

Lakewood Community Relations Advisory Commission

Meeting Minutes – July 10, 2012

Attending: Greg Mahoney, Acting Chair; Barbara Schwartz, Acting Secretary; JT Neuffer; Karen Kuramoto; Paula Maeder Conner; Joe Lobo; Nadhal Eadeh

Unable to Attend: April Stoltz, Chair; Nahida Farunia; Dan Saracina; Carla Williams; Veronica Williams; Melissa Garrett, Community Relations Specialist; Monique Smith, City Council Liaison

The monthly meeting of the Lakewood Community Relations Advisory Commission (LCRAC) was held at Lakewood City Hall and called to order at 6:40 PM with a quorum present.

Minutes of the meeting held on June 12, 2012 were reviewed, and approved as amended.

Membership: A question was asked if we had received a letter of resignation from Malik Moore, and Greg will check with Melissa if this was received.

Report to Lakewood City Council – September, 2012: The report should have two parts – the achievements of this past year and our plans and recommendations for the coming year.

This past year's achievements:

The Diversity Potluck held at the Women's Pavilion 1/19/12 with approximately 100 people attending. Ms. Shaffer and Ms. Gill, teachers from Lakewood's ESL classes, attended the January LCRAC meeting to coordinate the participation of their students, along with the RAD students from Lakewood High School, who did video presentations about their experiences leaving their home countries and coming to Lakewood. They talked about how much support they received from their teachers, and how welcoming was the Lakewood community. Participants brought a variety of ethnic foods, and many of Lakewood's restaurants donated foods of the varied cuisines the city has to offer.

Casey Greer of the Heights Community Congress spoke at an LCRAC meeting to share ideas and experience from the work of their organization in such a diverse and changing community as Cleveland Heights, as well as other communities in Northeast Ohio.

The showing of the movie Metropolis on March 28th, with an accompanying Community Conversation which focused on actions that can improve the quality of life and services in first ring suburbs such as Lakewood. The Welcome to Lakewood event was an idea that was taken from the movie.

Welcome to Lakewood – This event, held April 25th in the evening, was an outgrowth of the movie Metropolis. The purpose of the event was to make new residents of Lakewood aware of the many city agencies, organizations and services, hoping to increase citizens' engagement and connectedness to the community. LCRAC worked with Lakewood Family Collaborative and H2O, as well as the Lakewood school system, holding the event at the Garfield Cafetorium. We received a great deal of positive

feedback from attendees and the agencies and organizations, many saying that they would like to see this happen again. We also received donations from many Lakewood bakeries for refreshments.

An LCRAC member, Dan Saracina, has created a Facebook page for LCRAC.

LCRAC has worked with other departments of the city to educate the community about the anti-idling legislation that was passed.

When Luma Muflah spoke in November at Garfield School, LCRAC had a table with information to educate the public about LCAC's events and activities and to support her talk.

Planned actions for the next year:

Continue the success of the annual Diversity Potluck, schedule a second Welcome to Lakewood event, continue working on community education regarding Lakewood's Anti-Idling legislation, and consider another Community Conversation around the films New Metropolis.

Increase partnerships and collaboration with other groups and organizations, such as the Lakewood Library, Lakewood Chamber of Commerce, Lakewood Alive, and Lakewood Block Clubs through Mike Tuttle and Block Club Captains (to get a better sense of the concerns expressed by Lakewood residents.) It was suggested to send copies of our minutes to Mike Tuttle. Continue our collaborations with RAD, ESL classes, and H2O involving the youth of Lakewood.

Support the Lakewood Reads events.

Offer assistance and support through seminars for first time Lakewood home buyers.

Offer input on programs held at Lakewood Park to be sure they appeal to the diversity of Lakewood residents.

Offer our assistance in informing real estate agents about the desirability of Lakewood as a community of choice to live in. How can we be more proactive in promoting Lakewood's assets and strengths, holding these sessions more often than every two years and recruiting realtors from a wider area and more aggressively.

Lakewood Reads – The Other Wes Moore:

The author, Wes Moore cancelled his trip to Cleveland for the Facing History fund raiser, which means that his scheduled speech to Lakewood High School students will not happen. A proposal for LCRAC's support of the Lakewood Reads event would be to have a panel of Lakewood people who have read the book, to share their thoughts. It was suggested to have clergy members, a person who can speak about race (Veronica), a professor from CSU, a social worker familiar with the problems of youth, someone from Hidden Village, a youth re-entry program, and the Lakewood Youth Commission. It was suggested that we contact the library as a possible venue.

New Business:

Need for a Quorum to hold an LCRAC meeting: Monique Smith, in an email prior to the meeting, raised the question of holding a scheduled meeting not knowing if a quorum will be present. Aware of the city's limited financial resources, the committee asked the question of what incurs those costs, e.g. the cost of using the jury room in utilities, the presence of a security person, Melissa's time, and are there other costs that we are not aware of. Are there alternative locations or nights when other activities are occurring, so that no additional costs are incurred? When the meeting notice is announced, every member should use "reply all" by noon of the meeting day to say if they are or are not attending. It was decided to table the discussion for the next meeting, when these questions can be answered.

Paula Maeder Conner proposed that we invite the four Lakewood High School students chosen to learn leadership skills and promote tolerance and acceptance of LGBT students*, to speak to LCRAC about their experiences and activities. Joe Lobo also proposed that LCRAC recommend to Lakewood City Council that they recognize and/or congratulate the students.

**From the Lakewood Observer: "A Cleveland-based nonprofit has teamed with Lakewood High School to offer four incoming sophomores experiences of a lifetime over the next three summers. The group, Dare2Care, through a partnership with the nationwide Global Youth Leadership Institute (GYLI) aims to develop the students into leaders who can help promote a message of tolerance and acceptance among their peers and help stop bullying, particularly of LGBT and perceived LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) students."*

Paula also proposed that we invite a guest speaker to each of our meetings, to speak for about 15 minutes to explain their group – that this could provide valuable ethnic educational opportunities for us. An example would be a person from Lakewood's ESL program and the lack of places for kids in the summer program because of the increase in immigrant populations.

Announcements:

Joe: Lee Hirsch, the director of the movie Bully will be speaking at the Civic Auditorium on September 6th from 7 – 9 PM. It is free and open to the public.

Paula: On July 29th from 12 – 8 PM, Trinity Lakewood Outreach will hold Rally in the Alley to support hunger relief programs.

Nahdal: LOBC is helping to raise \$25,000 for the new basketball court in Lakewood Park. 75 % of the money has been raised, and they are offering memorial pavers which can be purchased for \$100, \$500, or \$1,000 which will be laid in a walkway next to the basketball court.

Greg Mahoney and JT Neuffer will be serving on Lakewood's Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC).

The meeting was adjourned by motion at 8 PM.

Minutes recorded by Barbara A. Schwartz