Shojaei signed an open letter to the board of directors criticizing the board for not having taken action on the above noted matter less than 2 days after the meeting of the board, in which it was decided that Mr. Kahnemuyipour and Mr. Amouzgar look into this issue. Mr. Amouzgar added that the rather untimely signing of the open letter by Mr. Namvarazad and Mr. Shojaei changed the dynamics as it gave rise to a public discussion on whether or not the ICC should react to the above referenced event. Many members of the board of directors were contacted by those who were in favour of a response as well as those who were of the opinion that the matter fell outside of the mandate of the ICC. The contradicting requests and communications received from the members suggested that the board requires more appropriate mechanisms to determine what the community wishes the board to do in relation to this issue and issues of a similar nature in the future.

Mr. Farid provided that our community seems to be divided on this matter and we should consult with the community prior to taking a position.

Mitra Saffari provided that the commemoration of Ayatollah Khomeini, who is responsible for numerous crimes against humanity, cries for a moral response, beyond all partisan and political views. She stated that this commemoration denies a history of mass atrocities; works a grave harm to many members of the Iranian Canadian community, particularly those who have survived serious human rights abuses in Iran; and disrespects the memory of those who were executed. She added

that this compels us to take action, and this is in fact supported by the ICC bylaw which commits to uphold the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

She stated that she understood that there are some members of the Congress who are opposed to any action by ICC due to different reasons. She agreed that we should be mindful of these concerns and take them into consideration so that we do not speak on behalf of the entire membership. She stated however that she firmly believes that these concerns should not push us into silence. She stated that we must explore potential alternatives beyond the classical statement. As a compromise solution, she stated that we can, for example, hold a public debate forum for people to voice their opinions about the position they think ICC should take regarding this issue. She stated that by remaining silent, we only represent one side of this debate and this would be a dark spot on the record of the ICC.

Mr. Shojaei provided that those who do not want the ICC to get involved with political issues related to Iran are those who have financial ties with the government of Iran.

Mr. Namvarazad stated that the issue has nothing to do with those that choose to go back and forth to Iran for whatever reasons they have. He added that this is about celebration of a "dictator" who caused genocide in our country. He further added that even Canadian Government and MPs of all parties in a historic decision condemned Islamic regime of Iran for violation against human rights in Iran and found Khomeini as the head of the state at that time guilty of such crimes against humanity. He stated that for these reasons he believes that the board should release a statement to condemn such action by the Islamic Society of York Region.

Ms. Ghasemi provided that at the time Kaveh Shahrooz was the VP of the ICC, a very similar event was held at Carlton University and the ICC board at the time did not involve the ICC with that matter. Ms. Ghasemi stated that in 2013, Mr. Shahrooz took the issue to the senate and a motion was passed by the Parliament but the board again did not deal with the matter on behalf of the organization. Ms. Ghasemi suggested that we release a statement to the effect that the board has heard the position of both sides and explain the challenges by the board.

Mr. Namvarazad stated in the case of Mr. Yadegari, who he introduced as a known criminal, members of one of the previous boards traveled to Ottawa in his support, and asked whether following the line of reasoning provided by Ms. Ghasemi, we should also do the same.

Mr. Ahmadi is personally outraged by the event that took place in Richmond Hill however he believes that the statement that was released by the two board members (Mr. Shojaei and Mr. Namvarazad) started a public debate and unfortunately changed the nature of any statement prepared by the board into a mere reaction to the authors of the open letter. Mr. Ahmadi believes that the board (including himself) made a mistake in the previous meeting on passing the motion that was tabled in relation to this issue quickly without properly considering



different opinions in our community. He stated that the more important debate is over the role of the ICC with respect to issues that are perceived in public as relevant to the politics in Iran. The role of the ICC and the interest of the Iranian-Canadian community shall not be determined by the board of directors and shall rather be determined by the members- as promised by new members of the board during the last ICC election campaign. Since there is no structure to obtain input from the members right now, the board may also look at precedents. Several individuals who have pressured the board to take action on the issue, did not take action on similar matters when they were a part of the board. He believes that we need public consultation meetings for members to get together and talk about the role of the ICC in relation to this issue and similar issues in future.

Mr. Ghazi received communications from both those who were for and against a reaction by the ICC. None of these individuals were supporters of the event that took place in Richmond Hill. The board did not have the required structure to deal with this with matter. He believes that we should respond to the statement by Ms. Motmaenfar. Mr. Ghazi is curious to know why the previous board members who were faced with a similar issue did not take any position with respect to the event that took place in Carlton University some years ago. The recommendation of Mr. Ghazi is to conduct a survey of our understanding of the mandate of the ICC and to determine what the members, as the stakeholders of the organization believe, our mandate to be.

Mr. Kahnemuyipour stated that any new board would need to have independence and the letter signed by Mr. Namvarazad and Mr. Shojaei against the board, less than 48 hours after the last meeting of the board, changed the nature of the action of the board to a reaction. He believes that a statement should be released by the board to explain the challenges in the past week and the reasons for the delay and as a further step a survey of the members to be conducted on the issue. He added that a survey does not however mean that if the results are 60-40, we should proceed with what the majority wants but that it should rather be used to provide us with guidance. Given the campaign promise of delegating the decision making with respect to the general policy directions, important issues such as this the issue should be put to a survey.

Mr. Shojaei provided that you cannot conduct surveys on crimes against humanity.

Mr. Amouzgar clarified that those who are in favour of a survey are not asking that we request the members to state whether they are in favour of or against crimes against humanity. It is clear that any crime against humanity must be condemned. Those in favour of a survey wish the community to determine the areas that should be the focus of the ICC, especially given the limited nature of the resources of the organization.

Mitra Saffari provided that Mr. Amouzgar committed to draft a statement in relation to the event organized by the Islamic Society of the York Region and to share it with the board members within 48 hours. She stated that no draft was formally shared

with the board and the reason for this inaction was not properly communicated. She added that this breach of the agreement should be acknowledged by those who were responsible.

Mr. Amouzgar responded that Ms. Saffari's comments were insincere, dishonest and delivered out of spite. He pointed out that Ms. Saffari was fully aware that all tasks that were delegated to Mr. Amouzgar were indeed duly completed. He expressed grave concerns about the fact that Ms. Saffari was not admitting that Mr. Amouzgar had indeed completed what was delegated to him. He added that attempts by Ms. Saffari to unjustly blame a board member who has completed all the tasks delegated to him for other shortcomings of the board are destructive and should be dealt with immediately in the interest of the safeguarding the spirit of the team.

In response, Ms. Saffari clarified that the blame was not only directed at Mr. Amouzgar and that it also targeted others who were responsible for the inaction.

**Motion M-20150610-8**

*Moving board member:*

Soudeh Ghasemi

*Motion Text:*

Provided the recent developments in the community, the decision of the board of directors in the previous meeting with respect to issuing of a statement in relation to the event organized by the Islamic Society of the York Region be reversed until the community is consulted on the issue and on the role of the ICC on matters of a similar nature.

*Seconded:*

Motion seconded by Reza Ghazi

*Status:*

Motion carried with the approval of

- Farhang Farid
- Behrouz Amouzgar
- Bijan Ahmadi

*Opposed:*

- Shahram Namvarazad
- Mitra Saffari
- Arshak Shojaei

**Motion M-20150610-9**

*Moving board member:*

Farhang Farid

*Motion Text:*

The board to issue a statement providing a description of the events in the past week which resulted in a delay in the implementation of the decision of the board in its previous meeting with respect to the event organized by the Islamic Society of York Region.

*Seconded:*

Motion seconded by Soudeh Ghasemi

*Status:*

Motion carried unanimously

**5. Forming the committees**

**Policy Development Committee**

**Motion M-20150610-10**

*Moving board member:*

Bijan Ahmadi

*Motion Text:*

Behrouz Amouzgar to be appointed the chair of the Policy Development Committee.

*Discussion:*

Mr. Shojaei nominated Soudeh Ghasemi to be the chair of the Policy Development Committee. Soudeh Ghasemi did not accept the nomination due to her other responsibility as the Vice President of the organization.

*Status:*

Motion carried unanimously.

**Communications & Public Relations**

**Motion M-20150610-11**

*Moving board member:*

Farhang Farid

Motion Text:

Bijan Ahmadi to be appointed as the chair of PR & Communications Committee. committee.

Status:

Motion carried unanimously.

**Culture**

**Motion M-20150610-12**

Moving board member:

Arsalan Kahnemuyipour

Motion Text:

Mitra Saffari to be appointed as the chair of Culture committee.

Status:

Motion carried unanimously.

**6. Membership Management**

**Motion M-20150610-13**

Moving board member:

Bijan Ahmadi

Motion Text:

Management of the organization's membership to be delegated to PR & Communications Committee. The committee to provide the board with a proposal by July 17, 2015 to implement a membership system with the following features:

- Members to be able to sign up online;
- Members to be able to make payments online; and
- The board to be able to verify the qualifications of the members who sign up online.

Seconded:

Motion seconded by Reza Ghazi.

Status:

Motion carried unanimously.

In relation to officer selection, Mr. Namvarazad stated that given that all officer positions were divided among the group that formed the majority, the selection should have taken place in the prior meeting and should not have been postponed to this meeting.

Mr. Shojaei added that the previous board was accused of being self-centred while it gave two of the officer positions to the group that formed the minority on that board. He pointed out that it is disappointing that in the current board, no officer positions were delegated to the group that formed the minority.

In response to the comments by Mr. Shojaei, Mr. Amouzgar pointed out that all responsibilities were delegated to the officers on the basis of experience and familiarity with the tasks at hand and that there was no intention to exclude any of the board members. Mr. Ghazi confirmed same and offered to give up his position as Treasurer to anyone who was interested in same.