



**COMMUNITY
RELATIONS
COMMISSION**
CITY OF GOSHEN

Community Relations Commission City of Goshen, Indiana

Annual Report – 2012

Vision

The road to positive community relationships.

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 Initiatives in 2012

CRC Visioning Retreat

On January 28, 2012 commissioners along with consultant Darin Short met at Abshire Cabin. The morning long retreat included an overview of CRC history, and examination of strengths and weaknesses of the commission, stories from commissioners about pivotal events in the history of the CRC. The retreat concluded with a group discussion in the form of a mock press conference about the following ongoing priorities identified by commissioners:

- Immigration
- Mediation
- Diversity Day
- CRC Principles
- Community Building
- Discrimination
- Education
- Budget Limits
- Quantifying our work

Middlebury Street Mural Project

CRC provided a significant portion of the funding for a community mural in the Chamberlain Neighborhood. This project fit well into the Commission’s Strategic Plan particularly in assisting youth develop and exhibit positive behavior and fostering healthy neighborhoods. The mural was designed by an artist from the Northside Neighborhood and painted with her assistance by youth from the area and the Boy’s and Girl’s Club. Many partners contributed to the project including LaCasa, Inc, Neighborworks America, Goshen Street Department, The Boy’s and Girl’s Club, Chamberlain Neighborhood Association, and Northside Neighborhood.

Diverse Foods Tent: May 4 First Friday

Due in part to lack of availability of the traditional organizers for a large single-event Diversity Day, the Commission and volunteers planned two events in conjunction with First Fridays. In May the Commission sponsored a diverse food tent just West of Main Street on Washington. Groups from the Ukrainian, Palestinian, East Indian, and Guatemalan communities as well as the Black and Latino Student Unions at Goshen College provided food at various distinct booths under the tent.

CRC commissioners were well represented at the tent and engaged attendees in a Diversity Quiz, which when correctly completed qualified attendees for door prizes provided by local businesses. The CRC also displayed the Principles, and provided other information to the public at the event.

May 9 Community Roundtable

As a result of the CRC’s interest in the discussion surrounding proposed City ordinances related to youth behavior at First Fridays, the CRC endorsed a discussion hosted by Mayor Allan Kauffman and facilitated by Chair Joe Liechty. The goals of the event were to allow a diverse range of viewpoints to be expressed, heard and acknowledged, and to foster agreement around the issue of large numbers of unsupervised youth present at First Friday.

Attendees represented among others; City Council, Goshen Police Department, Goshen School Systems, Goshen Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Goshen, Inc., The Boy’s and Girl’s Club, The Post, Latino community representatives, founders of the downtown Ambassador program, and Goshen students and parents. Approximately 45 community members were in attendance and addressed three primary questions:

- What do you value about Goshen First Friday?
- What are the important issues that have arisen from the increased number of youth downtown during First Friday the past four months?
- What steps can be taken to ensure a welcoming positive and safe atmosphere for all during First Friday?

Please see minutes from this meeting, attached as Appendix A, for an overview of responses to these questions.

Community Roundtable on Immigration: On September 17 the CRC held a roundtable discussion on immigration in the Goshen High School Media Center. This event was a follow up to a community forum held on June 23, 2011. The intention behind the roundtable was to shed further light on illegal immigration, give Goshen residents an opportunity to express opinions and explore possible solutions to a complex problem.

A group of approximately 100 community members heard presentations from Goshen College Professor of History Steven Nolt, Bob Schrameyer of Citizens for Immigration Law Enforcement, and Saulo Padilla director of the Office on Immigration Education for Mennonite Central Committee. Professor Nolt provided an update on state and national legislation since the June 2011 event while Mr. Schrameyer and Mr. Padilla responded from their unique perspectives.

Following the presentation, the assembled community members were assigned by number into roundtable groups. These groups shared written responses to questions around illegal immigration posed by the moderator with each person in the group reading the response of another. Group discussion of responses followed with specific time parameters. A wide diversity of opinion and experience was evidenced in the responses and discussion, though the discussion remained civil and even friendly throughout the evening.

At the close of the meeting participants were introduced to the concept of a community jury made aware of the possibility of a CRC convened Community Jury process to explore the issue of illegal immigration further.

A subcommittee formed of Richard Aguirre, Nathan Mateer Rempel, Glenn Null, Bob Schrameyer, Felipe Merino, Darin Short and Julia King met in November to look into possible central topics for a Community Jury process around illegal immigration. Due to a shift in legislative outlook and the general national tone of conversation about illegal immigration recently the Commission is looking to expand the Jury process well beyond immigration. For more about this please see the Upcoming Initiatives of this report.

Diverse Cultural Arts Event: On November 2nd the CRC hosted a presentation of dance and music in the Goshen Theatre in conjunction with First Friday events. A diversity of Goshen groups including Ukrainian, Mexican, Peruvian, East Indian and the Goshen Community Schools provided a delightful array of entertainment. CRC commissioners staffed an

information table in the entry providing public access to the Principles and further information about the work of the CRC.

Upcoming Initiatives

Diversity Events: 2012 was a pilot year of a new format for diversity themed events. As such there is ample opportunity in 2013 for analysis and improvement of these events. In particular the challenge is how and to what extent to include public educational materials beyond the experiential, and how to integrate this into the event. The CRC looks forward to continuing work with Downtown Goshen, Inc. and First Friday for both a May Diverse Foods event and a November Cultural Arts event in 2013.

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 Strategic Plan and Principles. Following a highly successful long-term partnership with Peacemakers which ended in 2011, we hope to provide opportunity to again use those funds in a way which has strong community building impact (i.e. Middlebury Street mural). The CRC is looking into the possibility of issuing a Request for Proposal to community groups to specifically target the impact of support money in addressing a community need.

Community Conversations: Due to recent strong indications that federal lawmakers may engage in substantive reform related to immigration it appears less likely that a community jury process tightly focused on immigration can inform legislators in a timely manner. Based on this change in legislative climate, Commissioner Richard Aguirre along with Darin Short and community member Phil Thomas are developing a proposal for a broader community discussion that arises out of three primary questions. These are:

- If present demographic trends continue, what will Goshen look like in 10 or 20 years?
- If Goshen becomes more diverse, what opportunities and challenges will that diversity create?
- How can Goshen take advantage of the resulting opportunities and minimize the challenges?

The precise format for these discussions is not yet determined, though the Citizen Jury model is being considered. Under this model, a randomly selected group of citizens is presented with a legislative or community issue and asked to come to a recommendation based on deliberations that are informed by experts in the particular field of inquiry.

The CRC has approved moving forward with this process, a timeline is being developed and early coordination with the Mayor's office is underway.

Consultant Evaluation: The CRC is developing an evaluation instrument to determine the effectiveness of the consultant under contract with the Commission. The evaluation is based on the job description of the consultant and is planned to be conducted on an annual basis.

Strategic Plan: The most recent strategic plan expired at the end of 2012. The CRC adopted an interim plan with some minor changes to the 2009-2012 plan in order to better reflect current engagements. A more comprehensive evaluation is planned for later in 2013.

Financial Summary

Private Funds, Grants and Donations

Balance, January 1, 2012	\$	7,182.10
Grants		0
Diversity Day Donations		0
Interest Earned		10.91
Total Expenses		<u>(165.00)</u>
Balance, December 31, 2009	\$	7028.01

Public Funds

Balance, January 1, 2012	\$	0
Encumbrances from 2011		7561.04
Income		240000.00
Total Expenses		<u>(17356.11)</u>
Balance, December 31, 2012	\$	<u>14204.93</u>
Encumbrances from 2012 to 2013	\$	<u>13,950.00</u>

Statistics

Commissioner Meeting Attendance

The Commission held 11 public meetings in 2012. There was no quorum for the February meeting. Average attendance for the year was 81%, the same average as in 2011.

Commissioner	Ja	Fe	Ma	Ap	My	Jn	Jl	Au	Se	Oc	No	De	Tot	% P
Richard Aguirre	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	11	100
Joe Liechty	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	11	100
Miguel Millan	1		1	1	1	1	A	1	1	A	A	A	7	64
Nathan Mateer	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	11	100
Rempel														
Sreekala	1		A	A	A	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8	73
Rajagopalan														
Julia Gautsche	1		1	A	1	1	A	1	1	A	A	1	7	64
Glenn Null	1		1	1	1	A	A	1	1	1	1	1	10	82
George Smucker	1		A	A	1	1	1	A	1	A	1	A	6	55
Members Total	8		6	5	7	7	5	7	8	6	6	6		
% Members Present	100		75	63	88	88	63	88	100	75	75	75		81
Guests & Others	4		1	1	3	2	1	2	2	3	3	1		

A= Absent; 1 = Present; > = at least this number and more were in attendance

Incidence and Prevalence of Discrimination

The CRC is mandated (Ordinance 4201) to receive and process complaints of discrimination related to employment, real estate, education, public accommodation and credit on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, disability, national origin, ancestry, and familial status. Monitoring the frequency, trends and nature of complaints is an assessment of the extent of discrimination, thus identifying needs for education and community building.

The fundamental tool for receiving information about discrimination is a private and confidential phone reporting/recording system advertised on the CRC website.

Results

March: One call related to accessibility requirements at retirement homes; referred to Indiana Civil Rights Commission (ICRC).

September: One call from an Elkhart resident complaining of housing discrimination; referred to Elkhart's Human Relations Commission.

November, two calls:

- Spanish speaking female asking for guidance in dealing with domestic abuse. She was referred to a Commission member for referral to local organizations with specialization in such issues.
- A claim of employment discrimination from a restaurant worker. Indicated a recent termination was racially motivated. Referred to the ICRC.

Other hotline calls

April: Two calls requesting information regarding Diversity Day

November: One call from a participant injured during November's Diversity event

Meetings (*unless announced otherwise*)

- Monthly on the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 P.M.
- Goshen City Hall, Conference Room, 202 S. 5th Street, Goshen.

All community members are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Commission Members on December 31, 2012

Common Council Appointments and Terms (year ends December 31)

Miguel Millan (2007–2009; 2010-2012)

Sreekala K Rajagopalan (2004–2006; 2007–2009;2010-2012)

Julia Gautsche (2011–2013)

Glenn Null (2009–2011; 2012-2014)

Mayor Allan Kauffman’s Appointments and Terms

Richard R. Aguirre (2008–2010; 2011-2013)

Joe Liechty (2004–2005; 2006–2008; 2009-2011;2012-2014)

George Smucker (2004–2006; 2007–2009; 2010-2012)

Nathan Mateer Rempel (2012-2014)

2012 Officers

Chairperson: Joe Liechty

Vice-chair: George Smucker

Treasurer: Glenn Null

Secretary: Nathan Mateer Rempel

Diversity Day Advisor: Sreekala Rajagopalan

Ambassadors at Large: Miguel Millan
Richard Aguirre

Liaison to City Council: Julia Gautsche

2012 Diversity Event Volunteers

Anne Berry

Beth Berry

Steve Coyne

Judith Davis

Odelet Nance

Maria Sanchez Schirch

Appendix A
COMMUNITY ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ON GOSHEN FIRST FRIDAYS
7 p.m. Wednesday, May 9, 2012 — Goshen Middle School Library

Overview:

Goshen Mayor Allan Kauffman hosted a community roundtable discussion on ways to strengthen First Fridays and to ensure a welcoming, positive and safe atmosphere for all. A diverse range of stakeholders and constituents shared their viewpoints and searched for common ground. The facilitator was Joe Liechty, chair of the Community Relations Commission. The CRC endorsed the discussion.

Goals:

- To allow a diverse range of viewpoints to be expressed, heard, and acknowledged
- To help foster the development of agreements or common ground to address issues raised by the presence of large numbers of unsupervised youths visiting downtown during First Fridays

Participants: About 45 persons, representing:

- City of Goshen (City Council, Police Department, Community Relations Commission)
- Goshen students/parents
- Downtown business owners (as well as members of Downtown Goshen, Inc. and the Goshen Chamber of Commerce)
- Education/youth organization representatives (Middle school educators, Boys & Girls Club, The Post, youth advocates)
- Latino community representatives (including pastors)
- Community at-large representatives (including founders of Ambassador program)

7:05 p.m.: Richard R. Aguirre, a member of the Community Relations Commission, opened the meeting and introduced Mayor Allan Kauffman.

Mayor Kauffman welcomed participants and provided the background/purpose of the conversation. He discussed the development of First Fridays and issues related to large numbers of youth downtown. He introduced Joe Liechty, facilitator. Joe is chair of the City of Goshen Community Relations Commission and professor of Peace, Justice & Conflict Studies at Goshen College.

Joe Liechty outlined the structure, goals and format for the evening.

- Participants introduced themselves

• **Conversation guidelines:**

- Civility / mutual respect
- No speeches
- Letting others speak before speaking again
- If there is an extended exchange, chair may ask them to move on

ROUND 1: What do you value about Goshen First Friday?

(Answers provided in “popcorn”-style discussion)

1. Social gathering
2. Great food
3. Family oriented (3)
4. Opportunities for commerce
5. Shows the city is alive
6. Inter-generational
7. Shake a lot of hands
8. Kids downtown having good time (2)
9. Shows city is diverse
10. Showcases features of downtown
11. Kids excited about First Friday
12. Family—diversity—business
13. Entertainment/music
14. Exposure to diversity – different cultural activities
15. History of Goshen
16. Amplifies best of who we are
17. It is all-weather, all year long, all times of year

ROUND 2: What are the important issues that have arisen from the increased number of youths downtown during First Friday the past four to six months?

(Responses by stakeholder table-groups)

City of Goshen

- Increased police and resources expended to enhance safety and peacefulness
- Youth detract from economic vitality due to traffic, bad language, shoplifting
- Small space with a lot of people

Students and parents

- Trouble and fights among youth
- Sidewalks are too crowded
- Jaywalking
- Safety
- Space (not enough) for youth to hang out

Downtown businesses

- Decreased revenue with increasing population and stagnation
- Overcrowding by noncustomers – prevents opportunity/access for paying customers and families
- Sidewalk blocking

- Disrespectful behaviors
- Unsafe condition for young single women after hours
- Commerce decreases as non-customers take up the space (especially worsens with inclement weather)

Education and youth organizations

- Intimidation by youth
- Violence taking place
- Unsupervised middle school students, plus elementary school children brought by older siblings
- Disrespectful behaviors

Latino community

- Lack of information about First Friday and issues
- Fights and disrespectful behavior
- Sidewalk blocking

Community representatives

- Not enough space to stop and stand
- Specific problematic behaviors by a few (not youth as a whole)
- Courthouse area not well lighted
- Safety issues

Round 2 themes observed:

1. There is no longer sufficient space (downtown) for youth to go or to be
2. Capacity has been reached
3. Where youth were once welcomed, space is full
 - Youth present at roundtable meeting are not the ones causing trouble – but youth in general are now seen as problems
4. Youth don't want to go where (locations) organizers have provided space
5. Behavior of youth
6. These issues don't just affect youth
7. It is not all the kids, only a few (causing problems)
8. It is the kids that get rude if you ask them to let you pass
9. Space is an issue; too many people block sidewalks; It's not just kids
10. Concern: avoid creating an "us" vs. "youth" mentality
11. Regarding kids, it is just the behavior of a few that is offensive
12. Standing and blocking space is different than bad behavior
13. 98% of kids find just standing there not a big deal—that's what they do
 - 2% using bad language is what is remembered; a few bad apples

ROUND 3: What steps can be taken to ensure a welcoming, positive and safe atmosphere for all during First Friday?

(Responses by mixed/random member table-groups)

Group 1

- Lighting improvement
- Close streets (to make space for people)
- More patrols (patrol areas)

- More volunteers; expand Ambassadors program
- More diverse activities for kids

Group 2

- Ambassador program: strengthen and encourage
- Create a task force like this (tonight's composition) to deal with these issues on a long-term basis
- Be proactive, create answers

Group 3

- Designate a side street area for youth entertainment – where they can be teenagers (One student asked, “How do you keep us there?”)
- Spread out amongst community and families, rules to follow when downtown
- While youth may listen, might not follow (the rules)

Group 4

- Many walking alleys and spaces aren't well lighted
- Have more (patrols) in areas that are not well lit
- Keep the Ambassadors
- Educate/encourage parents to attend events with their children
- Posting something (rules) that people will adhere to: e.g., “trail rules” for downtown; keep in good humor, e.g., “no F-bombs”
- Have expectations for right behavior with consequences: e.g., 2 warnings and we call your parents

Group 5

- Close Main Street (i.e., more streets) to create space
- Improve communications
- Parental involvement
- Volunteer involvement (more) – the ambassadors supplement police
- Create community support

Group 6

- Expand number of volunteer Ambassadors via churches/congregations
- Promote parents bringing the kids or have the kids stick with Ambassadors
- Add downtown space – close streets
- Better lighting in alleys and courthouse lawn area

Round 3 themes and expanded discussion

1. Street closings
 - Costs (chair asked that this implication be hammered out among stakeholders at another time)
 - Reduces parking spaces/access—a problem
 - Shuttle service – (never discussed by planners); tie in other retail areas
 - Way-finding signage
2. Find ways to reward good behavior
 - Ask teens what they say the punishments should be
 - Do teenagers have the solution to this situation?

3. Children congregating downtown today will be tomorrow's leaders, business owners and customers—remember, youth are the future of city vitality
4. Kids now have more money to spend than “ we” had
5. Community agreement helps bring about accountability
6. Ambassadors need to be people that really care about & like kids, so we don't have disrespect both ways
 - Ambassadors have shown they do care about kids; they want to help
 - Ambassadors now hand out schedules/venues
 - Ambassadors are trained with non-confrontational skills
 - Rewards for good behavior would be good (ice cream coupons?)
7. More programming for youth in close-by space where it is more lively
8. Do Latinos' feel welcome downtown on FF?
 - Latinos feel welcome downtown; pastors don't go because they have Friday church services
 - At a disadvantage since they didn't grow up here and don't find it a place to meet old-time friends
9. Demographics changing – how do we adapt to these changes?
10. More involvement of Latino business owners would be good

8:35 p.m.:

Joe Liechty thanked participants for a productive conversation

Mayor Kauffman closed the evening by expressing thanks to all in attendance for the conversation

Richard R. Aguirre reminded all participants to leave their names and email addresses to get a copy of the minutes. He also noted that the Community Relations Commission plans to convene a community conversation on immigration.

Note: Thanks to Goshen College for providing nametags, pens, paper, a flipchart and refreshments and to Goshen Middle School for providing an excellent venue.

Background of the roundtable discussion: The Community Roundtable Discussion on Goshen First Fridays was suggested by Richard R. Aguirre, a member of the Community Relations Commission, based on an original idea by Darin Short of InterSights, the consultant for the Community Relations Commission. The community discussion was first endorsed by Councilwoman Julia Gautsche and Eric Kenagy, a downtown business owner and leader. The community discussion later was endorsed and co-sponsored by Mayor Allan Kauffman and Councilman Jeremy Stutsman. The discussion was organized by Richard Aguirre, with logistical assistance from Mayor Kauffman, Councilman Stutsman, Darin Short and Joe Liechty, chair of the Community Relations Commission.

— *Minutes by George Smucker, vice chair, Community Relations Commission*