

Human Relations Commission
Monday, January 23, 2023
6:30pm

Location: Village Hall, 5127 Oakton Street – Conference Room D&E (2nd Floor)

NO OFFICIAL MEETING – NO QUORUM – NO OFFICIAL BUSINESS CONDUCTED DURING THIS MEETING. The following are updates made during the meeting. No official business was conducted at this meeting.

In attendance: Commissioners: Daphnee Camilien, Alexander Chaparro, Sheila Crumrine, Krishna Goyal, Anwar Haq, Jonathan Levin, Maria Monastero Bueno (chair), Swarupa Pahan, Ralph Ruebner; Trustee Khem Khoeun; Guests from Oakton College: Danielle, Terry (staff), Ella Whitehead (staff), Stephanie Erner (student); Skokie Staff Liaison: Mike Charley

Not in attendance: David Donegan, Jaili Fajardo, Marcos Levy, Michelle Reitman, Pearl Rubenzik, Jeremy Segall, Karen Sherman, James Specker

MINUTES

- I. Discussion started at @ 6:38 PM**
- II. Approval of Agenda:** Not approved – Not an official meeting – No quorum
- III. Approval of Minutes of November 28, 2023,** Not approved – Not an official meeting – No quorum
- IV. Guest Speaker: Danielle Terry, Equity Coordinator for Black Student Success at Oakton Community College.** Danielle Terry introduced herself and communicated that she works with the black student population, to bring the community together and to provide resources to the black community. She has gotten to know the Oakton student population and has found out that there is no one type of black person; different individuals have different ethnicities, different religions, different backgrounds and different cultures. She is the founder of Oakton’s Black Student Success Program. She gave structure to the program. First thing she did was to connect students to resources, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic when they were in crisis. Students needed mental health resources and connection to FAFSA (Federal Student Aid) workshops, help to complete scholarships and much more. Danielle Terry has partnered with the college’s wellness center and celebrated a “friends giving” holiday. Students, faculty, staff and school clubs were invited to the event last November and brought with them different ethnic foods and shared experiences with each other and to enjoy each other’s company. Danielle Terry helps her students with career exploration and transfer/transition to other educational institutions. Steph Erner (Oakton student) communicated that the program has been great for her and other students and the resources provided through the program have been invaluable. Ralph asked whether Oakton would be offering bachelor’s degrees? Ella

Whitehead communicated that Oakton does not have plans to offer bachelor's degrees at this point.

Ms. Terry communicated that she coordinates the Building Lasting African Culture and Knowledge Program. The program explores What does it mean to be a black college student? Participants have critical conversations about black culture.

Ella Whitehead communicated that her role is Assistant Director of Enrollment for Equity Outreach at Oakton. She works to examine systemic barriers in higher education that may stop individuals that are disenfranchised from the higher education experience being able to access this experience, to be successful. She works with different populations, first generation students, individuals with limited language skills, individuals with disabilities, etc. She works to ensure everyone has access to an education. She works with partners, such as Danielle to reduce barriers to students in them successfully getting an education. She ensures the community understands and knows the programming available at Oakton.

Jonathan Levin inquired whether Oakton works with special needs? – Ella Whitehead communicated that the school has a resource center and she does assist students with onboarding and she will link those individuals to the appropriate Oakton staff for assistance.

Jonathan Levin asked does Oakton have a catchment area where they must live? Ella Whitehead communicated that Oakton does have District that includes many municipalities. If out of district individuals can still take classes (open access), but fees are different for in-district vs out-of-district.

Ralph Ruebner asked, "Do you place students with local business jobs?" Ella Whitehead communicated "Yes, the career transfer center works with students." Danielle Terry stated that she will also help students. Ella Whitehead stated that students can return to Oakton's career center for job help for life, even after they graduate.

Sheila Crumrine asked if there was anything that the Human Resources Commission can do for Oakton. John Levin communicated that the Equity Committee has been researching/working on Black History month with the goal of ensuring this annual event is recognized and celebrated by this commission and the Village. Danielle Terry is responsible for the planning of Black History month events at Oakton College. Maria Monastero Bueno communicated that Oakton's upcoming web-based speakers have been promoted via the Village's SkokieNews already.

Jonathan Levin asked how many students participate in black student programming? Danielle Terry stated that up to 112 students signed up for membership in programming. Danielle Terry communicated that students do meet in-person weekly currently and Oakton does offer hybrid options like joining via Zoom also.

Maria communicated that the Stand Against Racism event is scheduled for Tuesday April 25 and invited Oakton Students to participate in the event. Maria asked whether Oakton would provide some representation at this event. Arrive at 10:00am, and then soon thereafter take the pledge. Maria asked that Sheila Crumrine take the lead on this.

Johnathan Levin communicated that the High School has a calendar for each school with things happening at school that celebrate or recognize Black History month. Danielle stated that Oakton also celebrates black history month and has a calendar of events. Maria communicated that the Human Relations commission would love to partner with Oakton College moving forward.

Ella Whitehead asked “Who is taking the lead for the Juneteenth programming?” Maria communicated that the Human Relations commission has not discussed Juneteenth yet, however the Equity & Diversity sub-committee would take the lead on this.

V. Chair’s Report, Maria Monastero Bueno: Maria Monastero Bueno communicated to the attending commissioners that there is no quorum, and this is an on-going issue and the commission needs commissioners to show up to meetings. There are 18 commissioners and to hold commission meetings, requires 10 commissioners to attend meetings to have a quorum. Alyssa Rusak asks how individuals become commissioners? Maria Monastero Bueno communicated that individuals that live or work in Skokie can apply through the Mayor’s office and then the Mayor appoints qualified individuals to boards or commissions. Mike Charley communicate he will remind commissioners that attending meetings is expected of commissioners.

A. December 8, 2022 Listening Event at Oakton Community College: Maria Monastero Bueno reported that there was an amazing listening session for the Village’s Native American seal. Ann Tennes is drafting recommendations for the Village Manager and Village Trustees. Trustee Khem Khoeun communicated that the memo is expected in February 2023, with the Village Board expected to discuss in May of 2023. Maria Monastero Bueno provided that at the listening event the feedback received was that the logo not include a human image, but that it represents nature, the past, present and future.

VI. Committee Reports

A. Housing Committee - Block Party of the Year Awards: Mike provided an update that there were twenty-three applications received in 2022 for Block Party of the Year Award. Mike will send an email to the twenty-three applications requesting that they submit pictures and/or other supporting documents to the Village for additional review. Staff will then review all applications, narrow the applicants down to a final seven (or so) applicants for final review at a future Human Relations Commission meeting. Three final applicants would then be rewarded with a Block Party of the Year Award, with presentation being made at a Village Board meeting.

B. Housing Committee - Block Party Forum: Alex Chapparo communicated that in past years the forum was held at the Police meeting room. There was a panel discussion with past award winners. The meeting encouraged individuals to hold a block party and helped individuals coordinate a block party. The tentative date for the forum is Sunday

May 21, 2023. Any time that day would be okay. Trustee Khem Khoeun related that this meeting is the same weekend as Skokie Festival of Cultures, May 20 & 21. Trustee Khem Khoeun recommended having the forum at the Oakton Community center that same weekend. Alex Chaparro will contact the Park District (Michelle Tuft) to inquire about having the block party forum on Sunday at the Festival of Cultures, possibly inside the Oakton Community Center. Trustee Khem Khoeun communicated that she can also follow-up. Maria Monastero Bueno recommended using the weekly SkokieNews to communicate the forum.

- C. Equity and Diversity Committee - Stand Against Racism Event/ “Until Justice Just Is”:** Maria Monastero Bueno communicated that the event is scheduled for Tuesday April 25, 2023. The commission and/or staff liaison will invite kids from Lincoln Jr. High. Mike Charley to reach out to the principal to confirm.

VII. Old Items of Business

- A. Community Calendar:** Jonathan Levin asked “Is the Village’s community calendar public?” Mike Charley to follow-up with Ann Tennes and/or Meredith Goia (Village Communications) on what is currently posted on the Village’s calendar. Ralph Ruebner recommended a yearly calendar with major holidays and events. Trustee Khem Khoeun said commission meetings are on the Village’s calendar.

VIII. New Items of Business

- A. Public Hearing on Affordable Housing:** Trustee Khem Khoeun communicated that the Village’s Plan Commission held an affordable housing meeting last Thursday. Different affordable housing agencies presented. Individuals can find the affordable housing review schedule at www.skokie.org or by clicking [here](#).

IX. Adjourn

Next Meeting: February 27, 2023, 6:30pm at VILLAGE HALL 5127 Oakton Street, Skokie IL. 60077
