

Lakewood Community Relations Advisory Commission Minutes
July 16, 2019; 6:30 p.m., Lakewood City Hall, 12600 Detroit Ave, Lakewood, OH

In attendance: Jessica Sloan (Chair), Rachel Donaldson (Vice-Chair), Chitra Walker (Secretary), Tariq Atta, Stacey Loegos (new member), Gary Rick, and Melissa Garrett (Community Relations Specialist)

Not present: Andrew Morris, Barbara Howell, Robin Beavers

OLD BUSINESS

Approval of Minutes: Approval of June 17, 2019 minutes was tabled till the next meeting.

4/11/19 discussion on racial equity with special guest Erica Merritt: Walter began discussion with briefly recalling the phone call with Erica Merritt at the 4/11/19 meeting. The discussion centered on what “next steps” LCRAC could take in light of the work Erica has done with other groups such as the City of Shaker Heights where they have begun community trainings with small groups of people about ways in which conversations about racial diversity can begin. Erica stated that the process of spreading these ideas is slow, but small groups lead to larger groups as more small groups work through these issues as they receive training. Jessica suggested that Walter find out how much such a training for a small group in Lakewood would cost; and what type of format would be used. Walter noted that Erica has experience working with the Racial Equity Institute and with Prism in Cleveland. He suggested that Foundations such as the newly formed Healthy Lakewood Foundation could consider funding such trainings. Chitra noted that Healthy Lakewood Foundation was yet in its very early stages of becoming a grant making organization, but that this was a good idea to present to them when they begin to consider grants. Gary suggested that we should also think of involving the Youth Advisory Council in getting this kind of training. There was further discussion on how to welcome more young people to such gatherings/conversations. Melissa noted that the City had some discretion in allotting monies to certain endeavors such as trainings, and possibly there could be \$5,000 for an initial training session conducted by Erica.

Action Items: Walter will find out from Erica: a) what can be done under \$5,000; b) how many people can be trained in the first session; the time line we would be considering.

NEW BUSINESS

Welcome to Stacey Loeges: Jessica extended a warm welcome to Stacey Loeges, who had already attended her first meeting in June. Stacey gave the group a brief description of herself – works as a nurse practitioner at University Hospitals (?); is the Founder of the Welcome Mat organization, which welcomes refugees into our Lakewood Community with welcome mats, baskets of goods and monetary donations, now in its third year of existence; and lives in Lakewood with her husband and beloved greyhound! The group also warmly welcomed Stacey.

Discussion on New Members needed on LCRAC: Jessica spoke briefly about her own resignation from LCRAC because she and her fiancé had bought a home in Medina and will be moving out of Lakewood. There are currently 5 open positions on LCRAC since Andy Morris will also be moving out of Lakewood.

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Stacey suggested two people connected with refugee integration in Lakewood whom she knows and will encourage to send in their applications to the Mayor.

New Chair Position: Jessica Sloan expressed her regret in resigning from her position as Chairwoman of LCRAC because she and her fiancé were moving to Medina. She briefly described the role of the Chair. She also recommended that the new Chair be elected at this meeting because it was difficult to get quorum in the summer months, and LCRAC had a lot of upcoming events which would need input/work by a new Chair. Chitra suggested Walter Wright consider taking on the position, and others agreed. Walter W. was moved by the confidence the group showed in his ability to take on this responsibility, and said he would be willing to serve as Chair. Jessica S. then formally nominated Walter W. to the position, and Gary R. seconded the nomination; a voice vote was taken; and Walter was elected Chair unanimously by the group. Rachel D. will continue to serve as Vice-Chair. The two officers will continue to serve in these positions until the end of the year, when the positions will again come up for election/re-appointment by the group.

Welcome to Lakewood Event: Jessica briefly described the event to the group, and the process to hold the event, including: a) deciding on the date of the event; b) securing the location (Garfield Middle School – Rachel has done this in the past); c) inviting all the groups who would have tables at the event to display/provide information about their various social groups to attendees (Melissa has the list of past groups who have attended, and are invited to the event); d) procuring of food and beverages for the event from local restaurants (Chitra has done this in the past); and e) publicity for the event – FaceBook (Tariq A., Gary R) article in the Observer about the event, publicity on the City’s website, notices sent in the water bill, etc. Jessica noted that we had been quite successful with FaceBook advertising of the event last year. This led to a discussion about who will, going forward, take ownership of the LCRAC website and responsibility to administer the site.

It was decided that the date for the event would be Wednesday, October 23rd. Rachel would check/confirm with Garfield Middle School; Melissa would check the City calendar. Assignment of responsibilities for the event will be discussed in greater detail at the next LCRAC meeting.

Youth Advisory Council – Update and next steps: Gary gave a brief update on the Youth Advisory Council, directing the group to an article on the Lakewood Youth Advisory Council on Cleveland.com. City Council made the unusual decision to approve the creation of the Lakewood Youth Advisory Council at the second of the usually three required readings of the Ordinance. The Youth Advisory Council was approved unanimously by City Council. The Mayor is very pleased by the progress that has already been made. The Vision Statement and By Laws of the Council have already been created by the Task Force, and were also included in the approval of the Ordinance by City Council. Also, the first 6 student members (currently serving on the Youth Advisory Task Force) were confirmed as founding members of the first Youth Advisory Council at the time the Ordinance was approved. These 6 members choose the remaining 9 members to be selected from the high school student population in Lakewood when school re-opens in the Fall. The online application to become a member of the Council has already been created, and will be finalized by the Task Force and approved by City Council. Applications will be sought from the student population after school begins in the Fall, and the hope is to have all new

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July 16, 2019; 6:30 p.m., Lakewood City Hall, 12600 Detroit Ave, Lakewood, OH

members selected to their first 2-year term on the Youth Advisory Council and approved by Lakewood City Council by October of 2019.

Gary R. informed the group that the next meeting of the Youth Advisory Task Force was Wednesday, July 17, and invited anyone interested to attend.

Next LakewoodAlive Community Forum: Chitra informed the group that the LakewoodAlive Forum Committee had, at its last meeting, discussed having its next Forum on November 14, 2019 on the topic of public transportation needs of the Lakewood Community. Ian Andrews of LakewoodAlive had offered to contact persons he knew at both the City (Bryson) and at the RTA who could possibly participate in a panel discussion on the topic. Jessica S. also suggested that there should be some follow up on the formal collaboration between LCRAC and LakewoodAlive on these forums. Chitra said she would explore this subject with both Ian Andrews and Cindy Einhouse (Chair of the Committee) and report back to LCRAC.

Upcoming LCRAC Meetings: Since August attendance has usually been light, and people were not sure whether the 8th would be good for everyone, Rachel will send out a Doodle poll to determine the day of the next two meetings.

Close and Adjournment of Meeting: Walter W. expressed thanks on behalf of himself and LCRAC to Jessica S. for her service on behalf of the group and all heartily agreed. Jessica said she would still be close as she still works in downtown Cleveland, and continues her participation in other Lakewood organizations, including the Lakewood Women's Club. Chitra and Rachel suggested LCRAC should have a "goodbye" party for Jessica soon.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned by Walter W. at 8:10 pm.