



Governor's Commission on Middle Eastern American Affairs

*Virtual ZOOM
Thursday, January 30, 2025
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.*

SPS I Meeting Minutes

Attendance: **Yes**

Ammar Abdulhamid, Member
Tharwat Abouraya, Chair
Dr. Majd AlGhatrif, Member
Dr. Amal K. Ali, Member
Shivaani Arya, Member
Athar Bayoumi, Member
Anthony Browder, Member
Alissa Deaver, Member
Ali Esfahani, Member
Dr. Bagher Fardanesh, Member

Rabbi Dr. Susan Grossman, Member
Dr. Ayesha A Gulistan, Member
Mohammad Khalil, Member
Mona Kishore, Member
Francis J. Ricciardone, Member
Rafi Rone, Member
Dr. Aharona (Roni) Rosenthal, Member
Dr. Laura H. Salganik, Member
Ala'a Wafa, Member

GOCI Staff:

- ❖ Dr. Antwan Brown, Administrative Director for the Governor's Commission on Middle Eastern American Affairs
- ❖ Keith Colston, Director of Ethnic Commissions - GOCI
- ❖ Cheryl Madigan – Executive Assistant for GOCI

I. Call to Order:

Tharwat Abouraya, Chair – Meeting called to order at 6:02 p.m.

II. Commission Roll Call:

Tharwat Abouraya, Chair – confirmed that we had a quorum.

III. Adoption of Agenda:

Motion	1 st	2 nd	Vote
To adopt the agenda.	Mona Kishore	Anthony Browder	12Y-0N-0A



IV. Approval of Minutes:

Motion	1 st	2 nd	Vote
Approval of 11/07/24 Minutes	Ammar Abdulhamid	Mohammad Khalil	12Y-0N-0A

V. Opening Remarks:

Chair Abouraya stated that the Commission is evolving to be more aligned with GOCI. He gave recognition and thanks to commissioners Frank Ricciardone, Tony Browder, and Tarek Saleh for their leadership and efforts. He wants to prepare to connect with the Middle Eastern Americans throughout the eight counties. He said this will happen by attending already planned Middle Easterner community events and planning their own community focus groups. Also, by getting invited to membership organizations which could be partners with us in meetings and hosting seminars. Commissioners Mona Kishore and Roni Rosenthal will lead their 2025 strategic planning session.

VI. GOCI Remarks:

Dr. Antwan Brown spoke briefly about House Bill 0899, updating GOCI's website, asking commissioners to forward information and pictures on community activities they are attending. He mentioned the commission working with other state agencies. He brought up the Governor's Top Priorities. What was chosen last year was: 1 - Creating a safer Maryland by interrupting violence, preventing crime and protecting the State 2 - Bolstering the well-being of Marylanders by ensuring world class health systems for all, and 3 - Setting Marylander students up for success. He wants to know if the commission still wants to keep working with these three priorities.

VII. Department of Service and Civic Innovation (Patrick Sawyer):

Patrick Sawyer talked about the [maryland.serve](https://maryland.serve.gov/) program.

VIII. Topics:

- ❖ Rotational Recording Secretary by Commissioners – this details a commissioner processing the minutes of the commission meetings. This would start for the next meeting on February 25th. The commissioners will get back to everyone on this, but commissioner Athar Bayoumi volunteered to do the May 15th meeting.
- ❖ 2025 Strategy Planning Session – Commissioner Mona Kishore and Commissioner Roni Rosenthal went over the following:
 - Best Practices
 - Goals
 - Proposed Action Plan by Quarter



- Mission and Core Values
- S.W.O.T. Analysis (Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats)

This was a very detailed presentation. Commissioners, please refer to the shared document in the shared folder that Commissioner Kishore sent everyone.

- ❖ Discussion on Committees/Working Groups:
They went over committees/working groups members, there are no subcommittees. Also, please refer to the shared folder for specific detailed information.

Administrative Director Antwan Brown went over the new Executive Orders for the commissions. He also suggested that the commission create a Legislative committee.

Director Keith Colston went over the Open Meetings Act.

- ❖ Open Discussion:
Chair Tharwat Abouraya stated that this is an extraordinary start and without actions, nothing can be implemented. He wants the commission to represent the eight counties which they live in and represent themselves at events, at which Montgomery County has two events in February, which he will share the information with everyone.

IX. Motion for Adjournment:

Motion	1 st	2 nd	Vote
To adjourn the meeting at 7:55 p.m.	Ammar Abdulhamid	Rafi Rone	16Y-0N-0A