

## Lakewood Community Relations Advisory Commission Minutes

March 13, 2018; 6:30 PM; Lakewood City Hall, 12650 Detroit Ave.

**In attendance were:** Chitra Walker, Rachel Donaldson (Co-Chair), Barbara Howell, Gary Rick, Tariq Ata, Bernadette Elston, and Harry Lader (Secretary); Melissa Garrett (Community Relations Specialist) and April Stoltz (visitor). Not present were: Erik Meinhardt, Gabrielle Jackson, Sam Gantous, and Jessica Sloan (Co-Chair). We have a quorum (minimum of six members).

**Old business:** The minutes from our last meeting were not available for approval.

We discussed Mayor Summer's State of the City Address as visionary and future thinking, especially by establishing the Resiliency Committee. We would welcome more emphasis on block clubs that can lead to self-sustaining communities.

**New business:** A Survey Monkey to get ideas on the best time to meet, the forming of subcommittees such as public relations, event logistics, speakers, etc. was sent out to all the members, but at least two members did not get it. Rachel will send out a new Survey Monkey to all members.

There are a number of upcoming events occurring in Lakewood:

- June 10, Taste of Lakewood, sponsored by the Lakewood Chamber of Commerce and Cleveland magazine
- July 4, 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade
- July 14, Summer Meltdown sponsored by Melt Bar and Grilled and presented by LakewoodAlive
- September 8, Lakewood Community Festival

We should consider having a presence at each of these events to promote the work of our commission and have handouts such as our mission statement.

For our community conversation, we should consider three committees:

1. Publicity and marketing using social and print media
2. Events and logistics for locating a venue, planning a, food donations, coordinating with other community organizations
3. Finding speakers, panelists, and moderators

Keith Benjamin was mentioned, someone who may be able to help us with our community conversations.

Possible formats: The World Café format was discussed as a way to bring diverse people together and engage in conversations; Tea Time for Peace format was also discussed as related format to engage in a small group conversations. We need to increase points of interaction between diverse groups of people and build stronger community connections to increase safety.

Possible topics: police/law enforcement and community relations; decrease divisiveness between groups of peoples; increase awareness and dispel stereotypes about Muslims.

We had a conversation about some of the hateful comments on Facebook regarding the carjackings. We need to have a counter voice against hate speech.

We discussed having an article in the Lakewood Observer to help bring people together and make our presence known, to start and continue community conversations.

We discussed being a cosponsor with LakewoodAlive conversations. We voted, with no dissent, that our commission should work with LakewoodAlive. However, Melissa pointed out that we need to be careful since we are an advisory committee and report to City Council, whereas LakewoodAlive is a nonprofit organization with a paid staff.

**Update on commission appointees:** Lisa Tomm (a Mayoral appointee) and Faith Nobel (a David Anderson appointee) are no longer on the commission. We are looking for two additional people to replace them and ensure that they can honor the time commitments involved in being on this committee.

Submitted by: Harry Lader, Secretary

March 26, 2018