

Lakewood Community Relations Advisory Commission

Meeting Minutes – February 13, 2014

Attending: JT Neuffer, Chair; April Stoltz, Vice-chair; Karen Kuramoto; Ayman Alkayali; Nahida Farunia; Bernadette Elston; Chitra Walker (appointment pending); Barbara Schwartz, Secretary; Melissa Garrett, Community Relations Specialist

Absent: Dan Saracino; Chris Varano

Melissa announced that both Joe Lobo and Paula Maeder Connor have completed their terms and have decided not to continue on the commission.

The minutes for January were accepted with corrections, moved by April, seconded by Karen, and approved by all members present.

Bernadette completed transcribing sign-in sheets from past events to Excel and used them to send invitations to the potluck. She had about a 20% return of “not delivered.” In the future she asked that we use a standard format for sign-in sheets with wide lines. Some were too small to read. Bernadette said she will continue to maintain the list. Melissa has a copy of the list.

Review of Diversity Potluck, held January 23rd – Nahida did a beautiful job on the Thank You posters that everyone signed and then were taken to the donors. Some felt that the people attending the potluck were not as diverse as we would hope. Karen suggested that the time would be hard for many immigrant families where parents must work multiple jobs. She suggested that a summer Sunday afternoon would work better. Previous diversity potlucks were held outdoors during the summer and there were problems with the weather. The commission agreed that we should look for more ways to reach out to the various ethnic communities. One way that had worked well, was to be sure that we reach out to the students. In the past their families attended, too. JT said about 75 people attended this year’s event, even considering it was a very cold and snowy night. It was also suggested that we call tables up to the buffet one or two at a time so that things flow more slowly. Thanks to Bernadette who took much of the leftover food to the City Mission, who were glad to have it. It also seemed to work well to have Nickie, our speaker, go first. People were attentive and listened. It was also brought up that we should have more involvement with the schools, and also to be more involved with the Community Festival, which is the Sat. after Labor Day. Bernadette suggested that we use social media more.

Planning for Welcome to Lakewood event - It is scheduled for Wed, April 30th, 7:00 to 9:00 PM, which has few conflicts with other events, particularly because it is the 5th Wed of the month. It will be held at Garfield Middle School, and we have the use of the cafetorium and the gym, as we did last year. This is the third year for this event. April explained for the newer members, that this grew out of our viewing and community conversation around the documentary, New Metropolis, which focused on a changing community much like Lakewood. The idea of the event is to make new residents – owners and renters – to feel welcome in the community, to provide information about the various organizations and services here in

Lakewood, encouraging people to be more engaged and to promote the diversity to be found here. Last year the League of Women Voters registered 44 people to vote, and the library issued new cards. We will again seek donations from local bakeries and coffee shops as they don't usually have the promotional budgets that larger chains have. We will also connect with the Lakewood Family Collaborative to join us in sponsorship and planning. We will likely need three "faith" tables this year for religious organizations to display brochures. Melissa has the list of organizations to be invited and will send a letter to them soon with application forms. Last year we had about 40 organizations. Melissa will again send postcards to the last 500 home buyers. We can also start earlier to coordinate sending a letter home with students and through the school/PTA newsletters. Our problem continues to be reaching renters. We will also have folders again with basic city information as we did last year, and as people walk around the gym they can collect additional information in their folders. Bernadette volunteered to do the follow-up article for the Observer with photos. She would also like to do the sign-in table. The planning ad hoc committee includes April, JT, Chris, Chitra, Bernadette, Karen, Barbara. April will contact the Family Collab to coordinate dates for a work meeting within the next two weeks. Chitra would like to be involved but will be away from 4/1 – 16.

Retreat – JT would like to set the date for an LCRAC retreat in May. Nickie said she would be willing to help facilitate. We also need a location. Possibly Paula's church might let us use the room we met in before, or the Women's Pavilion. Possible dates would be 5/10, 5/17, or 5/31, all Saturdays. Ayman said on a Sat or Sun he would only be available after 2 PM. Results of input from the diversity potluck will be included on the agenda.

Vacancies on the commission – Sean Juris has someone in mind as Joe's replacement, Paula was a mayoral appointment, and Ryan Nowlin will need to find someone to replace Veronica. Nahida decided that she would like to continue on the commission, at least for another year.

Karen moved to adjourn the meeting and Nahida seconded the motion. All approved and the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 13, 2014 at 6:30 PM.

Minutes submitted by Barbara Schwartz, Secretary