

Human Relations Commission Minutes

Monday, April 24, 2023

6:45pm

Location: Village Hall, 5127 Oakton Street – Conference Room A (1st Floor)

In attendance: Commissioners: Deborah Arnold, Daphnee Camilien Alexander Chaparro, Sheila Crumrine, Jonathan Lavin, Maria Monastero Bueno (chair), Swarupa Pahan, Ralph Ruebner, Jeremy Segall, Karen Sherman, James Specker; Skokie Staff Liaison: Amanda Sabri

Not in attendance: David Donegan, Jaili Fajardo, Krishna Goyal (E), Anwar Haq, Marcos Levy, John Muszynski, Michelle Reitman (E), Pearl Rubenzik, Mayha Syed, Trustee Khem Khoeun (E)

I. **Call to Order @ 6:45 pm**

II. **Approval of Agenda:** Agenda approved.

III. **Introduction of New Staff Liaison & Existing Members:** Amanda Sabri is the new Skokie Staff Liaison to the commission. She introduced herself and the existing members/participants in attendance also introduced themselves.

IV. **Approval of Minutes of February 27, 2023:** minutes approved with a recommendation to make grammatical correction on the first line of the 4th page. There was no “official” meeting in March, so there are no minutes to approve for March.

V. **Chair’s Report, Maria Monastero Bueno**

A. **Budget Presentation:** Maria Monastero Bueno provided an overview of the presentation she gave Village Board at the Budget Hearing at 6:15pm this evening. She relayed the board was very appreciative of the work of the Human Relations Commission.

B. **Unite Against Racism Event / “Until Justice Is” – April 25th:** Maria Monastero Bueno indicated she will be unable to attend this year’s event. Sheila Crumrine reports ten representatives will be coming from Oakton Community College with Dr. Rick Daniels, Director of Student Life and Campus Inclusion. Commission members will meet in front of Village hall at 10:15am. “Unite Against Racism” signs will be available at the event, as well as copies of the pledge against racism that will be read. Former signage was discarded due to it having the outdated phrasing (“Stand Against Racism”) listed. A request for new signage was made.

- C. **Block Party of the Year Awards:** Maria Monastero Bueno reported the awards were presented at the Village Board Meeting on April 17th. Several commission members were in attendance, which was appreciated. Representatives from 8300 Kolmer Ave and George & Park Ave Block Parties were present to receive their awards at the meeting and members of the commission took pictures with the winners. Maria Monastero Bueno delivered the award to a representative of the 8000-8100 Lowell Block Party who was not able to attend the meeting.
- D. **Hate & Bias Community Education Project:** Maria Monastero Bueno informed the commission that Trustee Khoeun and Trustee Robinson presented at the last Village Board Meeting about hate crime and hate bias incidents. The Human Relations Commission will be tasked with a community education project focused on hate and bias education, which Trustee Khoeun can speak more about at the next commission meeting. Maria Monastero Bueno reported that funds will be attached to this project and Corporate Counsel, Michael Lorge, has two experts in California he would like to connect the commission with. Members were encouraged to view the report attached to the 4/17/23 Village Board Meeting agenda as well as view the recording of the Village Board meeting, both available online.

VI. Committee Reports

- A. **Housing Committee: Block Party of the Year Awards:** See #VC above.
- B. **Housing Committee: Block Party Forum:** Alex Chaparro provided an update on the Block Party Forum. He reported that it was decided to push the forum back several months and he suggested a date of Monday, June 12. He has reserved a room at Skokie Public Library that can accommodate 50 people. The room is reserved from 6-8:30pm. Maria Monastero Bueno suggested having the actual event from 6:30-7:30pm. The three 2022 Block Party Award winners will be invited to share about their parties and answer questions. Images of their block parties will be shared during the forum. Alex Chaparro reports that an open invitation will be offered to Officer Wilken and his department if someone is able to come to discuss the Block Captain program. If no one is able to attend, a Block Captain can discuss their role and literature can be available. To get the word out about the forum, Alex Chaparro reported that invitations will be sent to all block party applicants from 2022 and 2023. Additionally, the forum will be promoted via all Village of Skokie media channels and through the Skokie library if possible. Alex Chaparro will update the flyer and send it to Maria Monastero Bueno and Amanda Sabri for distribution. Alex Chaparro motioned to have the 2nd Annual Block Party Forum on 6/12/23 from 6:30-7:30pm with a budget of no more than \$150 for refreshments. Motion approved.
- C. **Housing Committee: Know your Neighbor:** Alex Chaparro asked if the commission is looking to reinstate Know your Neighbor as it was previously known. Karen Sherman stated that she believed the big concern was with incorporating blocks with multi-unit buildings. She feels it would be best to go back to the drawing board and spend a year

getting input from residents of these blocks before determining how to proceed. Some ideas for garnering feedback included going door to door and sending out surveys which could be translated into multiple languages, facilitating feedback through existing Block Captains and involving the school districts. Possible ideas for future Know your Neighbor events included simply blocking off streets for children to play, without the financial burden of planning a party, bringing in a food/ice cream/coffee truck to get neighbors together, or having neighbors meet at a park. Karen Sherman motioned to start a subcommittee to do outreach with community members and garner input on the best way to proceed with the Know your Neighbor program. Motion approved. Karen Sherman, Sheila Crumrine, James Specker and Alex Chaparro will be a part of this subcommittee. They will meet before the next scheduled Human Relations Commission meeting.

- D. **Equity and Diversity Committee: Unite Against Racism Event:** See #VB above.
- E. **Equity and Diversity Committee: Juneteenth Planning Committee:** David Donegan was not in attendance to provide an update. Maria Monastero Bueno will follow up with David Donegan to request that he come to the next meeting to provide an update regarding the commission's participation at the June 17th Juneteenth event at Oakton Community Center. She will also request he provide updates on the SEED classes.
- F. **Equity and Diversity Committee: SEED:** See #VE above.
- G. **Equity and Diversity Committee: Skokie United:** No updates.
- H. **Equity and Diversity Committee: Skokie Pride:** Organizers of the event have been notified that the Human Relations Commission will be participating. Sheila Crumrine discussed that the commissions table at the event was free due having non-profit status. She wondered if it would be possible to sponsor tables for local small businesses that may be struggling, as the table fee of \$150 may be a hinderance. Maria Monastero Bueno explained that this does not fall within the prevue of this commission and therefore, it would not be appropriate to use the budget of this commission to sponsor tables for for-profit businesses. Jon Lavin suggested making a recommendation to the Village Manager and City Council to support small businesses at such events to make them more accessible. Jon Lavin will bring this matter to John Lockerby to discuss what can be done.
- I. **Equity and Diversity Committee: Festival of Cultures:** Karen Sherman shared that year festival organizers preferred to have Skokie Park District staff at the welcome table and did not need the assistance of the Human Relations Commission. Karen Sherman will reach out this year's organizers to confirm their preference for this year. Maria Monastero Bueno will check with Krishna Goyal on the status of putting an add for the Human Relations Commission in the Festival of Cultures booklet if it is not too late. The Festival of Cultures will be on May 20-21, which will be before the next commission meeting. Alex Chaparro made a motion to give the Chair discretion to place an ad in the booklet if the opportunity is still available, not to exceed \$175. Motion approved. Karen Sherman motioned to increase this amount by \$100 if needed. Motion approved.

VII. **Old/New Items of Business:**

- A. **Human Relations Onboarding Process:** Sheila Crumrine provided an update on the onboarding process she has been working on. She distributed a list of onboarding items for review that she and Health & Human Services Director, Mike Charley, had put together. Sheila Crumrine thanked Michelle Reitman for providing the documents that she had kept previously. One document that was recommended for onboarding was the Human Relations Commission Membership Report. This contact list was sent around the room for each member to make edits as needed. The document will be updated and distributed to all members. Additional onboarding documents were provided by Staff Liaison, Amanda Sabri. Sheila Crumrine also suggested having Human Relations Calendar to orient new members. Ralph Ruebner stated that the online Village calendar should be the starting point. Maria Monestero Bueno mentioned the difficulty of having a printed document for something that is continually changing. It was determined that a sample calendar could be printed with a link to the live calendar on the Village website. James Specker asked if new members meet with the Chair or other commissioners when they first join. Maria Monestero Bueno stated that this has been difficult due to time constraints. Alex Chaparro recommended the idea of having a rotation of commissioner ambassadors to meet with new members when they join in order to make the time commitment manageable. Amanda Sabri informed members that every commissioner is supposed to take Open Meetings Act training when they first come on the commission. Amanda will send out an email with instructions on how to complete the training to all members for whom there is not currently a certificate on file.
- B. **Village Seal:** Report that Ann Tennes & Maria Monestero Bueno drafted was presented to the John Lockerby and the Village Trustees. Feedback was extremely supportive, but they are curious to know the cost & process of developing a new seal as well as the replacement process. A meeting is set for May 8th with John Lockerby, Maria Monestero Bueno, Trustee Khem Khoeun, and Jasmine Gunneau, Director of Native American & Indigenous Affairs at Northwestern. Maria states they suggested that there be a call for proposals from Native American artists themselves and then a possible vote. The first dollar amount that has been attached to this measure from the Village's budget is \$25,000.00 to start the process. The previous seal is no longer being used and a graphic of Village Hall is currently being used. Ralph Ruebner suggested that children be a part of the decision process when a new seal is developed, possibly having seal proposals displayed at the library to get community input. Jon Lavin inquired whether the report has been distributed. Maria Monestero Bueno will ask John Lockerby if it can be sent to all members of the commission.
- C. **4th of July:** Swarupa Pahan asked if the Human Relations Commission will participate in the 4th of July parade. Maria Monestero Bueno reported that the parade is organized through the Skokie Park District. Swarupa Pahan made a motion for the commission to participate in the 4th of July parade. Participation in the parade will be added to the agenda for the May commission meeting. At that time, it will be determined what

members will pass out at the parade. Swarupa Pahan will reach out to the Skokie Park District about the commissions desire to participate in the 4th of July parade.

VIII. Adjourn @ 8:15 p.m.