

## Minutes of June 8, 2017 Lakewood Community Relations Advisory Commission Meeting

In attendance: Tariq Ata, Rachel Donaldson, Bernadette Elston, Gabrielle Jackson, Harry Lader, Gary Rick, Chitra Walker, Cindy Marx (City Council Liaison), Melissa Garrett (Community Relations Specialist), April Stoltz (guest), plus another guest (?)

- Lydia Kelly and Samiha Abusharekh have resigned from the committee due to business and career reasons, respectively.
- Discussed the difficulty of getting a quorum when some members of the committee have never been in attendance
- April Stoltz discussed her Teatime for Peace program which has met with great success in the greater Cleveland community
  - April's eighth Teatime for Peace program will take place July 12 at Saint St Malachi (west 25<sup>th</sup> and Detroit)
  - People are emboldened by Trump's rhetoric which encourages Islamophobia
  - Format for Teatime for Peace: After a brief introduction, each person will have two one-on-one conversations with someone who has a different religion which can be based on a list of specific questions. There is a wrap-up afterwards with comments about the experience.
  - We need to review and reframe these questions to adapt them towards having community conversations that can help bring us closer together as a community
- We need to increase the visibility and encourage new members for the Commission
  - Bernadette spoke about Faces of Lakewood, based on Humans of New York
  - We need to add stories for Faces of Lakewood, and have each one of us write stories about ourselves and why we are on the commission
  - Include the stories in the Lakewood Observer to garner more interest for our Commission and events
  - We need to encourage committed people to apply to our Commission to fill vacancies
- We discussed having a series of community conversations, possibly one per quarter
- We need to find out what LakewoodAlive is doing in order to coordinate our activities
- We need to encourage pluralism by understanding one another to realize that what we have in common is stronger than our differences
- We discussed possible dates for Welcome to Cleveland: October 11<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup>

### Action items:

- Melissa is to send out the application for our Commission to our members to encourage people who are committed to improving community relations to apply to our Commission
- Cindy will speak to Council regarding consistent non-attendees
- Harry is to send out to our Commission April's Teatime for Peace questions so that we can modify them as needed

Respectfully submitted by Harry Lader June 23, 2017