City of Galesburg
COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMISSION
City Hall, Erickson Conference Room
55 West Tompkins Street, Galesburg, Illinois
June 14, 2011
6:00 p.m.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman John Hunigan at 6:00pm.

Roll Call: Present: Chairman John Hunigan, Tammy Miller, Tianna Cervantez, Doug Summers, Michael Walters, Council Liaison Peter Schwartzman, Staff Representatives Kip Canfield and Brenda Reynolds. Three Commissioners were absent. The Chairman declared a quorum present. Guest speaker Rodney Blue was also present.

In the absence of the secretary, there were no minutes. Chairman Hunigan asked Brenda Reynolds to take the minutes.

Old Business:

Review of CRC Action Plan: One of the goals in the action plan was to “facilitate and organize neighborhood block parties with the help of the city, fireman and police.” John asked if the Commissioners were still wanting to do this over the summer. Kip explained that the National Night Out is being held on August 1st and that the GPD already has a process in place whereby block party activities are organized. He estimated there could be as many as 30 block parties on or around August 1st. There was discussion about how the Commissioners could visit the Block Parties and get the word out about the CRC. Peter said the one on South Street last year was and will be held at the end of July. He said he attended last year and volunteers are always welcome. Kip said that Sergeant Jason Shaw would know when and where these will be as the applications come in. Mike offered to take the lead on this and contact Sergeant Shaw. Mike will create a divvy up a schedule for Commissioners to get out to the Block Parties and share information about the CRC.

Another goal in the CRC Action Plan is to continue participation in the community meals and promote the mission of the CRC. John said that the next Community Dinner would be on either July 11th or July 26th and invites the Commissioners to come out and share information about the CRC and distribute the brochure.

Another goal in the CRC Action Plan is to help start community garden groups. John wanted to know if the Commissioners still wanted to do this. Peter suggested that there are many intangible benefits to this but that he still hasn’t really seen the cross-cultural benefits of urban gardening in Galesburg yet. Commissioners decided this would be something that they may individually decide to explore as volunteers. Peter invited Commissioners to the Community Garden he is working on at 449 W. Tompkins if they wanted to get their hands dirty. He will also put together a list of community gardens for future reference.
Other goals in the CRC Action Plan were discussed under new business: Meeting with local organizations and agencies to inform them of the mission of the CRC and training the Commissioners in Conflict Resolution.

The final revision of the CRC Brochure was approved.

**Update of Letter of Support for Hunger Research Grant:** Commissioners did not remember reviewing the information on the Hunger Research Grant. John said he would resend it to Brenda for distribution to the Commissioners. It is now past the deadline needed for the letter of support but he would still like the Commissioners to review the material so that the Commission could respond to their request for support. Peter mentioned that there were actually 3 different Hunger Research Grant projects going on at Knox College this summer.

**New Business:**

Brenda reported to the Commission that they have a budget of $750 for 2011 and none of it has been spent yet this year. Kip said that copying costs are absorbed by the City. Brenda will look into accessing the Human Services budget for copying brochures, flyers, etc.

Instead of assigning Commissioners to go out and talk to businesses and organizations about the existence and mission of the CRC, the Commission decided to host a Mixer/Meet & Greet and send out invites through the Chamber of Commerce newsletter. John asked Brenda to please check with the City Manager to see if we could do a mixer in the lobby of City Hall on Tuesday, August 9th from 5:00-7:00pm. Tammy will get a quote from Hy-Vee on cookies/light snacks, and punch. Brenda will also ask Sue Davidson to do the flyer, using the CRC logo, if the event is approved. The CRC will meet at 4:30pm that day before the mixer.

Brenda reported that the City Manager had asked her to look into Conflict Resolution training for the CRC per their request. She reports that the U of I Extension has a conflict resolution expert in Urbana who can customize a program to meet the needs to the CRC at no charge, except travel/meal expenses. Commissioners instructed Brenda to pursue this and see if the trainer could come twice: once to do a 3 hour Saturday morning session on Conflict Resolution and then once again in 3-4 weeks to do another Saturday morning session on Mediation. Hopefully we can add 3 more Commissioners before the training is held.

Rodney Blue from Carl Sandburg College came and gave a presentation on Youth Mentoring Programs in the community. He said he started one at the YMCA before he worked at Sandburg called Let’s Talk. This program provided weekly mentoring for youth. It was focused on social skills and character building. In addition there is a youth mentoring program at Lombard and Churchill. All together there are 21 youth mentored through the 3 program. He said that Goodwill provides training on developing mentoring programs. Now that he’s working at CSC, he has researched mentoring programs further and is putting together a program called “Harvesting Dreams” that will start in the Fall at CSC for young adults. John asked how the CRC could support his program. Rodney said that he just wants to get the word out about the importance of education and mentoring program.

Discussion ensued about our community’s cultural competency when it comes to mentoring. Tianna said that not enough members in the community understand why we need mentoring.
Doug volunteered to contact Jim Jacobs about an upcoming program that he and Tony Franklin may be offering on the subject. Doug said he saw a lot of discrimination in the South. He feels that the question that needs to be asked is if “it’s legal or illegal.” Tianna reports that she witnessed a questionable situation outside of a local establishment where people of color may have been “being offended” by public servants of the City. She questions what type of diversity training police officers receive and feels that, perhaps, people who are discriminated against may not feel comfortable reporting discrimination to the City. Peter said that even though there haven’t been any reports recently, we know that discrimination exists. Tianna feels a fire smouldering in the community when it comes to racial tension. Brenda suggested we revisit the “Not in Our Town” campaign and see if we can build upon it. Tianna and Tammy are going to outline the strategies they feel would best help build cultural competency in our community. They will send their outlines to Brenda and she will circulate them to the Commissioners. The incident at GHS was brought up about a racial comment by a teacher. The Commissioners are interested in finding out the outcome of this situation to ensure that it is not swept under the rug. Holding people accountable was a concern that was discussed. Diversity awareness and social justice awareness are not topics we can address for one month each year, we need to have an on-going campaign. Brenda pointed out that this type of activity does fall under the “duties and authority” of the Community Relations Commission.

John thanked Kip for his service as the CRC Interim Liaison. Kip offered to be a resource for the Commission as needed.

John asked if there were any public comments. No one was here from the public tonight.

Meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brenda Reynolds
Staff Representative