

Lakewood Community Relations Advisory Commission

Meeting Minutes – February 14, 2012

Attending: April Stoltz, Chair, Karen Kuramoto, Joe Lobo, Nahida Farunia, Malik Moore, Barbara Schwartz.

The following members were unable to attend: Paula Maeder Connor, Nadhal Eadeh, Greg Mahoney, Dan Saracina, Carla Williams, Veronica Youngblood-White. There is one vacancy.

Melissa Garrett, Community Relations Specialist was present and Kristine Pagsuyoin of the Lakewood Family Collaborative attended as her organization is co-sponsoring the Welcome to Lakewood event.

The meeting was held at Lakewood City Hall and called to order at 6:35 PM.

Kristine Pagsuyoin explained that the Lakewood Family Collaborative (Collab for short) is funded by a Family to Family Grant and is one of 14 in the Cleveland area. The Collab meets once a month and is made up of local businesses and non-profit organizations. The goal is to have everyone at the table to make Lakewood a better place for kids and families. They schedule guest speakers, share information, have sponsored the school supplies initiative, and programs to assist job seekers.

Welcome to Lakewood event:

As for promoting the Welcome to Lakewood event, Kristine said that Elizabeth Kimmel, the Director of Student Services can get lists of names of new families and will mail flyers. April, Malik, Kristine, and Emmie Hutchinson of H2O and the Collab have been working on the event. It will be held at the Garfield School Cafetorium. We will not have tables for for-profit businesses. They can participate if they are part of the Collab. The Chamber of Commerce may have a display to explain what they do for the community, but not to advertise businesses. We could have a table for various restaurant menus, one for information about local faith communities, and one for local media. The event is not just for newcomers to Lakewood, as it can also be for people looking for a deeper connection to their community. Nahid asked if we needed to translate the flyers to reach various ethnic groups. Joe said that the kids in the ESL classes can help share the information. We should also have an article in the Lakewood Observer for the 2/21 issue. The deadline for the Community Calendar is 2/14 and 2/28 is the deadline for the 3/6 issue. Everyone should check Melissa's list of community organizations and email her with any additions. Groups named to be added to the list: Lakewood Women's Club, Lakewood Garden Club, and possibly Neighborhood Family Practice. Nahida asked if we know if there are any major school events that day that would cause a conflict. There seem to be none. Melissa discussed with us the need to be conscientious and fair when determining criteria we use for groups to participate. We will be sending letters of invitation to participate. There is also the problem of limited space for groups. The Cafetorium has 22 six foot tables. We would have room for 44 groups giving each group a half of a table. April met with Mark Walter, Principal and Don Richmond, Custodian. We talked about limiting space to 30 groups. In the confirmation letters we will explain space availability and set-

up times. The event will be from 7 – 9 PM and we need to have access for set-up from 6 PM. Joe wanted to clarify that the main purpose of the event is follow-up to the movie New Metropolis, and the message is: “It’s great to have you in Lakewood, we want you to be engaged, and to know about groups and services that are here in Lakewood.” Nickie Antonio, State Representative will not be able to attend, but will send a message via video. Some of the members will be working on tasks on 2/15, 5 – 6:30 at April’s.

New Metropolis Film and Community Conversation:

Joe, Malik and Karen worked on preparations for this event. The goal is to have people leave feeling positive about Lakewood and interested in civic engagement. At the end, three points they can do: 1. Civic engagement, 2. Support local businesses, 3. Personal challenge. The movies are each 26 minutes long. Joe passed out the Event Guide that other cities have used. One suggestion is to have posters taped to the walls for people to respond to the question: “We choose to live in Lakewood because...” We can also have groups at tables with a facilitator, to respond to questions and report to the larger group. The event is scheduled for March 28th from 7 – 9 PM. We need to promote this in a way that will catch people’s attention. The flyers need to be done by 2/23 and Malik volunteered to create them.

Melissa passed out copies of the Commission’s by-laws and mission statement.

April asked us to do a re-cap of the Diversity Potluck to help us improve the event for next year. Four tables would be better than two for the food, to avoid bottlenecks. We may need to have a larger facility with a better kitchen where food could be kept cold or warm. Lakewood high school was suggested. A better sound system with a microphone, and a planned soundtrack would make it easier to hear everyone. The opening and closing were both good. The kids from the ESL classes, their videos and participation, really made the event very special. It was suggested that next year we look for graduates of the ESL program in Lakewood who are now in careers or pursuing further education, to attend or send videos. Through FLICKR we could create a collective photo album of cell phone pictures taken at the dinner. We may need a media release from the kids and their parents to use the photos. Dan said he would write an article. We also said that we should pursue having a student representative on the Commission.

April said that we will follow-up with a thank you to Gayle Wellman for her service on the Commission. Gayle has decided not to pursue another term.

Joe wanted to pass on the information that the Lakewood Summer Reading program has chosen The Pact, the story of three friends who make a pact to support each other and all three overcome poverty and become doctors.

Malik moved to adjourn the meeting, Nahida seconded the motion, and with all in favor, the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM. The next meeting will be Tuesday, March 13th at 6:30 PM

Minutes submitted by Barbara A. Schwartz