Human Relations Commission  
Monday, June 26, 2023  
6:30pm  

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

In attendance: Commissioners: Deborah Arnold, Alexander Chaparro, Sheila Crumrine, Krishna Goyal, Anwar Haq, Jonathan Lavin, Marcos Levy, Maria Monastero Bueno (chair), Swarupa Pahan, Jeremy Segall, Karen Sherman, James Specker, Trustee Khem Khoeun; Skokie Staff Liaison: Amanda Sabri

Not in attendance: Daphnee Camilien, David Donegan, Jaili Fajardo, Michelle Reitman (E), Pearl Rubenzik, Ralph Ruebner (E), Mayha Syed

I. Call to Order @ 6:35 pm

II. Approval of Agenda: Approved via consent

III. Review of Monday, May 22, 2023 Discussion Notes – No Official Meeting – No Quorum
   A. Feedback was provided to Staff Liaison, Amanda Sabri, to increase reminders for meetings and Maria Monastero Bueno stressed the importance of members attending meetings whenever possible.
   B. Maria Monastero Bueno informed members that John Muszynski has decided that he is no longer able to participate in the commission and has formally resigned.

IV. Approval of Minutes of April 24, 2023: Approved via consent
   A. Krishna Goyal made the request that excused absences be marked as such on meeting minutes. April 24, 2023 minutes will be updated to indicate excused absences.
   B. Jonathan Lavin provided an update that he has not reached out to Village Manager, John Lockerby, regarding small business table representation at events such as Skokie Pride. It was recommended that Skokie Park District and Skokie Chamber of Commerce may be better contacts to start this conversation with.

V. Committee Reports
   A. Housing Committee: Block Party Forum: Alex Chaparro provided an overview of the Block Party Forum, which took place on June 12th at the Skokie Library. Alex reported that the event was successful, and the library was a perfect venue for the event. Alex commented on how well the speaker panel did and how empowered and connected the speakers were with the audience. The event was attended by veteran block party hosts as well as first time hosts, including an individual from a multi-unit building. Feedback
was received that residents would like a recorded version of the Forum as well as a request to have a virtual Block Party Toolkit, where residence could find templates, flyers, agendas, activity suggestions, etc. Alex will be working on a mock template for this toolkit to share with the commission. He did also record the event, but the quality is not ideal during certain parts of the event. Alex is going to reach out to the panelist to attempt to re-record their input to put this information online for residents. Alex recommends we determine our date for the 2024 Forum at our September meeting to have ample time to reserve the room at the library. Lastly, Maria Monastero Bueno informed the commission that four Block Party of the Year Awards were given this year. Initially, an award was given to the combined blocks of 8000-8100 Lowell. However, it was determined that these were, in fact, two different block parties. To remedy the error, a fourth award was given to 8100 Lowell. Maria presented a representative of this block with their award at the Forum and the representative participated in the panel discussion.

B. **Housing Committee: Attendance at Block Parties:** Commissioners were given a print-out of all currently scheduled block parties and reminded of the Google spreadsheet which contains the information. Amanda Sabri requested any commissioners who need the link to the spreadsheet re-sent to them request this via email. Commissioners were encouraged to attend block parties and add their name to the spreadsheet indicating that they will be attending. Maria Monastero Bueno recommended contacting the organizer ahead of time and inquiring what time would be best to attend. She also recommended encouraging block parties to apply for the Block Party of the Year Award if they haven’t already done so.

C. **Housing Committee: Know Your Neighbor:** Karen Sherman provided an update that members of this group have not convened but will do so over July/August and will have an update for the next meeting in September. Members of this group include Alex Chaparro, Karen Sherman, Sheila Crumrine and James Specker.

D. **Equity and Diversity Committee: Skokie Pride:** Alex Chaparro provided update regarding the commissions table presence at this event. Turnout was ok, but possibly lower because the event took place on Father’s Day. Attendees seemed to enjoy the pinwheels and flags that were distributed. Block party applications (paper and QR code) were also available at the table. The event was also a good opportunity to connect with other Village entities and organizations who had tables at the event. Alex also reflected on the importance of meeting his neighbors at the event and how touched they were at the support of the Alex and Human Relations Commission at this event. Jon Lavin commented on the positive experience of representing the commission at this event alongside Alex Chaparro and James Specker.

E. **Equity and Diversity Committee: SEED Updates:** No updates.
VI. Old Items of Business

A. Human Relations Onboarding Binders: All members of the commission were provided with new Onboarding Binders. Sheila Crumrine walked everyone through the different sections of the binders, highlighting member contact lists, Human Relations Commission programming information, required trainings, Health & Human Services Department information as well as relevant Village of Skokie Ordinances. She also highlighted meeting attendance requirements, which are detailed in section 2-447 of Article VII. Boards and Commissions. “Any member of any Board of Commission who during any twelve-month period is not present throughout fifty percent or more of the regularly scheduled meetings shall be presumed to have resigned from the Board or Commission”.

B. Hate & Bias Education Project: Amanda Sabri reported that Village staff will be holding a meeting on June 29th to formulate initial ideas about the project. At the request of the commission, Trustee Khem Khoeun provided an overview of the history of this project and how it was brought to the Village Board by herself and Trustee Robinson. Trustee Khoeun highlighted that some of the perpetrators of hate bias incidents may be youth, making education and intervention likely a better avenue to address this issue. She also discussed the benefit of this initiative being promoted through the Human Relations Commission as it may allow more community members to feel comfortable coming forward with reporting incidences than if it was solely run by the police department. At this time $2500 has been budgeted to explore and fund the initiative this fiscal year. Alex Chaparro provided feedback stating that he feels the information that is provided to Block Captains by the police department has changed over time and is less specific and less helpful to promoting community safety. Jon Lavin indicated that this information is provided at Skokie Police Department Beat Meetings but indicated that a lot of information is provided at the meetings and it can be a lot to absorb. Additional information on the proposal can be found on Village of Skokie website in that agenda meeting packet for the April 17th Village Board meeting. It was determined that a subcommittee can be formed after more concrete information is learned about the initiative. Members would also like to meet with Professor Brian Levin, either by Zoom or in person.

C. Village Seal Redesign: Maria Monastero Bueno provided an update on the Village Seal redesign process. Maria and the Village of Skokie Communications & Engagement Director, Patrick Deignan, are leading a committee of Village staff and community members that are working on this project. Present from the Human Relations Commission are Maria, Sheila Crumrine, Trustee Khoeun and Amanda Sabri. She indicated that we will be engaging with the community by sending out a survey to gain
feedback on their visions and thoughts about Skokie. The feedback will be given to artists who will be designing the new seal. Sheila Crumrine clarified that the artist will have the community’s input for their creative process, but it will be made clear in the survey that no individual images or ideas submitted by community members will be used in the final design. The committee plans to have a presence at Wednesdays on the Green and Skokie Farmer’s Market to promote community engagement. The end goal is to have a seal design for the Village Board to vote on by the end of this year.

D. 4th of July Participation: Swarupa Pahan provided an update that we have a Human Relations Commission banner to hold for the parade, as well as American flags and suckers to hand out. Deborah Arnold, Swarupa Pahan, Jon Lavin, Sheila Crumrine, and Amanda Sabri plan to march in the parade. Amanda Sabri informed members that details about unit number and parking/staging information will be forwarded via email once they are received, which should be in the next few days. Trustee Khoeun also recommended carrying posters that can promote block parties and hold the block party QR code.

VII. New Business
A. 2023-2024 Meeting Dates: The following meeting dates were agreed on to accommodate National & religious holidays, as well as Village Board meetings.
   1. Wednesday, September 27th, 2023 (to accommodate Yom Kippur)
   2. Monday, October 23rd, 2023
   3. Monday, November 27th, 2023
   4. Monday, January 22nd, 2024
   5. Monday, February 26th, 2024
   6. Monday, March 25th, 2024
   7. Monday, April 29th, 2024 (to accommodate Passover on 4/22)
   8. Monday, May 20th, 2024 (to accommodate Memorial Day)
   9. Monday, June 24th, 2024

B. Housing Subcommittee: Jon Lavin reported that he will be participating on the Housing Subcommittee of the Plan Commission. He was asked to participate on this subcommittee as representative of the Human Relations Commission and will be looking for input from the commission when needed.

C. Meetup on Main: Deborah Arnold discussed a community event she attended called “Meetup on Main”, that is taking place multiple Fridays throughout the summer on Main Street between Keystone and Karlov. The intent is to bring community together and promote business development along this stretch of Main Street. Deborah spoke to Lissa Levy, the community member strongly promoting this initiative. Go Green Skokie has also joined on with Meetup on Main to assist their efforts. Although it was
determined that it is not within the purview of the Human Relations Commission to assist in promoting business growth along Main Street, members were encouraged to attend the community event if able.

VIII. Adjourn time: 8:05

Next Meeting: SEP 27, 2023, 6:30pm at Village Hall 5127 Oakton Street, Skokie IL. 60077