



**COMMUNITY
RELATIONS
COMMISSION**
CITY OF GOSHEN

Community Relations Commission City of Goshen, Indiana Annual Report – 2017 Submitted by Darin Short, CRC Consultant

Mission

To foster a climate of positive community relationships and non-discrimination in which all Goshen citizens enjoy equal opportunity for education, employment, access to public conveniences, accommodations and real property.

Origin and Background

The Community Relations Commission (CRC) was created by Ordinance 4201, “An Ordinance Creating the Goshen Community Relations Commission and Prescribing the Powers and Duties of the Commission,” adopted by the Common Council on April 13, 2004. Goshen was the 23rd Indiana city to establish a human/community relations commission. Mayor Allan Kauffman convened the first meeting on August 17, 2004.

CRC Principles

- Respect for each other and respect for each other’s rights
- Open communication and engagement
- Honesty
- A safe community
- Acceptance that change has positive and negative consequences
- Tolerance of differences
- Support for equality and freedom from discrimination

CRC Commissioners during 2017

Angie Troyer, Chair

Evan Miller, Treasurer

John Ferguson, Secretary (resigned during year)

Rocio Diaz (resigned during year)

Lizzy Diaz (served partial year)

Ed Ahlersmeyer

Sreekala Rajagopalan

David Araujo

Nathan Mateer Rempel

Judy Snider

CRC Activity in 2017

Vision 2025: The CRC made efforts to introduce the vision statement to the community by hosting an invitation-only event in March. More than 70 people attended the event and were given the opportunity to hear more about the visioning process as well as to hear from former Mayor Allan Kauffman, Goshen College's Gilberto Perez, and then CRC Commissioner Nathan Mateer-Rempel.

Following is the vision statement adopted by the CRC:

Goshen is a vibrant and dynamic community. Together we strive to

- **Strengthen our social and economic resources.**
- **Promote vitality, safety, and wholeness.**
- **Engage, embrace and celebrate our cultural commonalities and differences.**
- **Address challenges to our common good.**

Latino Neighborhood Outreach: In January the Commission approved a funding agreement for a joint effort between Bienvenido Community Solutions and LaCasa, Inc. to increase Latino participation in neighborhood associations. The initial effort focuses on the Historic South Side, Community of East Goshen, West Goshen, Rieth Park, and Chamberlain Neighborhoods.

Taste of Goshen: May First Friday: In May the Commission held its' annual Taste of Goshen during which almost two thousand people enjoyed food offerings from cultures represented in Goshen's population. These included Palestinian, Korean, Mexican, El Salvadoran, Colombian, Ukrainian, Puerto Rican and Indonesian.

Discrimination Issues: In March of 2017 a black man and resident of Goshen came to the CRC to share about his experiences of being pulled over by police while driving (he did not indicate whether his experiences involved Goshen Police, Elkhart County Police, State Police, or some other police agency). The gentleman shared with tears in his eyes that he has learned to accept that he will be pulled over in Goshen for no reason at all even though he is fully obeying the law. He indicated his wife fears for his safety when he leaves the house because he is black. The gentleman also referred to a specific case in which he was pulled over and ticketed for allegedly not using his headlights which he said was not possible because his headlights come on automatically. In order to fight the claim the gentleman had to travel on several occasions to Nappanee but in the end he was told he had to pay the ticket. He continued to fight the charge by taking it to court. In the end, the court agree to cancel the ticket and remove this incident from his record.

In July of 2017 another local resident came to the CRC to share the story of her biracial son (black and white) being called the "n word" in the CVS parking lot at the intersection of Main St. and Madison St. During the July CRC meeting, the conference room was packed full with visitors showing support for the mother. A positive outcome of this engagement with the mother and guests was that the guests challenged the CRC to develop and deliver a by-stander training program throughout the Goshen community. The purpose of the by-stander training would be to help residents know how to safely intervene if they witness harassment based on race, sex,

and/or other personal qualities or characteristics. By the end of 2017 the CRC was in the process of working with other resource persons to develop a by-stander training program.

Other items of note:

- In late 2016 the CRC engaged the services of R3 Design, a branding and website development firm owned by Rafael Barahona, Jr. In early 2017 R3 Design presented a branding and community engagement initiative that the CRC adopted. The purpose of the engagement with R3 Design was to increase awareness of the CRC, the role of the CRC in the community, and Goshen Vision 2025. Although there were several outcomes of this project, a primary outcome was a tagline for the CRC as a matter of fostering curiosity about the CRC. The tagline developed by R3 Design was “CRC What We Mean” or “CRC, Significa Que?” in Spanish.
- Commissioners held two half-day retreats in March (to begin to get to know each other since several new commissioners joined the CRC) and June (to further discuss and plan for implementation of Goshen Vision 2025). During the remainder of 2017 the CRC made great progress in identifying initiatives to be developed as a matter of pursuing the vision. The goal was for implementation of these initiatives in 2018.
- The CRC provided small grants for the Farmer’s Market Salsa Festival, Encuentro in the Alley (an event emphasizing Latino art), and The Multicultural Festival, an event supported in part by La Casa and held in the summer of 2017.
- CRC Principles of Engagement were adopted in part by City Council as an addition to the “Goshen Common Council Rules of Order”.
- Revised the Memorandum of Understanding with Darin Short to more accurately reflect expected duties and provide objective measures for evaluation.

Upcoming Initiatives

Diversity Events: The CRC is continuing with its expanded role with Downtown Goshen, Inc. for First Friday events this coming May. The May event is branded as ‘Taste of Goshen’ after the CRC’s annual event. In addition to our usual tent featuring a variety of ethnic foods, we are sponsoring musical performances, as well as sharing the newly minted Vision with the community.

Continuation of Community Project Support from CRC: In the past the CRC has made monies available for community projects or initiatives particularly where those projects interact with our Mission, Vision, and Principles.

Goshen Vision 2025: While we develop methods of publicizing the Vision in the community, we are also working to prioritize elements of the Vision that most directly intersect with our Mission and Strategic plan.