

MINUTES

Regular Meeting of the City of Goshen Community Relations Commission

Tuesday, May 9, 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: Ed Ahlersmeyer, David Araujo, Lizzy Diaz, John Ferguson, Nathan Mateer-Rempel, Evan Miller, Sreekala Rajagopalan, Judy Snider and Angie Troyer

CRC Members Absent: None

CRC Consultant Present: Darin Short

Others Attending: Sharon Hernandez, City of Goshen

1. Call to Order & Opening (7:06 - 7:09)

- a. Angie called the meeting to order.
- b. Angie introduced Lizzy Diaz and asked that she introduce herself. Lizzy is newly appointed to the CRC and offered brief comments about herself.
- c. Angie asked that guest Sharon Hernandez also introduce herself, which she did.
- d. Angie asked that Commissioners review the evening's agenda, requesting any additions or corrections.
 - **ACTION:** *Evan moved to reverse agenda items 5 and 6. The motion was seconded by Nate and was agreed to unanimously.*
 - Angie also noted that Judy's name was misspelled on the agenda.
- e. Angie asked if Commissioners had opening comments or thoughts to offer. There were none.

2. May Reflection: Judy Snider (7:09 – 7:12)

Judy spoke of the importance of listening to others. While effective communication is dependent upon both good listening and speaking, effective listening enables speakers to feel welcomed, accepted and esteemed. Judy encouraged Commissioners to practice effective listening, trying to understand the heart of others.

NOTE: *There was no mention made of a June, 2017 reflection or a presenter thereof.*

3. For the Good of the CRC – Floor Open for Public Comment (7:12 – 7:13)

There were no comments offered.

4. Farmers' Market Grant (7:13 – 7:17)

The CRC has received a grant request from the Farmers' Market, seeking financial support for the 2017 salsa festival.

ACTION: *Ed, John and Sreekala agreed to serve as a grant request review committee, with the full CRC having discussion regarding the request at its June, 2017 meeting.*

5. Retreat Planning – June 3rd (NA)

As per Evan's request noted in the Call to Order above, there was no discussion regarding this specific agenda item. Pertinent discussion notes are found in item #6, Strategic Planning.

6. Strategic Planning (7:17 – 8:39)

Evan commented that he and Darin have spoken briefly of this. Evan offered a number of points, intending that these serve as a basis for pending strategic planning discussions. Points made:

- a. The CRC is not a working committee in that it does not produce a regular series of activities/events such as Taste of Goshen, and adding that as a volunteer body, there is not sufficient staff time to produce more.
- b. The CRC, while able to "weigh in" on issues of discrimination, etc. has no real authority to mediate or resolve such issues.
- c. The Goshen community possesses a large number of very desirable assets and attributes on which to build (i.e. a supportive mayor, an active faith-based community, the Chamber, vibrant business community, etc.).
- d. Goshen is not immune to polarization. Polarization exists and appears to be increasing.
- e. Goshen is home to significant groups of people who experience discrimination.

Evan asked how the Goshen community might build resiliency. How do we prepare for “bad events” so as to react positively, preserving “the good of Goshen?”

Commissioners responded variously:

- a. Beyond resilience, how does Goshen proactively recognize the value of diversity, encouraging and nurturing its acceptance, thus averting problems?
- b. Bad events can happen anywhere. There is value in simply allowing diverse people to gather with one another at events like Taste.
- c. Don't underestimate the value of events such as Taste. There is “strategic value” in hosting such events.
- d. Many issues and comments offered tonight have been raised previously by CRC members who preceded.
- e. Perhaps employing a fairly traditional strategic planning process will reap community benefits and focus CRC energies.
- f. The CRC might consider hosting “community conversations.”
- g. The CRC's initial planning discussion a number of weeks ago served to establish a shared understanding of, and vision for, the CRC.
- h. Future CRC planning needs to consider both proactive actions resulting in positive behaviors and averting conflict, while also preparing for productive responses to difficulties that arise.
- i. Taste of Goshen is more than simply a food festival. Taste fosters an appreciation for other cultures and provides a forum for minorities to positively present themselves.

Angie commented that the CRC should seek a “doable” mix of events such as Taste and other community building activities, noting that we cannot present such events every month.

Sreekala commented on the numerous positive changes she has observed in the community during the 43 years she has resided here.

Commissioners brainstormed activities that might be undertaken in the future:

- a. Host community conversations,
- b. Offer individual intercultural awards – recognizing champions of diversity,
- c. Offer similar recognition to businesses,
- d. Broaden the “Coffee with the Chiefs” concept,
- e. Promote new police interaction with the community (i.e. “ride with a cop” programming, presentations to neighborhood associations, to church groups, etc.)
- f. CRC presentations to local businesses,
- g. Less than full neighborhood association conversations (“block parties”) regarding diversity, etc.,
- h. Is there applicability for the planned “Cookie Conversations” coming from the Marketing Committee?
- i. Host regular meetings, with conversation focusing on a single question/issue facing the community,
- j. Coffee shops or other businesses set aside space for regular evening conversations,
- k. Host community lectures during which “experts” present information and facilitate discussion,
- l. How might the CRC engage youth – formation of a Goshen Middle School CRC,
- m. Actively engage Goshen's faith community,
- n. Conversation (without governmental action required) on LGBTQ issues.

Evan posed a question – what does CRC wish to do with this compilation from here forward? How do we decide which of these – and/or others - to pursue?

Members mentioned a few “screening criteria” against which possible actions might be measured, compared and contrasted, helping to pare the list of possible actions to a manageable number:

- a. Quantify CRC resources available,
- b. Identify potential project/initiative partners,
- c. Define the “fit” with the CRC's mission and vision,
- d. Discuss available experience presenting such events,
- e. Conduct a SWOT analysis,
- f. Conduct a SOAR analysis (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations and Results)

ACTION: CRC members will meet to discuss the above on June 13, 2017 beginning at approximately 5:30 and continuing until 10:00 or after. Darin will seek the use of Abshire Cabin for this planning discussion.

7. Arts on the Millrace – Humans of Goshen (8:39 – 8:46)

This event will be held on the Millrace on Saturday, June 17.

ACTION: Angie and other CRC members will be present, with CRC information available for distribution and to collect Humans of Goshen information.

8. Reports and Statistics (8:46 – 8:49)

Darin reported that there has been no activity during the past month.

9. Review Taste of Goshen (8:49 – 9:14)

Commissioners offered comments regarding Friday's event:

- a. Do we need to issue tickets in "twos," as the tearing of the strip in half slows sales?
- b. It was noted that vendors operate as part of the CRC and hence, the County Health Department has not required licenses. Commercial vendors pay DGI for space used.
- c. The theme of the May, 2018 First Friday celebration may be different and inappropriate for Taste.
- d. Some, appropriately toned music will be desirable.
- e. Having music which is representative of various vendor's countries would be appropriate, perhaps even offering same on a CD.
- f. We need to work harder in the future to sell CRC T-shirts.
- g. Might the CRC produce a cookbook containing recipes of vended Taste food items?
- h. Smaller, less expensive samples of vendor food would enable patrons to sample foods from more vendors/countries.
- i. Can we grow Taste? There are additional vendors who would be interested in participating.

Darin reported that expenses for Taste are under budget. Specifically, he noted that Interra sponsored the event financially, and that Grand Rental costs were less than budgeted.

10. Indiana Consortium Conference – Angie (9:14 – 9:16)

The 2017 state conference is being postponed, with a new date and location TBD. The CRC has money available should we opt to send a member(s).

11. Review of April's Minutes (9:16 – 9:17)

Commissioners reviewed Minutes draft.

ACTION: Evan moved to accept April, 2017 Minutes as presented. Nate seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously by the CRC.

12. Treasurer's Report – Judy (9:17 – 9:26)

Judy reported that the only expenses for the month were 1) annual dues payment to the Indiana Consortium, 2) reimbursement to Sreekala for food purchases and 3) payment to Darin for consultant services.

Following discussion, CRC members decided to deposit the Interra donation into the donation account.

13. Reflection (9:26 – 9:27)

A comment was offered that CRC meetings should be kept shorter.

14. Announcements by CRC Members, Closing Comments and Reflections on the Meeting (9:27 – 9:28)

It was noted that high school students did not follow through with planning of the First Friday "flash dance."

15. Adjournment (9:28)

The next meeting of the Goshen CRC is scheduled for June 13, 2017 at 5:00 p.m. at a location TBD. An abbreviated regular CRC meeting will be held, followed by strategic planning discussions.

Action: Nate moved to adjourn the CRC meeting of May 9, 2017. The motion was seconded by Ed and was unanimously passed.