

ICC Meeting – Nov 18, 2015

ICC Board Meeting

Attendees

1. Behrouz Amouzgar
2. Bijan Ahmadi
3. Soudeh Ghassemi
4. Arsalan Kahnemuyipour
5. Reza Ghazi
6. Shahram Namvarazad
7. Arshak Shojaei

Regrets: Farhang Farid, Mitra Saffari

1. Minutes of October 22, 2015

The minutes of October 22, 2015 will be prepared by Behrouz Amouzgar upon receipt of the audio recording of the meeting from Soudeh Ghasemi.

2. Approval of the minutes of Nov 4th, 2015

The approval of the minutes of Nov 4th led to a long discussion of about 45 minutes. Mr. Shojaei and Mr. Namvarazad requested that a line be added to the minutes to point out that they objected to the addition of an individual to our advisory board as the representative member from an affiliate organization. The board agreed to this change as long as the specific name was not mentioned. They further requested that their reasoning for this be added to the minutes. They were told that the reasoning would be in violation of our Code of Conduct. In addition, in public minutes, we have avoided mentioning names of individuals. Therefore, it was decided that no extra explanation be included in the minutes. At the end of this discussion, Mr. Namvarazad and Mr. Shojaii left the meeting in protest.

Note: According to the bylaws, if a board meeting has quorum, it will continue to have quorum if members leave when the meeting is underway. Meanwhile, motions require 5 votes in favor to pass regardless.

3. Event in Recognition of the Success of the Iranian Canadian Community in the most recent elections

Reza Ghazi is the principal person in charge of the programming of the event. Mr. Ghazi has put together an extensive plan for the event in writing which he presented to the board.

The details of the event were discussed and revisions were suggested to the document.

Mr. Ghazi will be circulating the updated programming.

With respect to ticket sales, it was decided that all board members should commit to promoting the event among their networks and selling tickets.

Tickets will be sold for \$50 per person. The venue will be Persian Palace.

The capacity of the venue is 144 at max with the ideal capacity of 130.

4. Updates of the Culture Committee

Amnesty international festival this weekend which will be supported by the cultural committee. They will be going to one of the movies.

On December 6th the culture committee will hold an event for the International Day of Elimination of violence against women.

Mitra Safari will be interviewing with Sharhvand in relation to this event.

5. Updates of the PR Committee

Bijan Ahmadi provided the following update about the work that's being done by the PR and Communications Committee:

- The day-to-day communications and PR work is in progress.
- The info session on Nov 15, 2015 about effective job search was very successful with attendance of around 50 people. Thanks to our guest speaker, Ms. Elahe Najafi, and our PR coordinator, Ghazal Shokri, for organizing the event and all other PR volunteers who helped and participated in this event.
- Feedback form was distributed among attendees. 30 feedback forms collected. 24 rated the event useful and very useful. Other feedback we collected will be used for our future event planning.

- Our next pub night is scheduled for Thursday Nov 26th. Board members please try to participate and invite your friends. Committee Chairs please highlight to your committee volunteers that this is a good opportunity for them to meet other committee volunteers.
- Affiliate organizations: Tayaz and Arsalan met with IAUT (Iranian Association at the University of Toronto). Both IAUT and ISARU (Iranian Student Association at Ryerson University) are positive about the affiliate partnership and hopefully will come on board soon.
- New projects PR committee is working on: entrepreneurship conference, Career fair for recent immigrants, research based on public survey and polling of our community. For new projects the committee will prepare proposals to be reviewed by the board.
- Planning work for a newcomers blog is in progress. Committee had discussions about including a section for job postings in this blog. The committee has received several emails from experts who are interested to help with the newcomers program.

6. Updates from the Policy Development Committee

The policy committee's next meeting will take place next week and in North York Civic Centre. The committee will announce the date as soon as room booking is completed.

Bijan Ahmadi mentioned that Shahram Tabeh Mohammadi attended one of his committee meetings. He appreciated his attendance and mentioned that the meeting was very useful for the committee members to understand the by-law revision process better. Bijan provided the following suggestions and asked Behrouz, Soudeh and Arsalan to communicate these suggestions and concerns with the subcommittee working on by-law revisions and requested the initial proposed timeline prepared by the subcommittee to be shared with the rest of the board. Here is a summary of Bijan's suggestions:

- Narrow down the scope of work to most important and urgent issues in the by-laws and try to get direction from the board in defining the scope.
- Regular consultation with the board will provide the subcommittee direction in their work and will allow board members to work more efficiently during the approval process of the questionnaire or the draft of the amended by-laws.
- It's important that the subcommittee involves different stakeholders in the by-law revision process as soon as possible. These stakeholders include ICC founders, members, advisors, former board members and community members interested in the work of ICC.
- The subcommittee has to educate new members about the need for amending the current by-laws.

7. Response to Paris Attacks

Behrouz Amouzgar and Bijan Ahmadi to put together a preliminary draft of ICC's statement with respect to the Paris Attacks. The tone of the statement to be inclusive of all countries that have experienced similar troubles such as Lebanon. Arsalan emphasized that it should also address the Islamophobic incidents in Canada in the aftermath of these events, which is an affront to the democratic values Canada stands for. Bijan Ahmadi will get help from Kourosh Zand, one of PR volunteers, for preparing a draft.

8. Liability Insurance Update

Reza Ghazi advised that he has obtained quotes from multiple companies and is now pursuing the opportunity with Aon.

9. Response to Ashura Letters

A number of members have sent letters to the board of directors requesting that the board act in response to the intolerance expressed by some towards those who participated in the march that took place on Yonge St. in Toronto.

Bijan Ahmadi sent the following electronic motion through email on Nov 10th, 2015:

Given ICC's mandate to uphold and defend the interests of Iranian Canadians in social spheres and its commitment to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms I propose that the ICC president prepares a statement on behalf of the board to be published in Persian weeklies expressing disappointment about discriminatory reactions to the public Ashura ceremony held in Toronto and urging our community members to respect individual rights and freedoms enshrined in the Canadian Charter of individual Rights including freedom of peaceful assembly, freedom of religion and freedom of association.

The motion was seconded by Soudeh Ghasemi however, several board members requested the motion to be discussed and voted on during the board meeting on Nov 18th, 2015.

Arsalan Kahnemuyipour prepared a letter which was circulated among board members before the meeting and proposed a motion to send this letter as a response to the members who sent an email to ICC regarding this matter. The letter would explain why it's not ICC's responsibility to get involved in this matter and mention that ICC is not in a position to advise members of the community about their actions. The letter emphasized that those members of the community managed to hold their procession without interference. Had they been prevented from holding their procession, the ICC could have gotten involved. The letter also argued that such condemnations will not advance tolerance in our community. The letter also suggested that ICC hold a forum where the issue of the religious procession and the reactions to it can be discussed by several panelists ideally including a representative from the organizers. The letter also explained how the current ICC board has tried to advance tolerance and inclusion and emphasized that ICC should use other ways to show openness toward those with religious backgrounds.

Behrouz Amouzgar suggested that a statement be drafted in which both sides of the issue are advised to exercise more tolerance as, in his opinion, both had exercised their freedom of expression. Reza Ghazi originally was in agreement with Arsalan's letter but later supported Behrouz's suggestion as a good way to respond to the issue as well.. Behrouz Amouzgar was asked to send his suggested text to the board by e-mail. Then the three options could be out to vote by all the board members.

The meeting was adjourned and the other items were tabled.