

## **City of Pekin**

### **Human Rights Committee**

**Call to Order** 6:00 10/13/2020

#### **Pledge of Allegiance**

**Members Present: Tonya DeGroot, Tonya Calvert, William Calvert, John Dossey, Sarah Newcomb, Roy Beckham, Sharon Collins**

#### **1. Introductions of committee members**

Sharon Collins is introduced to the members.

#### **2. Discuss Purpose and Goals**

#### **3 Old Business**

There is discussion about a movie night, DeGroot talked to the Park District about logistics of using park facilities, but the Park District needs 60 days advance notice. Dossey says there may be an issue with trying to get projects done this calendar year due to COVID. DeGroot also got a hold of the Avanti's Dome and they wanted to pair it with the Peoria German Society and a German Christmas Market, but even with sharing the cost, the Dome is expensive for our budget. Chief Dossey offers Billie Ingles, the Public Information Officer to help coordinate events especially at the Dome. Dossey discusses some of the fundraisers the police department has done in the past.

DeGroot asks about a Facebook presence. Chief Dossey says he can help with social media. Tonya Calvert also suggests Instagram. The most important thing for the HRC to work on is introducing who we are and focus on getting the information out there.

DeGroot would like to get something off the ground for Christmas. The drive for winter supplies such as mittens, hats scarf, blankets, even tents is discussed. Working to get other businesses involved by placing collection bins in their places of business. The City could put a few boxes at City Hall and will also share the drive with its employees. The topic of bikes came up and Dossey and Newcomb tell the committee that the City has a bunch of bikes that could potentially be donated. Bikes will need to be discussed within the City first and it would be helpful to have them inspected before giving them away.

Collins says getting the round table talks going and making sure the public knows who we are is also important. Dossey suggests getting some students on the committee which would give the committee some credibility among the younger crowd may be helpful when we have information to share about the HRC. Beckham asks how the City would get the word out about the drives for gloves etc. Calvert says Twitter, Instagram, Facebook are key. Dossey says we would do a press release and get the information out to the public.

DeGroot suggest getting some of the Peoria School District and the PCHS students together working on the murals and other art projects. Collins says a lot of the children on both sides of the river have never been on the other side. Bill Calvert suggests making the students advisory members. Beckham suggests giving an opportunity to the high school students to come to some meetings. Collins offers to reach out

to Manual High School to work with the art students there. Sharon also suggests a talent showcase with different categories or Newcomb suggests a sidewalk art competition with a theme.

We need to focus on who we are and get the message out through social media and the podcast. When we do that, we need to have a plan for events for the 2021 calendar year. Dossey will help with the social media pages. After we do the initial podcast, we should follow up with the social media outlets.

The Committee suggests the podcasts and follows up with someone like Dr. Charlie Cartwright as a guest on the podcast. The podcasts should bring a new perspective and different points of view as well as guests from both inside and outside the community. The importance of getting ahead of issues and managing the dialogue through our social media will be critical. Sharon says the public does look for someone to blame, but once you get to know the police officers and change the dialogue attitudes will change. Tonya Calvert says this is why the community-based policing is so important. One of our goals needs to be helping people have the difficult conversations. Sharon shares an interaction at the Pekin Walmart with a woman who thanked her for speaking with her because Sharon was the first African American person she had ever spoken to.

Beckham states we may have a vacancy on the committee, he will keep the Mayor informed on the committee members. Bill Calvert thanks Sharon for her perspective and feels her connections will be key to the committee. DeGroot says the key needs to be inclusive and bringing difference here, by “popping the bubble” and not being so insular. We need to retool and reeducate by reaching out to the students and the citizens. Tonya Calvert suggests coordinating the art teachers at PCHS and one of the Peoria Dist. 150 art teachers to create a collaboration for submissions for murals and would be COVID safe. Sharon has a connection with a retired art teacher in Peoria. If we do the sidewalk art, the group could collaborate there as well.

DeGroot asks about starting the mitten/winter supplies drive. We need to make flyers and share on social media. We can share with people along the riverfront, we can coordinate with the grade school, House of Hope, and some other social resources in the area.

There was a discussion about the name of the committee and ensuring people participate, share information, and gaining inclusion is the key. The Human Relations Commission was the original name and then it became the Human Rights Committee. A lively conversation ensues about people’s perception including politics and the divisiveness on many topics in America now. One of the biggest goals of the HRC is to open the door for civil discussion about diversity.

Dossey informs the committee that the podcast equipment has been ordered and was donated by the Police Foundation. The Committee will be thinking about the name for the podcast and work on the logo/artwork through the graphic arts class at the high school. First podcast will be who we are, how we are going to use leadership to make change and how we lead with courage. The committee will work on narrowing our focus to the podcast, then following up with social media. The committee will need to set up rules for posting on social media. Tonya Calvert asks if the graphic arts coordinator should attend the next meeting as well as Larry Hendrichs from Peoria.

Beckham is going to work on setting up the diversity circle/table talks for the first quarter 2021. The needs drive should have a name – Season of Hope Drive is the concurrence. A list of the needs will be put together and we will put it out on social media. DeGroot will also reach out for help on social media and Chief Dossey may be able to have Mike Eeten help set things up for the committee. Tonya

Calvert asks if Sharon would be willing to speak to her classroom about the needs list and who we are hoping to serve.

Beckham provided a letter for the committee to review for the fundraising.

DeGroot will share a flyer that Stephanie has started about the HRC

The next meeting will be November 10, 2020 6:00 p.m.

Meeting is adjourned at 8:25 pm

Submitted by Sarah Newcomb, secretary for the Human Rights Committe