

Lakewood Community Relations Advisory Commission

Meeting Minutes – June 11, 2013 – *final*

Attending: JT Neuffer, Chairperson; April Stoltz; Karen Kuramoto; Nahida Farunia; Joe Lobozzo; Chris Varano; Barbara Schwartz; Melissa Garrett, Community Relations Specialist

Absent: Paula Maeder Conner; Veronica Youngblood; Dan Saracina; Monique Smith, City Council Liaison

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM. The minutes from the meeting of May 14th were approved.

Input from Lakewood City Council's Ad Hoc Committee on Boards and Commission: JT had attended the recent City Council's Ad Hoc Committee on Boards and Commissions, which is reviewing the work of each of the city's boards and commissions. At the last meeting, the Ad Hoc Committee reviewed the work of LCRAC. They were complimentary about the overall work of the commission, especially for the three events that LCRAC has planned and held: the fall Community Conversations, the Diversity Potluck, and the Welcome to Lakewood event in the spring. They hoped these would continue, and that LCRAC would continue working collaboratively with other organizations in the city. They asked that LCRAC look at our use of city resources.

After much discussion regarding possible options, the members of LCRAC approved the following:

April Stoltz made the motion that LCRAC changes its meeting night to the second Thursday of the month (from the second Tuesday of the month) and that we not meet in July. The motion was passed unanimously. This change will schedule LCRAC's meeting on the same night as other city committees, eliminating the need for a security guard to be scheduled just for the LCRAC meeting. Melissa will send out the revised schedule.

As for the use of other resources, Melissa Garrett said that she has the administrative responsibility to provide support to LCRAC. Her time at the meetings is considered time that she can take off in compensation. The Commission members said they consider her presence invaluable – her knowledge of city laws, procedures and policies were important to keep the commission from being in violation or creating any conflicts of interest. The Commission has no budget or monetary resources. The city has provided some publicity for events, facilitating contact through email, and the mayor provided some financial assistance to publicize and provide for the set-up for Welcome to Lakewood. Commission members have sought donations of food from Lakewood businesses, received some small monetary donations, and have dug into their own pockets to support the events.

By-Laws: The Commission agreed to review the by-laws to see if any changes need to be made to improve the efficiency of its operations. Melissa said that the by-laws were created by the Commission and has the authority to change them. This will be taken up at the next meeting.

Mission Statement: JT also read the Commission's mission statement, and it was agreed that we can take a look at perhaps revising it to make it more succinct.

Planning next year's programs

Community Conversations: Joe suggested that we look at our past community conversations. We have talked about collaborating around efforts against bullying. Karen suggested looking at Project 360 as a good subject to get involved with. It is a grant –funded resource in the second year of a three year grant. They have said they would be very willing to work with us. We could also collaborate with the Dare to Care program. Another possibility is collaborating with the work of Julia Shearson, who wants to connect with police to do training about intervening with immigrant families around domestic violence. We have discussed talking with Mike Tuttle about meeting with Block Captains for a better understanding of the needs of the community.

April asked Melissa if there were any issues coming to the attention of city hall. Melissa said that her office does not receive a lot of these calls, as things are often issue driven, such as when the city flew the rainbow flag in front of city hall. Fair housing questions are often diverted to other agencies.

In the past, the Community Conversation focused on the issue coming from the Lakewood Reads choice. This year the book chosen is Outliers, and Commission members were encouraged to look at it. This year, the choice is coming from Lakewood High School's math department.

It was recommended that we do the Community Conversation in November. Karen, April, Joe and Barbara have volunteered to begin the planning process and will meet Monday, August 5th at 7:00 PM at Panera's on Detroit.

Diversity Potluck: The committee to plan the Diversity Potluck, which would be in January, should be formed by September. We may want to consider a different location than the Women's Pavilion.

Lakewood Foundation – Melissa will call the foundation about creating an account for LCRAC. This way any funds donated can be used to support events and activities of LCRAC. Melissa said we will need a member to be the treasurer, and to prepare a presentation to the foundation about who can ask for checks and who will be accountable.

Old Business: We still have three vacancies that are all mayoral appointments. We are looking for suggestions. We are still waiting for a determination if we can have a youth representative.

Announcements: Daoud Nassar will be speaking at the Westshore Unitarian Church. Eboo Patel spoke at CSU about his book, Sacred Ground, about the need to build bridges and the need for religious pluralism and tolerance. Carol DeLaat, a resident attending the meeting, said she felt the Commission was doing a lot of things well. April pointed out that there had been a lot of negative comments posted in the PATCH regarding the Albanian community when Caribou changed hands.

Karen motioned, and Nahida seconded, and members voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:08 PM.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 8th at 6:30 PM.

Minutes submitted by Barbara Schwartz, Secretary.