

MINUTES

Regular Meeting of the City of Goshen Community Relations Commission

Tuesday, July 11, 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: John Ferguson, Nathan Mateer-Rempel, Evan Miller, Sreekala Rajagopalan, and Angie Troyer

CRC Members Absent: Ed Ahlersmeyer, David Araujo, Lizzy Diaz and Judy Snider

CRC Consultant Present: Darin Short

Others Attending: Mayor Jeremy Stutsman and many others

1. Call to Order & Opening (7:01 – 7:06)

a. Angie called the meeting to order, welcoming all. CRC members introduced themselves, as did all visitors.

ACTION: *Angie moved to amend the meeting agenda by adding 1) Annual Report discussion, 2) 2018 Budget discussion and 3) comments regarding the Indiana state consortium meetings. Nate seconded the motion, which was unanimously passed.*

ACTION: *Nate moved to adopt the amended meeting agenda. The motion was seconded by Evan and was unanimously passed.*

b. Angie offered an opportunity for CRC members to offer comments. There were none.

2. July Reflection (7:06 – 7:13)

Angie explained the purpose of the Reflection for the benefit of visitors. Sreekala commented, offering some history of the CRC and stating its purpose. She has served on the CRC for many years, and was the Commission's first Chairperson. She spoke of changing community attitudes and priorities affecting the CRC through the years. Sreekala commented regarding the need for the CRC to approach various issues with "balanced" perspectives.

Upcoming reflections will be offered:

August	Evan
September	Lizzy
October	Nate
November	Angie
December	Ed

3. For the Good of the CRC – Public Comment (7:13 – 7:59)

Angie invited visitors' comments, reciting the CRC's Principles as a basis for the conversation to follow.

A mother spoke on behalf of her son, who was not in attendance. She reported that he had recently been called a "n*****" at a local retailer by a woman who was unknown to him. The mother added that she herself had long been the target of racially offensive comments, adding that she did not know if the situation is solvable. She stated that she wants a different experience for her sons. Parents can do everything correctly but cannot fully shield their children from hate. The mom added that she was speaking as the mother of her son and not as the "face" of any other group.

Mayor Stutsman commented that the CRC is an "open" place for sharing. He encouraged others to speak out.

Other visitors also commented regarding discriminatory incidents. It was noted that conditions leading to such occurrences are Goshen's, and cannot be attributed to or blamed on "outsiders."

A number of specific initiatives were referenced as possible ways to begin to mediate these situations:

- A **neighborhood watch** initiative might be launched in which individuals report incidents as they witness them,
- **By-stander training** might be offered, preparing citizens to properly and productively intervene in situations involving conflict. NOTE: It was noted that Beth Birky (?) at Goshen College offers similar training.
- A visitor asked as to the possibility for **local businesses to display "We're Glad You're Our Neighbor"** signage.

- Another visitor asked whether it was possible for ***citizen rights to be posted***, ensuring that everyone knows how he/she might respond to incidents,
- It was suggested that ***intervention training*** be offered,
- There was also general agreement that citizens must ***report incidents***,
- The ***CRC should better publicize itself*** and ways that citizens can contact the Commission,
- It was also suggested that the ***CRC be listed as a community resource in materials published by the schools***.

John Ferguson noted that the CRC is currently engaged in a planning process that will hopefully result in the implementation of specific programs and activities, adding that he hopes tonight's visitors remain engaged in the process.

Darin Short announced that he would leave a "sign-up sheet" at the door, encouraging visitors to leave their names and contact information so that the CRC might contact them again.

Evan Miller thanked the "citizen mom" for her candor, adding that he knew her presence and comments were difficult.

4. Propose Principles Amendment (7:59 – 8:07)

Angie reported that CRC principles have never been formally adopted by the City Council. She added that such adoption will be presented to the Council by a City Council member at next week's meeting.

ACTION: Evan moved that the CRC proceed, seeking adoption of the CRC principles by the City Council. The motion was seconded by John and was unanimously passed.

5. Review/Reflect on Retreat (8:07 – 9:01)

Darin briefly commented regarding the "Opening Comments" page of the document distributed, adding that the CRC will address the "Aspirations" and "Results" sections during this meeting. Commissioners commented generally, that they were pleased with the retreat discussion and progress made.

Comments offered in the two sections discussed include:

"Aspirations"

- We all care about Goshen
- The CRC needs to be more visible
- We care for all people, especially those experiencing discrimination
- We want to foster respect
- We want to foster tolerance
- We want a safe community
- We want to express the power of diversity
- The CRC wants to lead by example
- We want to be a catalyst for positive change
- We want citizens to "connect" to the CRC and with one another

"Results"

- We want to see increased "traffic" via the CRC website, social media, etc.
- We want more people participating/trained in various CRC-sponsored activities
- We want to see more businesses adopt CRC principles
- We want to track and report the "unique" number of persons participating in community conversations, as well as total numbers of participants
- We want to see increases in "random acts of kindness"
- We want people to be nicer and more civil to one another

Darin distributed the "Proposed Criteria" and suggested that he speak more specifically with a couple of commissioners to prepare a report for the August meeting of the CRC.

6. 2018 Budget (9:01 – 9:11)

Following discussion, commissioners agreed that the following line cost items should constitute the 2018 CRC budget:

- Community conversation production
- Grants (unspecified) initiatives
- Marketing
- Consultant fees
- Diversity Day/Taste of Goshen
- Diversity inventory

7. Reports and Statistics (9:11 – 9:12)

It was agreed that conversation around the meeting agenda item *For the Good of the CRC – Public Comment* above would constitute this agenda item. No new comments were offered.

8. Review of June Minutes (9:12 – 9:15)

There were no comments offered regarding minutes of the June CRC meeting.

ACTION: Nate moved to adopt the minutes as presented. Evan seconded the motion, which passed the CRC unanimously.

9. Treasurer’s Report (9:15 – 9:16)

A financial report was presented, but commissioners agreed that it is not accurate.

ACTION: John moved to table the Treasurer’s Report, giving Judy additional time to work with the Clerk’s office so as to regularly produce an accurate report of CRC financial activity. The motion was seconded by Evan and was passed unanimously by the CRC.

10. Announcements by CRC Members, Closing Comments and Reflections on the Meeting (9:16 – 9:34)

a. Angie commented that the deadline to register for the state conference is rapidly approaching. Angie is unable to attend but feels that the CRC should be represented. Hotel rooms must be reserved by 7.21.17.

b. Sreekala distributed several historical documents.

c. Nate reminded commissioners that notice of CRC meetings must be posted at the front door of City Hall and that the front door must be open for the public.

d. Evan reminded commissioners that we had agreed to certain follow-up actions regarding the citizen report of inappropriate police action reported a couple of months ago. It was noted that police are able to act as though on duty when they are in uniform and even though they may be outside their own jurisdiction.

ACTION: Darin will talk with Chief Branson about local activities and practices.

e. Evan also commented about a diversity inventory which measures individual awareness of, and perspectives on, diversity issues, suggesting that commissioners may want to all take the inventory.

ACTION: It was agreed that commissioners will take the inventory later during 2017.

f. Sreekala commented regarding a disabled individual who is running for Congress.

11. Adjournment (9:34)

The next meeting of the Goshen CRC is scheduled for August 8, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. at Goshen’s City Hall.

Action: Nate moved to adjourn the CRC meeting of July 11, 2017. The motion was seconded by Evan and was unanimously passed.