

City of Pekin

Human Rights Committee

Call to Order 5:30 8/5/2020

Pledge of Allegiance

1.Introductions of committee members

Roy Beckham

Bill Calvert

Mark Foglio

Sarah Newcomb

Tonya Calvert

Stephanie Rhodes

Josie Esker

Tonya DeGroot

Beckham thanks the members for their willingness to serve and discusses the initial purpose of the meetings and how the renewed committee came together. A copy of the agenda as well as the purpose and goals of the committee were passed out.

2. Discuss Purpose and Goals

We discuss section 2-8-8 of City Code, which is nice and broad and provides for latitude in providing service to City of Pekin. Beckham asks for initial ideas/concepts. Newcomb discusses that we need to get back to being nice to each other and accepting of each other and suggests from the HR standpoint employers can play a huge role by modeling the behavior we want to see in the community and there are a lot of resources out there to help with moving the needle. Tonya Calvert discusses her experiences as a teacher and the lack of education about acceptance in the school curriculum. DeGroot also says she would like to see the image of Pekin change and feels that starts with by educating the children. Esker says education is a huge factor, but we also need to find the leaders in the community that can actually be changed. Foglio discusses the terminology of tolerance and intolerance and asks that we make sure we are not shutting the door on dialogue through terminology. We need to work globally and act locally. The changes have to start with us. Rhodes gives a personal example of an interaction with her child at school showing the dire need for education in the City of Pekin. Beckham says her example is a travesty because in his experience when speaking of color he has never met anyone black or white. We are all colorful people. Things will begin to change when we see each other as the human race and as an "US" on earth instead of us and them or them and us, but the Human Race. With so many planets in the universe, we were placed on this one planet together. That's the message he would like to convey. Respecting and accepting others will create change. Esker would like to add that the surrounding communities have a negative perception of Pekin and we need to change the narrative of the City of Pekin and we need to strive to achieve that. Bill Calvert suggests maybe we need to own the past and talk about how we are moving forward.

- Opportunity was given for public comment. There were no public comments

3 Old Business

The Human Right Committee in the past helped to sponsor the MLK luncheon with the Y, worked with the high school for the "Come Together" sign on the bridge into town. There was also a diversity fair on the courthouse lawn.

4. New Business

Ideas for messaging. Esker suggests we have the opportunity to do some new and interesting art installations along the new Court St corridor, such as the large retaining wall. Discussion about having local students work on the art and getting them involved. Foglio brought up ideas to also include art in other areas of Pekin and suggested along 14th and Derby streets. Tonya Calvert discusses the attributes of Pekin through the eyes of a friend from the Chicago suburbs and those from out of town who come here and don't know our history really see Pekin as a jewel, accepting and friendly. Discussion about some other areas for messaging, such as downtown, the Derby corridor, and the welcome to Pekin signs also ensue.

A. Funding Beckham discusses reaching out to the business community to donate money toward the cause. Beckham volunteers to head up that portion of the goals and inquire as to the tax deductibility of such donations.

B. Events Beckham had the idea of having a human race festival. It would encompass everyone and could include a race; Esker suggests a 5K run/walk. Perhaps schedule sometime around Fall and a booth at the Marigold Festival. He also suggests some diversity tabletop exercises. Foglio brought up the idea to not focus on the term diversity circles, but human kind circles or human kind table. Which leads Newcomb to discussion about Big Table and tapping into the resources through the City's Greater Peoria Economic Development sponsorship. Tonya Calvert suggests we could have some merchandising using the Life skills classes and TCRC as well and some cross collaboration with other communities and students could also be helpful. We need to make people feel more welcome and having more young people involved will help. Having a more diverse community will bring some economic development by way of having companies feel more secure in moving to Pekin. Newcomb suggest perhaps we can tap into resources at the Library – such as a book club or a movie club and discuss readings and such among ourselves at first. DeGroot suggests having guest speakers and present those to the community is an option post COVID.

C. Goals How do we help people to be able to feel free to talk about the issues at hand? The committee agrees we need to educate people, which the book club and movie club could help with especially now with the COVID19 issues. Foglio asks that we use words that are a gates instead of walls to encourage acceptance. Use the phrases Human Kind, Human Race, and De Groot suggested playing on "It Takes a Village" and "New Beginnings".

How do we promote human rights within the community? The Police Chief is a member of the committee and he is working on Community Policing which spurred idea of Community Parenting. The police will discuss some de-escalation and sensitivity training would like a statement and some opinions from the committee. Perhaps we can tap into resources at the Library – such as a book club or a movie club and discuss readings and such among ourselves. The committee asks that Chief Dossey bring his policies to the next meeting for the committee to review. Police dept needs to discuss their hiring process and the training they do and let the public know what they do from the beginning of their career because the vast majority just don't know how much Pekin does to ensure we have community minded new hires.

The Committee needs an initial statement, perhaps not a mission statement, but something that and addresses what has happened in the past, how Pekin has moved on from its past and the current civil climate.

Beckham pointed to the purpose and goals everyone received at the beginning of the meeting and raised the point that the purpose and goals in the Code was enough for the time being, particularly the 4th point which states

the purpose of the Committee is to establish and encourage meaningful dialogue within the City of Pekin community, its leaders, community organizations, educational institutions, business and civic groups, respecting diversity, equality and human rights

Beckham felt this was enough in his opinion because we didn't want to limit ourselves.

Beckham asked the committee to address the 2nd point under the purpose and goals of the committee which states:

purpose of the Committee is to promote increased awareness of legal and regulatory issues respecting diversity, equality, and human rights;

William Calvert voiced that it would be good for the public to know the stance of Pekin and specifically its police department's efforts on training for excessive use of force, de-escalating, sensitivity training, etc.

Does the committee agree with supporting a statement from the City of Pekin and Police Department addressing de-escalation, sensitivity training and tactics used to prevent excessive use of force? There is discussion about having the police department be the focus of the second meeting. Beckham makes a motion to support a public statement of the Police and City of Pekin to make a public statement supporting or the City of Pekin's stance on de-escalation tactics, sensitivity training and tactics used to prevent excessive use of force Esker 2nds and all present voting aye.

Assignments for the Committee to bring back ideas for the next meeting for that language.

We discuss board positions and committee advisory members and monthly meetings.

Esker made motion to nominate Beckham as Chairman. Beckham declined

Beckham makes a motion to create the position of Treasurer with a 2nd from Esker, all present vote aye. Esker makes a motion to nominate Beckham as the Treasurer, 2nd from Bill Calvert. Beckham accepted the nomination. Esker made motion to vote Beckham as Treasurer for the Human Rights Committee. Newcomb 2nd motion. All voted aye in favor of making Beckham Treasurer of the Human Rights Committee

Newcomb makes a motion that regular meeting be set for the 3rd Tuesday at 6:00, so the next meeting will be September 15 and a 2nd from Esker. All in favor

Meeting adjourns 7:50