

MINUTES

Regular Meeting of the City of Goshen Community Relations Commission

Tuesday, May 10, 2016, 7:00 P.M., Goshen City Hall, 202 South 5th Street, Goshen, Indiana

CRC Mission: *Our mission is to foster a climate of positive community relationships and non-discrimination in which all Goshen citizens enjoy equal opportunity for education, employment and access to public conveniences, accommodations and real property.*

CRC Members Present: David Araujo, Anne H. Berry, Rocio Diaz, John Ferguson, Bryce Gast, Sreekala Rajagopalan and Nathan Meteer-Rempel

CRC Members Absent: Ed Ahlersmeyer and Kelly Huffman

CRC Consultant Present: Darin Short

Guests: Emanuel Monge

1. Call to Order & Opening (7:02-7:38)

- a. Nathan called the meeting to order.
- b. Nathan informed members that the date of the May CRC meeting had not been included on the agenda. He also added that he had an additional item to discuss, which had not been included on the evening's agenda.
- c. The **Opening Reflection** was offered by David. He opened by praising Goshen Community Schools (GCS), noting that the instruction and educational guidance offered students is the envy of many area school corporations. He commented however, that Hispanic/Latino youth represent in excess of 51% of Goshen's student body. However, Hispanic/Latino persons constitute a far smaller percentage of GCS administration and teaching faculty. David added that at present, only 3 Hispanic persons work in school administration. David stated that a more proactive recruitment effort aimed at attracting Hispanic/Latino educators to Goshen Schools is necessary, adding that students will benefit.

Anne added that she has heard of Goshen teachers who are ill equipped to manage student performance and behavior owing to an absence of cultural and ethnic knowledge.

David commented that some Hispanic/Latino teachers are departing as they see no possibility of career advancement here in Goshen. They perceive there to be a "glass ceiling."

Several CRC members commented on various employment and operational practices in the GCS. It was suggested that a recruitment policy change is needed, and that greater intentional effort must be made to attract Hispanic/Latino persons to GCS. Is there a role for the CRC in this important discussion? David commented that Comunidad is seeking a meeting with Superintendent Diane Woodworth. Nathan suggested that CRC may wish to have representation at this meeting as well.

CRC members agreed that this conversation should continue.

John will offer the Reflection at the June CRC meeting.

2. Review of Minutes for CRC Meeting of April 12, 2016 (7:39-7:45)

Nathan asked that members review and comment on distributed minutes. He noted an error. Richard Aguirre's name was misspelled in the minutes. John will correct this error.

ACTION: *Bryce moved that the minutes of the meeting of April 12, 2016 be approved with the aforementioned name correction. The motion was seconded by Sreekala and was unanimously passed by members.*

3. Treasurer's Report (7:45-7:50)

Bryce reported that following modest expenditures totaling \$250 during the month, the CRC has a current account balance of \$44,634.

Bryce also commented on Taste finances. Food vendors sold a total of \$11,044 worth of food (5,522 tickets distributed). Following expenses, CRC netted \$377 on the event.

4. Reports and Statistics (7:50-8:20)

Darin reported that the individual who offered a complaint last month, a complaint that he had discussed with the CRC, has not followed up with him as intended.

Darin received a call last week. A resident reported that a Confederate flag had been displayed in her neighborhood. She believed this to be inappropriate and discussed the matter with the homeowners' association. She believed that she was "brushed off," and was told that it was wrong of her to imply that the neighbors are racist. In response, she displayed a Black Lives Matter flag. There have been subsequent comments made which intimate actions to be taken against her by neighbors.

At this point, Nathan raised the "additional agenda item," to which he had referred at the meeting's opening. He has received an employment-related complaint. The complainant wanted to meet with the CRC, but had also wanted to remain anonymous. Nathan told him that the meeting is public and that anonymity was not possible. Hence, the individual did not attend.

Nathan reported that said individual is overweight and is disabled. He reports that he has applied for various jobs which "fit" his abilities, but after being hired for several of these, he has been subsequently dismissed. He has applied for several jobs in person – his appearance obviously apparent - only be told that there are no openings. But, when he then placed inquiring phone calls (no visual contact), inquiring about these same employment opportunities, he has been told that yes, openings exist. He feels discriminated against owing to his weight and disability.

David commented of a recent incident in which Hispanic persons were pulled aside by police and questioned about an incident with which they had no association.

Rocio has followed up on a contact made of the CRC some time ago, and which was previously discussed. This individual had been pleased with service received at the local hospital. But, she had requested a Spanish language form with which to comment and was told that Spanish language forms did not exist. When she pursued the matter she discovered that the phone number listed to make inquiries was the CRC number.

Members engaged in considerable discussion that the CRC does not presently have explicit complaint policies and procedures, guiding its response to matters such as these. Nathan and Darin will work to draft same, and Nathan invited others to also participate. It was also noted that CRC members are not presently trained to respond to said complaints. Anne asked if it now may be time for the CRC to employ trained staff. Presently, CRC's response when such complaints are received and are not very easily resolved is to refer said matters to other appropriate resources.

Anne also commented on a recent incident at Goshen Middle School. Parents of a student were not included in a discussion educators had with their child and felt that this was inappropriate. Evidently, GCS does not have a policy for managing such situations.

Members discussed other communication mediums that might be more effective and efficient in receiving such contacts than is the current phone messaging system. Sreekala mentioned a phone system that automatically translates from English to Spanish and vice versa. Darin will investigate. Also mentioned was use of the new City website and various social media.

The aforementioned complaint mediation discussion is far-reaching, and CRC members agreed that it involves additional discussion around the following:

- a. Development of policies and procedures to receive, document and effectively manage calls,
- b. Training of staff to effectively respond,

- c. Identification of other resources that might be of use in problem resolution,
- d. Implications of a re-invigorated marketing plan and a new and more visible presence for the CRC, perhaps resulting in a greater complaint volume being received.

5. Taste of Goshen Re-Cap (8:20 – 8:56)

All agreed that it was a very good evening. Darin was thanked for his efforts! The use of tickets was an efficiency improvement. It was noted that the signage was great and Emanuel was also thanked.

Darin estimated that 1,600+ patrons purchased tickets and ate.

There were both comments and questions about the payment method and the timing thereof to Taste food vendors. Darin and Bryce continue to work through the payment process.

A number of Taste-related positive comments, suggestions for improvement and concerns were voiced, all intended to make Taste, 2017 even better. Darin recorded each.

Darin will host a food vendor de-briefing on Thursday, May 12.

6. For the Good of the CRC (8:56-8:57)

The meeting was opened to comments from members or the public. None were offered.

7. Announcements by CRC Members (8:57-8:58)

There were no announcements offered by CRC members.

8. Adjournment (8:58-8:59)

The next meeting of the Goshen CRC is scheduled for June 14, 2016 at 7:00 pm.

Anne moved to adjourn the CRC meeting of May 10, 2016. The motion was seconded by Rocio and was unanimously passed.