

MINUTES

Regular Meeting of the City of Goshen Community Relations Commission

Tuesday, March 14, 2017, 7:00 P.M., Goshen City Hall, 204 East Jefferson 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, John Ferguson, Evan Miller, Sreekala Rajagopalan, Nathan Mateer-Rempel, Judy Snider and Angie Troyer

CRC Members Absent: Ed Ahlersmeyer

CRC Consultant Present: Darin Short

Others Attending: Rafael Barahona (R3 Design) and a citizen visitor

1. Call to Order & Opening (7:05 - 7:08)

- a. Angie called the meeting to order.
- b. Darin introduced the visitor. CRC members introduced themselves.
- c. Angie asked that Commissioners review the evening's agenda, requesting any additions or corrections. She requested several changes:
 - The meeting date on the Agenda heading should read "Tuesday, March 14, 2017"
 - Judy's name is misspelled in item #5. It should be "Snider."
 - Commissioners should discuss the need for a meeting follow-up to Saturday's planning retreat.

Angie's suggested changes to the Agenda were agreed to.

2. March Reflection: David Araujo (7:09 – 7:18)

David expressed his concern regarding trends in the "national mood" and conversation. He told of his regular meetings with others who have opinions that differ from his own. He stated his own belief that he wishes to be more proactive in meeting and talking with those whose opinions differ from his own. He wants to hear and learn from others.

David commented that he wants not solely to be treated with tolerance. Tolerance seems to be too passive a response. Rather, he wants others to hear and respect his thoughts. He wants to be treated with civility. And importantly, he will always interact with others in a similar fashion. He believes that we will only come to value and respect one another if we are willing to engage others openly and with respect.

David also commented that he tries to be politically correct "gently." He values "political correctness" to a degree. But carried too far, political correctness can interfere with honesty.

Sreekala commented that perhaps a better descriptive phrase to use is "acceptance of others" rather than "tolerance." David agreed that this was preferable.

Others commented that today, "tolerance" of those who are different than they may be the best we can hope for from many.

ACTION: John Ferguson will offer a Reflection during the CRC's April, 2017 meeting.

3. Review of Minutes for CRC Meeting of February 15, 2017 (7:19 - 7:20)

Angie asked that Commissioners review and comment on distributed minutes.

Evan inquired as to the author of CRC meeting minutes. Angie responded that John produces them. Evan commented that on minutes of some other organization's meetings, the individual taking minutes is identified.

ACTION: Evan moved that the minutes of the meeting of February 15, 2017 be approved. The motion was seconded by Nate and was unanimously passed by Commissioners.

4. Kick-Off Event – Darin (7:21 – 7:41)

Darin reported that all is set for the Event. He reported that 33 individuals have responded that they are attending. Darin also distributed a list of others who have been invited, but who have not yet responded.

Darin will arrive at 4:00 to set up. Others should plan to arrive by 4:30. Both set-up and tear down should be relatively easy.

The Event is scheduled to run from 5:00 until 7:00. Nate will offer welcoming comments. Allan Kauffman will talk of various issues leading up to the launch of the Vision. Gilberto Perez will speak more specifically about the Vision and its implementation. Each speaker's comments will last 7-8 minutes.

Darin distributed photos of the event giveaway – note card booklets with the CRC logo and new tagline.

ACTION: Angie and others who are able will meet immediately prior to the Event to write personal notes in giveaway books.

Darin commented that the \$820 food budget originally discussed for the event is likely accurate. Nate suggested that the CRC adopt the food budget at this level, adjusting as needed later.

ACTION: Angie moved to pass the Kick-Off Event food budget at this \$820 level. The motion was seconded by John and was passed unanimously.

Commissioners reviewed the list of persons invited to the Event, but who have not responded. Various Commissioners agreed to place follow-up phone calls and to communicate results to Darin.

5. Treasurer's Report – Judy (7:42 - 7:49)

Judy and Angie met with City officials to discuss the CRC budget and financial reports. Judy reported that CRC will not receive fully updated financial reports until March.

Judy commented that the only expenditure for the month past was payment to Darin.

6. Reports and Statistics – Darin (7:50 – 8:22)

Darin reported having received no phone calls or emails during the month since last CRC meeting.

Darin introduced our citizen visitor, a Black man who resides in Goshen and who told of his recent experience in the City of Goshen with a non-Goshen police officer. The visitor was stopped by the officer and cited for non-use of headlights on his vehicle. The visitor explained to the officer that this was not possible and that his headlights illuminate automatically and immediately upon starting the engine. He was ticketed anyway and told that he could pay the fine or speak with prosecutors.

The visitor reported that it is fairly usual for him to be stopped by police, even when he is fully obeying all laws.

The visitor chose to speak with authorities regarding the situation rather than simply paying the fine. He had to repeatedly travel to another Elkhart County town for these meetings, only to find that there was no one present on these various occasions to speak with him.

In the end, it was determined that he must pay the fine after all. He intended to pay and let the issue go away. However, friends and family have encouraged him to protest this outcome and he will do so, with an appearance before authorities scheduled for April 12.

The guest reported – quite emotionally – that his wife fears for his safety each time he leaves the house. She worries that given today's publicized strained relations between certain police officers and some black men, her husband might experience extreme trouble. Further, he told Commissioners that he and his wife are expected a child and that he does not want his mixed-race child growing up in such an uncertain environment.

Nate offered that there is likely not much that the CRC can legally do in this situation.

ACTION: Darin will speak with Mayor Stutsman regarding the situation.

ACTION: The CRC will explore the possibility of Goshen Police Chief Branson attending a future meeting to discuss this occurrence specifically and police/community relations generally.

Evan suggested that the CRC might be able to make presentations such as that heard from tonight's visitor more comfortable by allowing them to speak first on the Agenda, rather than having them sit through a long business meeting.

ACTION: Future CRC Agendas will allow for citizen issues, reports, complaints, etc. to be presented and discussed at the top of each meeting.

7. CRC Marketing (8:23 – 8:33)

Darin introduced Rafael Barahona, principal at R3 Design. Rafael has been working with the CRC Marketing Committee to develop a logo, tagline, etc.

Rafael indicated that he has been very interested in the CRC marketing initiative, and shared that he has too has concerns regarding the CRC's identity (or lack thereof). He indicated that he has focused his efforts on "branding" the CRC. That is, he has wanted to help the CRC establish an interactive relationship with the community.

He described his thoughts and how he arrived at the tagline, "CRC What We Mean." He noted that this tagline also translates well into Spanish. Nate commented that he likes the line and that it invites community exploration of the CRC. Rafael briefly discussed his idea of the CRC hosting "Cookie Chats." During these, CRC members can have casual conversation with small groups of community citizens.

David inquired as to the origin of the current CRC "hands" logo. Darin responded that it was developed by attorney Mark Altenhof and further enhanced by former CRC member Ann Berry.

It was noted that the CRC Marketing Committee will continue meeting with Rafael over the coming months, refining marketing strategies.

8. Taste of Goshen – Darin (8:34 – 8:50)

Darin reported that several past Taste vendors have contacted him regarding Taste and that he will contact others in the next few days.

He presented a tentative event budget (\$4,959.92), which is approximately \$2,000 less than 2016.

Sreekala commented on the benefit of being able to process credit card purchases last year, and asked if we would be able to do this again in 2017. She asked if Bryce (former CRC member) might assist. Several Commissioners responded that yes, we will be able to process credit card purchases again.

Sreekala reported that Ed has spoken with Jacob Biller, Goshen High School representative to the City Council regarding the "flash dance." It appears that students are interested. A meeting will be arranged with Jacob, during which he will be reminded that if a dance is pursued, that students will be responsible for the planning thereof, and should expect only minimal assistance from the CRC.

9. "Baby" Proposal (8:51 – 8:52)

Commissioners were reminded of discussion had during the February CRC meeting (see minutes of the February 15, 2017 CRC meeting). Following that meeting, Ed decided that he was not going to pursue the "initiative." Various Commissioners commented, agreeing that they did not support moving forward.

10. 2nd Planning Retreat Discussion – Angie (8:53 – 9:09)

This Agenda item was added to the meeting at the outset of this CRC meeting.

Darin commented that the CRC did not have sufficient time on Saturday to delve extensively into the Vision itself, and that a 2nd planning discussion would allow for same.

There was general agreement that a second discussion is desirable. Nate commented that he wants to focus on specifics. This will include discussion around such questions as, 1) What does CRC success look like? 2) What are the barriers which must be overcome to achieve success? 3) What assets exist that might be used to support development and achieve success? 4) What are the "leverage points" that might be used to advance the CRC mission?

ACTION: Darin will meet with Phil Thomas, discussing content of a 2nd planning retreat and identifying a date in late May or June.

11. Reflection (9:10 – 9:17)

Comments were offered that the meeting was good. CRC members were discouraged and saddened by the comments offered by the citizen visitor to the CRC. His comments served to personalize various hateful situations occurring each day in Goshen.

Sreekala commented on a similar situation involving a Latino friend of hers.

Darin reported on a conversation that he and Evan recently had. They feel that the CRC needs to spend less time during meetings discussing specific agenda items and devote more time to discussing the CRC, the community, the “environment” within which we find ourselves, etc. We need to think strategically during each meeting. All conversation must occur within the context of the CRC mission.

Evan suggested that the CRC mission statement be read aloud at the beginning of each CRC meeting.

12. For the Good of the CRC – All (9:18 - 9:21)

Judy commented that the Islamic Society in South Bend is hosting an open house this Saturday (March 18, 2017) and asked if others might be interested in attending with her.

Both Sreekala and Judy commented that they would not be in attendance at the April meeting of the CRC.

13. Announcements, Closing Comments and Reflections – All (9:23 – 9:25)

Lizzy Diaz’s application to become a Commissioner is being processed.

14. Adjournment (9:26)

The next meeting of the Goshen CRC is scheduled for April 11, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. at Goshen’s City Hall.

Action: Nate moved to adjourn the CRC meeting of March 14, 2017. The motion was seconded by Evan and was unanimously passed.