

MINUTES



REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY OF GOSHEN

COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMISSION

Monday, January 10, 2022 – 7 p.m.

Goshen City Council Chamber - **111 East Jefferson St.**

This meeting will be held in person and via zoom.

PRESENT: Malik Cato, AJ Delgadillo, Ed Groff, and Glenn Null,

ON ZOOM: Cathie Cripe, Gladys Rosas

ALSO PRESENT: Megan Eichorn (Council Liaison) and Steve Bermudez (Youth Advisor).

Absent: Sharon Beechy

Meeting called to order: (7:05 pm)

Call to Order & Opening

Roll Call and introduction of visitor: Sharon Beechy, E-Man Monge, and Gladys Rosas.

1. E-man Monge – introductions; He is a supervisor at the Bashor Home for the daily reporting program and Children’s aftercare services. Locally he is involved with the East Lincoln Crossroads Neighborhood Association services, as well as helping with the communication coordinating for the Goshen Ministerial Association. He has been married for ten years, with a young child of one.
2. Gladys Rosas - works for “Eve’s Advocate Programs” for Elkhart County working with the youth. She has a huge passion for justice.

Review of the CRC Mission and Principles: **Read aloud by the group**

Reviewed the agenda – **Motion passes unanimously.**

Review Minutes from December 13, 2021 – **Motion passes unanimously.**

Current Treasurer’s Report – Starting with the 2022 clean slate. CRC was awarded \$23, 200 for the yearly budget. This is a significant commitment from the Mayor’s office and the city counselors. **AJ** has submitted a proposal back in July 2021. There have been items identified of the certain content area that we anticipate spending money on this year. Being that this budget was approved simultaneously with the funding of **AJ’s** full-time position, we need to keep our eyes on the budget this year, to be sure that we spend the money we have been awarded. **Glenn** added, to spend the money wisely and to focus on our missions, **Ed** concurred. **Glenn:** In the past, community needs were present to the commission, using CRC protocols and procedures; this is a very important process.

New Business

1. AJ; Officer Election: As a group back in December 2021, we came to a consensus to accept Cathie Cripe as the CRC Chairperson, Malik Cato as Vice-Chair, and Ed Groff as the Secretary-Treasurer was generally accepted.

A Motion by Glenn Null, and seconded by Ed Groff. **Motion: Passed unanimously**

Motion to elect Malik Cato as Vice-Chairperson.

Motion by Glenn Null, seconded by Cathie Cripe. Motion: Passed unanimously

2. **Essay Draft** – receive board comments
 - a. **Ed** requested to have a little more information about where it goes from here and how it gets distributed, also what kind of buy-in do we have from the Goshen Junior High School and the High School, in terms of circulating it?
 - b. **Meghan Eichorn** – works with both Goshen Junior High School and the High Schools in the communications department, so she can distribute the essay. She can use email, social media, and the “Parents Square”. She still needs to work with AJ on the write-up/ advertisement for it.
 - c. **Megan** suggested that the write-up when ready should be sent from AJ to her. She would then forward the Essay on, coming from CRC, forwarded by Megan. Megan has plans to give the Principals advance notice of this upcoming project.
 - d. **Glenn Null** noted that the language reads (Goshen Residents), and we have a lot of students that go to private schools. Technically, under the terms we are reading, it says Goshen Residents, it comes down to the student’s residential address, not the school.
 - e. **AJ** commented that the Essay would be put on the Cities Social Media. This will make it clear that it is for everyone with a Goshen Address.
 - f. **Glenn Null** wanted to make sure that no one gets left out.
 - g. **Megan**; will include Bethany's school for the essay. The group was encouraged to contact Megan if there are any discrepancies with the message she sends out, and she will find solutions. AJ will take care of the city site messaging.
 - h. **Ed Groff has questions/comments about the instructions.** I am wondering if your intent is to say; select one of the Principals above, because line two; Under “Definition” states; (what’s an example of how you’ve seen this principle in your life) that’s one principle. Ed and Malik feel that the language needs to be tightened up around “select one principal above”. Also, Ed is curious about the large word range of 300-1500. How will they evaluate them side-by-side, how it's going to make it difficult for those people trying to decide; if you are comparing a 300-word essay to a 1500-word essay? He is curious about the thinking behind that. Maybe a narrower range to 500-800, or something like that?
 - i. **Ed Groff**, it is only going to be successful to Ed, if we have people out there in the school system that are encouraging students to participate. I think we need to allow a little bit of

roll-out time, to help get the word out, to get people interested and excited, and then also they have to have time to write it, and then it comes back, and then whoever is going to be reading and assessing them; I think we need to be thinking about whatever that committee looks like too. Also, get some people from the school system involved to help us make that evaluation. Megan Eichorn can reach out to some of the English Teachers and department heads and get them on board. Megan also suggests having the CRC present this project at the next City Council Meeting and School Board Meeting in February.

- j. **AJ** – replied, he was originally thinking to be able to compensate for ability levels. Also, he was thinking about having the 7 & 8th graders competing, which would be the Junior High and then 9 through 12, and assuming that those closer to the 300-word range would be the 7 & 8 graders.
- k. **Cathie Cripe, AJ, and Ed**; what would you think about Ed Groff being the “point man”; because this sort of ties into what we talk about? Ed Groff replied; he does not want to take away from someone else that initiated the idea. Ed asked Cathie if she would team up together to re-draft the language for a final review, Cathie Cripe agreed.
- l. **Malik Cato**, suggested looking at three different issues for re-drafting the instruction: (1) Add language to say; choose one principal to write about, (2) Language adjustment to the wide range word limit, (3) Make a clear message; that the Essay is open to all Goshen Residents.
- m. **AJ**, With the word number, I think that would make sense along with defining how it is going to be judged. I think that the word limit may count, more or less based on what we are actually looking for, and content. That information is missing from this document.
- n. **AJ**, spoke of the timeline, that he chose this date based on; it was the end of (Black History Month), but it does not have to stay that date. Megan replied; she is open, but she would rather not be rushed.
- o. **ED**, how can we maximize the benefits from this kind of project? I think one of the things we need to consider more seriously, like what happens on February 28, or when every we gather the people for the Awards? What kind of event we are imagining, and who all’s going to be there; or what we bring to that in addition to what we have gained from the Essay, but it seems like it is a platform for the CRC to say something to whoever has gathered for that event? Maybe it should be pushed back into March? AJ concurred.
- p. **AJ**, who would like to be part of planning an Award Ceremony? Steve Bermudez/Malik Cato, Cathie Cripe, and E-Man have volunteered for this project.

For the Good of CRC – Community Comment

Megan Eichorn thanked and welcomed the three new CRC Commissioners. She looks forward to seeing what this group can roll out for the CRC. She is excited to get the ball rolling on the Community Conversations going again.

Reports and Statistics

1. Director’s Report – Personnel update with the addition of Gladys Rosas, E-man Monge, and Sharon Beechy. This brings our group to seven members. The Four verbs of Strategic planning from last year that keep coming up are; Recruit, Communicate, Partner, and Build. So those are

the four actions that are going to guide what the CRC does in 2022. To do those, we will need to get good at telling our story. Writing effective sound bites. Pounding the pavement, or whatever that means digitally. Make lists of; ideas, volunteers, future commissioners, and get the word out. The CRC is Goshen's best-kept secret, and we are about to change that. We have a lot to do, and a lot to look forward to. The big things this year are; the Essay competition and the Awards reception, the Juneteenth event that is being planned as well as restarting Community Conversations.

Please note; We are missing one commissioner from last year, and she will not be returning. Her term ended in December 2021, and she was not reappointed. Sreekala Rajagopalan served on the Human Rights Commission, which later changed to the Community Relations Commission. We would be glad to have her as an Honored guest, and a volunteer in the future. Glenn Null mentioned making sure the CRC sends a nice "thank you" letter to Sreekala Rajagopalan, and Ed Groff said he would draft the letter to be signed by the members. Ed offered the members specific comments, memories, and thankful thoughts of her longevity; he would be glad to include them with the letter. Cathie reminded us that Sreekala will receive a "plaque" after 24 years of service, and we can present the letter and kind thoughts together.

2. Council Liaison Report (Megan Eichorn) – Nothing new
3. Subcommittee Reports – AJ is proposing to have Chairperson or Leaders to have more responsibilities making sure everyone knows what's going on and that the actions being assigned to the committee are being done. Malik; do the meeting need to be during the day? AJ, no they can be in the evening. So going back to the three events outlined Juneteenth, Essay competition, and Restart Community Conversations; to get those going we are going to have to have a big effort. We will need a "group" of volunteers together, so AJ will be organizing a more concerted effort at messaging. If anyone is interested in helping, please get back to AJ via email.
 - a. Community Conversation Subcommittee (Cathie, Malik) Cathie Cripe has agreed to be the leader of this subcommittee.
 - b. Special Events Subcommittee ((Cathie, Malik) Currently planning the Juneteenth event. AJ asked for a member to volunteer?

Note: Still room for three more commissioners.

Announcements by CRC members, closing comments, reflections on the meeting:

Comments and concerns: Glenn Null commented that the Liaison between Council and CRC failed to give information that was necessary for the Commission. That is not what a Liaison is supposed to do. The comment was; I can't talk about now. But if it affects this commission, then by god somebody better be talking with the commissioners about it. It erodes the trust between two different bodies of commissioners, and I have a problem with it. I was hurt, that we were not informed of it ahead of time. It was almost like, we are going to sneak this through. It comes down to trust, it just did not sit right with me. He feels the need to call this out. I have a problem with our Liaison. **Megan Eichorn** responded with; Megan did not have permission to talk about it. **Megan** supports this commission, and

she supports **Glenn**. She had prior conversations with AJ and our small group. We have been trying to find ways with the Director and Council how can we make this group far more effective and reachable? And, that is what we are trying to do specifically. CRC was down to five members, Council had three openings, and the Mayor had two openings, but no one was appointed. Council cut the CRC back to five people. The Commission does not have to wait until December to appoint new members. The council needs to treat the CRC with respect. Glenn Null felt as though the council could have out of respect talked to us, before making their decision. Ed Groff thanked Glenn Null for speaking up, and Ed too felt it needed to be said. Ed Groff added; that the CRC is in a new place, and a place they have never been before; with a full-time Director, having 7 commissioners, and working our way to 9. Keep moving forward to get more volunteers. Ed feels as the CRC moves forward, that they are in a better place than they were in the past. Ed Groffs was not happy with how he heard about the changes to the commission. He got his information through the back door; which was very uncomfortable for Ed, and from people that had no connection with the CRC. A Proposed Ordinance change was supposed to go before the City Council in December and it had not been vetted with the commission. Ed hopes that going forward that the CRC would be included in the loops of conversation about things that affect the CRC. The CRC commissioners are volunteers and hope that the City Council remembers this. Megan Eichorn agreed that the communications could have been better, and it will not happen again. Ed Groff asked AJ if he was still looking for three people to join the meeting for the Indigenous people's day tomorrow morning? AJ indicated that Sharon Beechy has joined the group, and Ed Groff then also volunteered to join the group. AJ has been soliciting volunteers for this event.

- a. Reminders and Upcoming Events
- b. Juneteenth Zoom brainstorm January 18 at 4:00 pm
- c. Indigenous people's day Zoom meeting January 11 at 9:00 am

Motion to Adjourn: Motion by Glenn Null, Second by Malik Cato.

Adjourn 8:31 pm