

The City of Rock Hill Community Relations Council

Minutes

Tuesday, March 12, 2019

City Hall Wellness Center

155 Johnson Street

Attending: Carlo Dawson, Lawrence Lewis, Dale Johnson, Summersby Okey, Isaiah Venning, Cynthia Ware, Shekinah Miller

City Staff: Sonya Caldwell

Not Attending: Natasha Jones, Gigi Anderson, Sylvia Berry, Bethany Marlowe, Rachel Lillibridge, Robert Karkoski

Purpose

To promote respect, appreciation and understanding of diversity among all people in our community by promoting positive human relations and reducing discrimination, assessing and responding to the human relations needs of our community, serving as a source of information, and advocating and recognizing change to achieve our mission.

1. Call to Order/Moment of Silence/Review Purpose

- a. Called to order at 6:07 p.m.

2. Approval of February 12, 2019 Minutes

- a. Minutes approved with promise to edit for typo on subcommittee on 4h.

3. City Announcements

i. Human Resources Department

- a. Reappointment letters are in the mail: Lawrence, Shekinah, Dale, Summersby, Isaiah, Carlo
- b. We are transitioning from HR as liaison for committee to Housing and Neighborhood Services (HNS).
- c. Committee membership is pared down to 13 (from 15). Passed down from City Council upon review. Was approved on 3/11 at City Council meeting. Has to do with attendance and how many people were active on the committee.
- d. The committee shared with Sonya that issue was not that we had too many people, but that people were not showing up and we needed more help. There were people who wanted to resign, and Andy told them they could not. It was a challenge to get our work done with the number of people we had. We need people who show up, not less spots on the council. The work-load was very heavy for dedicated members and it was hard to sign up for another term. Sonya promised to pass this on the leadership and get more information.
- e. Council members feel uncomfortable about this decision without appeal to the council executive board about needs and work-load. We would have liked for them to confer with the council before the decision was made.
- f. Sonya will try to get more information on this topic.

ii. Future CRC Meeting Location

- a. Next meetings will be at HNS. Parking will be easier.
- b. HNS is already plugged in to the community and have connections.
- c. The transition will happen immediately, and our next meeting will happen at HNS.
- d. Still working on direct liaison, but more details will come forward before next meeting.

- e. We will still be in direct connection with the mayor and still under Steven Gibson.
- iii. **End Racism Day, March 21, City Hall, 6:00 p.m. (SCHAC)**
 - i. Started 4 years ago to partner with different groups to celebrate the day. Reached out to CRC originally as partners.
 - ii. Panel discussion on race relations in Rock Hill, South Carolina, and the nation. Will be moderated. Expected attendance of around 100 people.
 - iii. Handed over to Race and Reconciliation group in conjunction with SC Human Affairs Council. CRC will not host. We would like to partner in the future.
 - iv. The council would like it known that we did not really want to just give it away and that we asked our liaison to find out if we were allowed to partner with Race and Reconciliation, and somehow the event just got handed over. We would like to work on this event next year.
 - v. Originally brought to us during the MLK event and we were a little overwhelmed and did not capitalize on it as we should have. This type of event is really what we stand for.

4. New Business

a. Reports from sub-committee

i. Living Wage sub-committee

- a. No updates at this time.

ii. Race Equality week sub-committee

- a. Lawrence brought minutes from last sub-committee meeting (attached appendix A)
- b. Make it more than just a week, but something that really impacts everyone, not just folks who attend the function.
- c. Events that engage different groups (schools, sororities and fraternities, church groups, etc) at different times, then it will bring more people together for the culmination/launch at Food Truck Friday.
- d. Get the word out ASAP, do no wait until the week-of. First steps are to formulate the message so that we can get the word out there.
- e. Film-festival. Other small events throughout town. We need to start putting together now. Flashlight or candlelight vigil to engage the community. Random acts of kindness as part of the structure of the week.
- f. Whatever we define equality as can be attained. We need to have uncomfortable conversations and get to know each other.
- g. Next steps: formalize the proposal and submit to the City for approval before we take any actions.
- h. Will formulate a proposal at the next sub-committee meeting. Include possible dates and content.

iii. MLK sub-committee

- a. No updates at this time.
- b. We need a sub-committee chair. Anyone who is interested needs to start thinking about this.

iv. Black History sub-committee

- a. Post-event review: The event was packed out, even the overflow room. We may want a bigger venue, but it may look empty and people may not come without the ambiance of City Hall.

- b. People removed the reserved markers on seats, and that is why there were not seats for CRC members.
- c. Excellent program. Variety of groups. It was better with less reading and less programming.
- d. Next steps: What is the next group we want to honor in Rock Hill? Who do we want to honor? How do we get people to show up? It works better when we have a specific theme.
- e. We need a new sub-committee chair as Carlo's term is up. Carlo will help support. Anyone who is interested needs to start thinking about this.
- f. There was a confusion- the time on the Facebook event and time on the program was different. Listed as one hour on Facebook, but it was over 1.5 hours.

v. Elections for Officers and Sub-Committee Chairs

- a. We do not have a quorum to elect officers.
- b. Ellen Wilder-Byrd has resigned from the committee effective immediately. Ellen shared a letter with the group as read by Sonya Caldwell (attached in Appendix B).
- c. Ellen was elected Chair at previous meeting. New HNS liaison has suggested that we discuss our officers at the next meeting. Upon reading by-laws, it seems that Carlo should step up as acting chair.
- d. Lawrence suggested that we share this information with the rest of the council immediately and be prepared to come to the meeting ready to make nominations and discuss them at our next meeting.
- e. Do we just start all over again? Is that possible? Do we move forward with who we have elected and make changes? We need to check our by-laws and see what should happen. Last time it happened, Ellen was co-chair and stepped in to the chair position. It makes the most sense for Carlo to step in as Chair (as she is the current Vice Chair) and then we need to nominate someone as Vice Chair.
- f. We tabled this conversation until our next meeting.

5. Old Business

a. CRC Member attendance.

- i. We discussed this last meeting and it is figured out. Some people have stepped away, and attendance requirements are clear.

6. Announcements and Concerns

- i. Lawrence shared that the President of Clinton College is thinking of piloting a work-study program to feed and support the Opportunity Zones and student mentoring.
- ii. Connect the dot opportunity fair used to be successful at Emmett Scott with 1500 people attending, but when it moved to the Transformation Center, the attendance decreased.

7. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 6:57 p.m.

Appendix A: Race Equality Week Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes

- A. This year's REW is taking on a new character with the outlook of making this a starting point for real change in Rock Hill.
 - a. Recognizing there is injustice, and there will always be injustice, what are we going to do to counter it in the most positive and constructive manner
 - b. The idea is affecting all people in a positive manner with positive behavior which will cause positive outcomes.
 - c. Inclusion is the operative term, behavior and reality
 - d.
- B. Inclusion, appreciation, random acts of kindness/consideration/generosity
 - a. Engaging populous, one person at a time
 - i. Sharing the vision of their importance in the whole welfare of their neighborhood, community, city, etc.
 - ii. Participating in looking for and engaging in engaging with random people with kindness, consideration, generosity, interest
 - iii. Letting yourself be engaged, appreciated, etc.
 - b. Sharing the vision of light overcoming darkness by appreciating what each citizen means/contributes to the general welfare of our block, neighborhood, community, etc.
- C. Utilizing networking opportunities across Rock Hill's community to enlist support to perpetuate this concept and behavior
 - a. Media
 - b. Schools
 - c. Churches
 - d. Civic groups
 - e. Organizations
- D. Program entails
 - a. Winthrop student participation
 - i. video interviews in neighborhoods
 - b. Organizations above enlisted in this project
 - c. Media support
 - i. Herald – stories of the day/week/month
 - ii. CN2 – showing interviews, daily, weekly, monthly
 - iii. Facebook
 - iv. Etc.
 - d. Wrap up of initial 'start' of program
 - i. Food Truck Friday, Sept. 20, Fountain Park
 - ii. Tell story of program
 - e. Flashlight vigil
 - i. All participants who've been active light their smartphones
 - f. Share the vision and enlist participation

Next steps:

1. Formalize the proposal and logistics
2. Find & meet with leaders of above groups to enlist support and engagement
3. Enlist other means of getting this message out

Appendix B: Letter to Council from Ellen Wilder-Byrd

If you would, please share with the members tonight my resignation from the council effective immediately. Changing family circumstances and competing priorities have limited my time and my ability to lead the council and participate fully in its activities. It has been a wonderful experience getting to know and work with each council member. As the council moves into a new year of work, the timing is right for me to step away so that others may have the chance to step up to the opportunities ahead. There is much talent and ability around the council table. I wish the team every success, and I look forward to seeing folks around town.

Please extend to the members my thanks for all their good work over the years. Together we have made Rock Hill a better place.

Ellen