

Lakewood Community Relations Advisory Commission Minutes
November 8, 2018; 6:30 p.m., Lakewood City Hall, 12600 Detroit Ave, Lakewood, OH

In attendance were: Rachel Donaldson (Co-Chair), Jessica Sloan (Co-Chair) Chitra Walker, Andrew Morris, Bernadette Elston, Harry Lader (Secretary), and Melissa Garrett (Community Relations Specialist)

Not present were: Gabrielle Jackson, Barbara Howell, Tariq Ata, Gary Rick. Erik Meinhardt

OLD BUSINESS

The minutes of our October 11, 2018 meeting were approved unanimously.

Recap of Welcome to Lakewood: All agreed that turnout was larger than the previous year because of a number of factors: better communication through social media, flyers, post cards, water bill, etc. Also there were no conflicting events to draw attendees elsewhere. All agreed that we continue to build on this success. Andy noted that some attendees objected to providing an email on the sign in sheets. The group agreed that we should modify the sign-in sheet. Harry suggested having the event every other year, and Bernadette agreed. Rachel, however, noted that the event is well liked, and Garfield School really wants us to continue doing it there. It was also noted in the discussion that we should encourage a stronger presence of City Council members. No decision was reached regarding how often to have the event.

NEW BUSINESS

LakewoodAlive Community Forum: Chitra gave a brief recap of the last meeting with the LakewoodAlive Forum Committee. The next Forum, *Anxiety and Depression in Teens – Who Cares?* will take place on Tuesday, November 13, in the Lakewood High School Cafeteria, from 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. LakewoodAlive is expecting LCRAC members of help as volunteers. Chitra and Rachel are able to volunteer for the event. Volunteers should arrive by 6:00 p.m. Chitra will let Cindy Einhouse know. Chitra will also pick up the LCRAC tri-fold with photos from Melissa before the Forum, which would be placed at the information table at the event, including “Save the Date” cards for the Diversity Potluck in January. Rachel also requested that we remind Cindy Einhouse to mention LCRAC’s collaboration at the event as they had not noted this in their public announcements of the event.

LCRAC Happy Hour: Jessica noted that the first Happy Hour will be on Tuesday, November 27 at 6:00 p.m. at the Distill Table on Madison Avenue. Councilman John Litten has been informed. Need to follow up with other Council members. Jessica has made a reservation for 10. The purpose of these Happy Hours is to increase our involvement and role in the City.

LCRAC Leadership Positions and Election: Rachel reminded the group that Harry Lader would be leaving the Commission at the end of the year, and that Chitra Walker had volunteered to take on the role of Secretary. She also said that due to her new schedule of grad school as well as new job, she would like to step back a little. All were agreed that LCRAC has been more enthused and energized under Rachel’s and Jessica’s leadership, and would like them to continue as Chairs. The three positions: Chair – Jessica Sloan, Vice-Chair – Rachel Donaldson, and Secretary – Chitra Walker were put to a vote, and were voted in unanimously by the group. Chitra Walker agreed to take on her role as Secretary immediately.

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Youth Advisory Council Update: Bernadette Elston, representing the Youth Advisory Council Subcommittee gave a brief report on the Subcommittee's progress. She provided the group copies of a proposed Vision Statement and Application Forms. The Subcommittee has contacted various groups and individuals, including Lakewood High School, Lakewood Catholic Academy, Albert Einstein Academy, and others to gather information and ideas on what this Youth Advisory Council could look like. There was further discussion on whether there should be greater student involvement in creating vision statements and even the formation of the Advisory Council. Some suggestions included bringing in one or two students into the Sub Committee to work on the application process and student selection committee, getting more feedback from the schools, meeting with RAD, the LGBTQ group, school guidance counsellors, other cities that may already have a youth council, and other youth activist groups who may be able to provide further input. Melissa said the establishment of the Youth Advisory Council had already been presented at the November 5, 2018 City Council Meeting. It would need three readings before it can be approved and ratified by City Council. It was also suggested that the LCRAC Chair (Jessica) and a representative of the Sub Committee meet with the Mayor to give him an update on our progress, and to make sure we are on the right track. All were agreed that the Sub Committee had worked hard on the framework of the Youth Council, and were excited about the progress that had been made.

Spooky Pooch Parade Meeting: Chitra gave the group a description of the debrief meeting with LakewoodAlive and Action Together Lakewood regarding the unfortunate incident at the Spooky Pooch Parade involving a participant who dressed in "Black Face" to parade his dog. Unfortunately, no one seems to know exactly who this particular participant was, nor were they able to address the issue directly with him. LakewoodAlive drew a lot of criticism on FaceBook and there were other negative conversations on the Action Together Lakewood FaceBook site as well. Discussion at the debrief meeting called by LakewoodAlive included improving their registration system for the event (to include better ways of identifying owners of the dogs), educating the Lakewood public on how to empower people to intervene in situations like this without creating disruption, and basically in how to engage in civil discourse. Nickie Antonio, State Representative for Lakewood also attended the debrief and suggested that LCRAC take an active role in any next steps – such as getting training in becoming "upstanders" as opposed to being bystanders. We could also be volunteers who help to avoid such situations at future events. Chitra will keep LCRAC advised of any further action on this issue.

Diversity Potluck: The date for the Diversity Potluck is Thursday, January 24, 2019 – from 6:00 – 8:00. It was agreed that planning and preparations for this event will begin in earnest at LCRAC's next meeting.

Next Meetings: The next LCRAC meetings will be: Thursday, December 13, 2018; and Thursday, January 10, 2019.

With no further announcements or discussion, the meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.