

Community Relations Commission

Meeting Minutes

February 9, 2021

A meeting of the Appearance Review Commission was held electronically on Tuesday, February 9, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. Chairperson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Present were

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

Absent were:

Jason Caplan

Also Present:

David Fitzgerald-Sullivan, Communications Specialist
Jeri Cotton, Secretary

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.

Document Approval

Mr. Lundquist moved to approve the minutes from the January 12, 2021 Community Relations Commission meeting. Mr. Antokal seconded the motion. Ms. Hoffman made a minor correction. The motion passed by the following vote as amended:

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

NAYS: None (0)

Discussion

1. Consideration of Community Relations Commission "Functions and Duties" Changes

Ms. Boyajian believes the words relations, relationships, community and diversity are used multiple times. Although they are appropriate to use, she expressed concern

about the overuse of these words. She wants to ensure the information comes across as heartfelt and suggested rephrasing some of the information to keep it fresh. The commissioners discussed other possible words to use as substitutions and decided to replace the word 'relations' with 'positive interactions' for all individuals in our Village in the Functions and Duties section. The commissioners do not believe the next sentence is needed if they add engagement to the first sentence.

Mr. Antokal moved to accept the changes listed above to the Functions and Duties section. Ms. Boyajian seconded the motion. The motion passed by the following vote:

AYES: Anderson, Antokal, Boyajian, Metts-Childers, Hoffman, Lundquist, Raimi, Wexler (7)

NAYS: None (0)

Will go ot the MBOT first meeting in March

2. Report from the Deerfield Park District Regarding Sister Community Proposal and Village History Museum

Jeff Nehila, Executive Director of the Deerfield Park District, provided an update on park district happenings over past nine months. There was a petition to rename Mitchell Park due to James C. Mitchell. The Park Board decided to change the name to Floral Park, which was the proposed subdivision for that property. Other outcomes from that discussion include the establishment of a citizens advisory committee, creating a historical museum within Deerfield to show the history of the Village and consideration of a sister Village concept to partner with an underserved community. The museum is not in place yet. Mr. Nehila is doing some research on it and it will take some time. There will be an exhibit to discuss the history of Deerfield in 1959-1960 when the purchase took place. The museum will have a lot of partners including the Village, Township, schools, historical society, etc. Someday there will be a museum with a lot of exhibits. Mr. Nehila explained the Park District owns two homes on Wilmot Road and that is the potential site for the museum.

Mr. Nehila discussed the Sister Village concept. The Village would partner with an underserved community to provide activities including mentoring, counseling and government. He will do some outreach to identify partners that have some interest. Mr. Nehila noted the Village needs to be sincere about it. He would like it to be a community effort rather than only a park district initiative. There is not a need for any decisions at this time, as he is still working on the concepts. Ms. Metts-Childers believes both programs have a lot of potential. She believes the Village could learn a lot from the sister city. Mr. Nehila noted the Historical Society is in charge of preserving artifacts and archives while the museum would be an operation / entity that would be run jointly with the park district and Village. Mr. Fitzgerald-Sullivan does a lot of work with the Historical Society. He is working with them to create a Deerfield Covid-19 archive.

Ch. Wexler went through the Commission's four main functions and believes there is a lot of overlap with these programs and the Commission's functions and duties and these proposals. Mr. Nehila believes the Commission's objectives are in line with the Park District's goals. Mr. Antokal believes the advisory group learned and understood that a lot of what was previously put out was inaccurate regarding Mitchell Park. They were able to learn some of the facts. Ch. Wexler believes there is a vast opportunity for a lot of different groups to be involved. They have to be mindful of accurate information and can be a model of how to distribute accurate information in a fair minded and thoughtful way.

3. Discussion on Community Kindness Award Program

Ch. Wexler received an email asking if the CRC could publicly acknowledge when people go out of their way to be good people. Mr. Antokal explained the Commission had a complete program about seven years ago called random acts of kindness and will get information to Mr. Fitzgerald-Sullivan for distribution to the Commission. It is special to acknowledge when people do random or community acts of kindness without asking or expecting things in return.

The commissioners discussed a name for the new program decided on a Community Kindness program rather than Random Acts of Kindness. They discussed the possibility of recognizing the recipients as ambassadors to the community. Mr. Fitzgerald-Sullivan suggested giving recipients a yard sign but the commissioners were concerned it may not be displayed. Ch. Wexler suggested giving the recipient something they could pass forward.

The commissioners discussed how to promote the program. Mr. Antokal believes the Commission could put in a quarterly blurb in D-Tails asking for submissions. There could be a plaque in Village Hall with the recipient's name and a replica given to the recipient. Ms. Boyajian suggested having the recipient's picture in D-Tails. Ms. Metts-Childers suggested having a couple options, including donating \$25 to charity. Ms. Hoffman believes a proclamation, recognition on social media and in D-Tails may be nice, but suggested less "stuff" would be greener.

Ms. Anderson asked about the criteria of who gets chosen. She suggested creating a system where people are nominated and get recognized. The Commission may need to do some outreach to get people to nominate others. Ms. Anderson does not think most people are not looking for any recognition. They are doing it because they know that is best. She suggested asking the recipient if they want to be publicly recognized or just accept recognition from the Commission. Ch. Wexler suggested looking at the previous process and modifying it for 2021. She thinks there the commission should look at the following:

1. Standards. The commission may need to look at different categories. How can you compare what a middle school student does versus an adult? There needs to be equity across the board.

2. Capture. The commission needs to create a wide net to capture who has done things.

3. Pattern. Needs to be someone that has a pattern of kindness. This is a person that lives the kindness kind of life.

Ch. Wexler suggested looking at other institutions that have similar programs and determining what the commission likes and dislikes. The program should start small and grow. Ch. Wexler suggested determining a launch date. Mr. Antokal explained the previous Community Relations Award and Outstanding Student Award were given out at the ecumenical service the day before Thanksgiving. There were criteria for both awards. Mr. Antokal will send information to Mr. Fitzgerald-Sullivan for distribution to the Commission.

4. Consideration of Letter of Support for Dementia Friendly Community Task Force

Mr. Fitzgerald-Sullivan explained the Dementia Friendly Community Task Force is comprised of representative from the public and different organizations. Ms. Hoffman is a member of the Task Force. They meet monthly and want to become a dementia-friendly community. The participants include West Deerfield Township, the police social worker, Mr. Fitzgerald-Sullivan, the police commander and others. They are looking for support to earn designation and plan to work continuously on it. Ms. Hoffman explained they have a template from other communities for a letter. There is a good education online and ways for a community to grow from the resources on hand. She believes this is a good initiative and match for what the commission wants to support. Ch. Wexler believes this is a population that does not always get the support they deserve. Mr. Fitzgerald-Sullivan noted the DBR Chamber of Commerce just approved a letter in support of the initiative and would send a copy to the Commission.

Mr. Lundquist moved to recommend the Mayor and Board of Trustees support the dementia friendly community initiative. Ms. Hoffman seconded the motion. The motion passed by the following vote:

AYES: Anderson, Antokal, Boyajian, Metts-Childers, Hoffman, Lundquist, Raimi, Wexler (7)

NAYS: None (0)

Public Comment:

Mr. Antokal reminded everyone about the Community Blood Drive on March 7, 2021 in the Pine Room of the Jewett Park Community Center.

Adjournment:

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There being no further business or discussion, Mr. Antokal moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Metts-Childers seconded the motion. The motion passed by the following vote:

AYES: Antokal, Boyajian, Metts-Childers, Hoffman, Lundquist, Raimi, Wexler (6)

NAYS: None (0)

The meeting was adjourned at 7:06 p.m.

The next regular Community Relations Commission meeting will take place on Tuesday, March 9, 2021 at 6:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeri Cotton
Secretary