

MINUTES

Regular Meeting of the City of Goshen Community Relations Commission

Tuesday, June 14, 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: Ed Ahlersmeyer, David Araujo, Anne H. Berry, Rocio Diaz, John Ferguson, Sreekala Rajagopalan and Nathan Meteer-Rempel

CRC Members Absent: Bryce Gast

CRC Consultant Absent: Darin Short was in Ohio for the birth of a grandchild

Guests: Bill Mateer and Araceli Pacheco representing Goshen Farmers' Market, and Jose Elizalde representing LaCasa

1. Call to Order & Opening (7:00-7:23)

- a. Nathan called the meeting to order.
- b. Introductions of all present were asked for and offered.
- c. Nathan asked that Commissioners review the evening's agenda. He added that the evening's reflection would be offered by John and not by David as written.
- d. Sreekala asked if it was appropriate to have discussion regarding the recent shooting in Orlando. Following brief discussion, it was agreed that this would occur during the "For The Good of The CRC."
- e. Nathan requested that those present observe a moment of silence in remembrance of those killed, injured and otherwise affected by Sunday's tragic shootings in Orlando.
- f. The ***Opening Reflection*** was offered by John, who stated that he was excited to serve on the Commission. He is particularly interested in the Commission's role in exploring ways to bridge racial and ethnic divides, and harnessing the power that exists in our diversity. He added that he has become disheartened, hearing conversation regarding local disharmony, observing comments made during the current presidential campaign, and culminating with the shootings in Orlando. John commented that he wonders if it is possible to bridge existing racial, ethnic, religious, etc. gulfs. He closed by stating that the work of the CRC has never been more important and by reading a quote from Muhammed Ali, in which Ali stated his belief that nothing is impossible.

Various Commissioners responded, commenting of their own unease and sorrow.

Ed commented that in this situation, there is opportunity for everyone to follow his/her heart and to set examples for establishing positive relationships.

Anne commented that now is a good time to review the CRC's annual report, taking note of the Commission's numerous positive activities.

2. Review of Minutes for CRC Meeting of May 10, 2016 (7:23-7:27)

Nathan asked that members review and comment on distributed minutes.

ACTION: Sreekala moved that the minutes of the meeting of May 10, 2016 be approved. The motion was seconded by Rocio and was unanimously passed by members.

3. Treasurer's Report (7:27-7:31)

Nathan reported, briefly stating that during May, the CRC paid against a number of lingering Diversity Day expenses and that Darin had invoiced twice during the month.

Ed asked if the use of tickets for Diversity Day purchases had gone as well as hoped. Nathan responded that there had been a few problems, but that these were minor and that the tickets were thought to be a wonderful improvement.

Sreekala noted that she is still owed \$31 for Diversity Day related out-of-pocket expenses.

4. Reports and Statistics (7:31-7:40)

- a. Nathan reported that there will be no CRC members attending the upcoming statewide conference.
- b. A call has recently been received, with details of said inquiry unclear. Rocio will follow-up.
- c. Nathan updated Commissioners on the status of an employment related complaint discussed last month (see minutes). The "case" was referred to another body for further investigation and at the moment, all appears OK. The complainant was satisfied that his concerns were seriously heard.
- d. Commissioners had brief discussion regarding the need to develop standardized guidelines for managing the receipt of such complaints/grievances in the future.
- e. The Commission has invited the woman who displayed the Black Lives Matter flag to appear and have discussion regarding her incident (see May, 2016 minutes). Thus far, she has declined said invitation.
- f. Anne reported that the school-based situation in which a student was allegedly disciplined without involvement of parents (see May, 2016 minutes) has been resolved.

5. Grant Request: Goshen Farmers' Market (7:40 – 8:02)

Bill Mateer and Araceli Pacheco presented a grant request. The Market seeks support from the CRC so as to produce its inaugural Salsa Festival. The Market plans to attract Hispanic vendors, as well as visitors, in an effort to attract greater numbers of Hispanic people to the Market. This event is scheduled for August 6.

Goshen Farmers' Market is seeking \$1,438 from the CRC and will match said grant dollar-for-dollar.

Various Commissioners posed clarifying questions. Nathan appointed a study committee to look into the grant request further and to then report its recommendation to the CRC at the July meeting. Commissioners appointed include Ed, John and Sreekala.

6. Grant Extension Request (8:02 – 8:31)

Jose Elizalde reminded the CRC that it granted LaCasa \$500 with which to underwrite costs associated with mediating various disputes. Funds were never transferred to LaCasa, but were also never needed.

LaCasa proposes that these funds again be made available for LaCasa use. Commissioners engaged in discussion, seeking to understand the best, most efficient way to manage mediation expenses. Should the Commission pay LaCasa, which then pays a mediating entity? Or, should the payment be made directly to the mediator? The CRC does not need great detail on said mediations, but it does need assurances that cases are being efficiently and effectively heard and resolved.

Jose will speak with the Center for Community Justice and return to the July CRC meeting for more discussion.

Jose also reminded Commissioners of LaCasa's upcoming Maple City Cultural Festival at Roger's Park

7. Consultant Activity Report (8:31-8:38)

Darin's 1st quarter activity report was reviewed. Several questions were asked which may require clarification upon Darin's return.

8. Vision Initiative Action Steps (8:38-8:44)

Brief, general discussion was had. Commissioners agreed that the Initiative must mesh with the CRC mission and not be a stand-alone.

ACTION: Commissioners decided that additional discussion with Darin is needed and Ed moved to table tonight's discussion until July. Rocio seconded the motion, which was unanimously passed by Commissioners.

9. For the Good of the CRC (8:44-8:52)

Sreekala asked whether or not the CRC should formally respond to events in Orlando. Nathan responded that he and Darin had been contacted by the Goshen News, although their comments were not printed. It was agreed that the CRC will discuss the issue in July. Needed are guidelines for making such a response in the future.

Anne suggested that the CRC organize a structured conversation, relating national events to Goshen. Perhaps too, the CRC might sponsor periodic discussion groups.

10. Announcements by CRC Members (8:52-9:01)

- a. Nathan asked David if there are still plans to talk with Goshen Schools officials regarding diversity in the Corporation. David responded that yes, such plans are being made.
- b. Nathan also reported that he will meet soon with Richard Aguirre, who has ideas for action.
- c. Nathan reported that the CRC now has both mayoral and council – appointed seats open. At least one individual is interested.
- d. Sreekala reported that she attended President Obama’s recent event held at Concord High School.
- e. Anne is departing the CRC and this meeting was her last. Nathan thanked her for her service and wished her well!

11. Adjournment (9:01)

The next meeting of the Goshen CRC is scheduled for July 12, 2016 at 7:00 pm.

Ed moved to adjourn the CRC meeting of June 14, 2016. The motion was seconded by Nathan and was unanimously passed.