

VILLAGE OF DEERFIELD COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMISSION

Tuesday, January 12, 2021
6 p.m.

Remote via Zoom.

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://deerfieldil.zoom.us/j/85067449929?pwd=TU96TUIVckhBVHljS3FyWFFRQ3hFUT09> Passcode: +TivG1=J

Or Telephone: +1 312 626 6799 or +1 646 558 8656

Webinar ID: 850 6744 9929

Passcode: 38170137

Village residents wishing to respectfully share thoughts about any matter concerning the Village may do so by submitting an email to publiccomment@deerfield.il.us prior to the meeting. Emails received will be read aloud during Public Comment. At least one representative from the Village will be present at Village Hall.

AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER

PUBLIC COMMENT

DISCUSSION

- 1. Review of Community Relations Commission “Functions and Duties”**

ADJOURNMENT

Community Relations Commission

Meeting Minutes

December 1, 2020

A meeting of the Appearance Review Commission was held electronically on Tuesday, December 1, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. Chairperson called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

Present were

Kathy Anderson
Gil Antokal
Veronica Boyajian
Rebeka Childers
Judy Hoffman
Bill Lundquist
Zach Raimi
Susie Wexler, Chairperson

Absent was:

Jason Caplan

Also Present:

David Fitzgerald-Sullivan, Management Analyst
Jeri Cotton, Secretary
Kent Street, Village Manager (present at Village Hall)

Public Comment:

There were no public comments on non-agenda items that were received prior to the meeting. There was no one present at Village Hall for Public Comment and no one on Zoom.

The commissioners discussed the Open Meetings Act training requirement, which gives a general idea on what is allowed at public meetings.

Discussion

1. Introductions

The commissioners introduced themselves.

Kathy Anderson has been the principal at Deerfield High School for five years. Prior to that, she worked at Chicago Public Schools. Ms. Anderson would like to continue to connect community members to the schools, even after their children leave the school system. She hopes to draw all ages into the high school community and bring community members together.

Gil Antokal is a 40-year resident of Deerfield. He is married with three grown children and eight grandchildren. His children went through the Deerfield school system. He works as a mortgage banker. Mr. Antokal was a member of the Youth Council when it merged with the Human Relations Commission to form the Community Relations Commission. He has been on the commission for 23 years. Mr. Antokal loves Deerfield and the community spirit. He was involved with DYBA, AYSO and other organizations. In addition, he has been elected to the Park District Board five times. Mr. Antokal likes the community spirit and the people who go the extra mile for the Village.

Veronica Boyajian has lived in Deerfield for 10 years. She has a special needs daughter who did not go through the school system in Deerfield, as she was 22 when she moved to Deerfield. Ms. Boyajian wants to promote social activities for special needs adults.

Rebekah Childers is a 14-year resident with two children in the Deerfield schools. She works as a corporate communications consultant and is running for Deerfield Trustee. Ms. Childers looks forward to new opportunities to engage people. She enjoys talking to people about the opportunity to get involved in the community and believes it is a great place to live.

Judy Hoffman has worked as the Outreach Coordinator at the Deerfield Public Library for seven years. She worked with the library for many years and has a long library career. Ms. Hoffman lives in Skokie. She loves working in Deerfield and the great relationship between the municipal organizations. Ms. Hoffman is very involved with the League of Women Voters. She is excited to work with the group and serve on the Commission.

Bill Lundquist has been a member of the Community Relations Commission for four years. He is a 42-year resident and his kids went through the Deerfield school system. Mr. Lundquist believes the school system is very fine and noted the schools brought his family to Deerfield. Mr. Lundquist brings a lot of management experience to the Commission. He was in the US Airforce and worked as a consultant for a not-for-profit organization. He currently works part time doing accounting work. Mr. Lundquist likes the volunteer spirit in Deerfield, as well as the safety, security and support from Deerfield residents and staff.

Zach Raimi is a seven-year Deerfield resident with two school-age children. He works as a lawyer for HH Global in Deerfield. Mr. Raimi appreciates the park district and the parks that are available for residents.

Susie Wexler has lived in Deerfield 28 years and has served on the Volunteer Engagement Commission for the past 21 years and chaired that commission for the past ten years. Volunteer engagement is her passion. She decided to make a lateral move to this commission to help improve communication and relations with residents.

The commissioners discussed the current situation in the Village and what the CRC can do to assist. Mr. Antokal explained the Commission has done a lot in the past, including the Outstanding Service Award for students, the Human Relations Award for a resident going above and beyond in the community, a Random Acts of Kindness program, and more. The CRC was the first Commission in the State of Illinois to initiate a student government intern program where a high school sophomore and junior were made part of the Commission and the senior member actually voted on public policy. This was a great way to engage the youth in Deerfield. Mr. Antokal would like to recreate some of these programs.

Ms. Childers believes the Commission will establish a charter of what they want to achieve. The commissioners have a shared set of values but there is also an opportunity to help build human spirit. The commissioners can take these opportunities and put them toward progressing something within the community,

Ch. Wexler noted the Commission has been dormant for a bit. There may be a re-ramping period, but there is a significant need for this Commission to be active now more than ever. We are at a key time in the social journey. There is a need for overt statements for behavioral norms within the community. We need to celebrate the behaviors we want and cultivate what is good in the community. Human nature reacts to the negative. People are stressed right now and need the guidance and leadership of the CRC. Ms. Childers believes there are more outlets for people to be negative, especially with social media. Ch. Wexler looked at the list of the things the CRC accomplished over the years and noted highlighted the good. People do not think they will be noticed when they do the right thing. The CRC needs to celebrate the good. They should be shining light on the good; because where there is light, there is the opportunity for good. Ch. Wexler wants to work hard because progress begets progress. The Commission needs to commit on when to meet, set an agenda and cultivate success.

Ms. Anderson looks forward to establishing the goal / mission statement to develop the initiatives to connect with the community. She fully believes the Commission can provide resources and support for all community members regardless of their background and looks forward to working with everyone. Deerfield is a strong community. Ms. Anderson hopes to embrace Deerfield and have other communities see how amazing we are.

Mr. Antokal's grandson was mainstreamed in Deerfield schools and will return to Deerfield from Southern Illinois University when he is 22 years old. The Commission should consider addressing this type of situation as well. Ch. Wexler explained when the Commission has a regular meeting cadence, we will be able to look at who is in the community. Deerfield is a place for so many of us to be our best selves and bring strengths to the table for this opportunity to thrive. There are a lot of underdiscussed populations and opportunities where this Commission can create connections. Covid has shown us that being alone and isolated is not the place to be. This Commission has a lot of work to do.

2. Establish regular meeting calendar

Ch. Wexler explained the Commission formerly met on the second Tuesday of each month. She suggested the possibility of meeting more frequently to gain traction. Ch. Wexler indicated the commissioners should plan for the second Tuesday for the meeting, but there could be subcommittees and other work in between the monthly meetings.

Mr. Antokal explained there were representatives from Districts 113 and 109, the Patty Turner Center, the Deerfield Public Library and the community. He asked if there would be more people on the Commission. Ch. Wexler explained that is the long-term goal, but the Commission needs to get started to determine who else would be needed to work as liaisons with the Commission.

3. Other projects / items for discussion

Ch. Wexler asked the Commissioners to think about who else to include as part of the Commission.

Adjournment:

There being no further business or discussion, Mr. Antokal moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Lundquist seconded the motion. The motion by the following vote:

AYES: Anderson, Antokal, Boyajian, Childers, Hoffman, Lundquist, Raimi, Wexler (8)

NAYS: None (0)

The meeting was adjourned at 6:58 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeri Cotton
Secretary

Overview

Membership consists of 9 members appointed to 3-year overlapping terms. Duties: Study and recommend means of developing better relationships among all residents in all community activities. Identify and evaluate the social, recreational and developmental needs of village youth and how they might participate in all aspects of community life. Initiate and conduct educational and informational programs to promote diversity. Award village assistance to senior residents in accordance with established eligibility criteria.

Functions & Duties

The Community Relations Commission is established to foster and promote understanding, mutual respect, cooperation, and positive relations in a diverse inclusive community. The Community Relations Commission is also to promote increased participation in all aspects of community life and a sense of shared community among all residents. The Community Relations Commission shall act in an advisory capacity to Village President and Board of Trustees. The Community Relations Commission shall have the following functions and duties:

1. Study and recommend means of developing better relationships among all residents in a diverse and inclusive community of Deerfield.
2. Encourage residents to be "service-oriented" in the opportunities to assist one another in the community and the neighborhood.
3. Promote and support initiatives with federal, state and local governmental agencies, commissions, businesses, schools, civic and religious organizations, neighborhood and community events aimed at increasing goodwill and civil engagement among the residents and the global community at large.
4. Recognize and approve honors or awards for persons, firms, or entities that serve or advance understanding, mutual respect, cooperation and positive relations between and among residents of Deerfield.

The Community Relations Commission shall consist of members broadly representative from the community at large. The Commission shall consist of 9 voting members and additional ex officio members as the Commission deems necessary.