

City of Pekin

Human Rights Committee

Minutes

The meeting was called to order March 9th, 2021; 6:00pm Via Zoom with Roy Beckham, John Dossey, Sarah Newcomb, Tonya De Groot, Nicholis Hall in attendance. Tim Sorrells, Maureen Naughtin, Lynne Johnson, Sharon Collins, Tonya Calvert with the pledge of allegiance.

Correspondence and feedback

There was no public input – None

- A. Committee Advisory – none at this time; Roy reports Heather is not on the call at this time
- B. Coalition for Equality – Maureen Naughtin noted the Coalition meets the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 4:00. The Coalition for Equality is making a funding request for the full amount of their program. The Coalition and the mission of the Y and the HRC aligned well. The Coalition is shifting their programming to focus on K-12 and are committed to programming for MLK Jr Day, then Black History month in Feb, and March focus on women with the Girl Up club, and in April they have the Stand against Racism focused on HS students. They also have a Reading through Feeding days dispersed throughout the year. Beckham informs her that we are working on setting procedures and the policy for the formal requests. Naughtin points out they would like to collaborate with the HRC on future programming that are mutually beneficial to the HRC and Coalition of Equality.
- C. Pekin Outreach Initiative brings a request for funding Lynn Johnson just began a program with the City and they have helped with applications for housing, setting up doctor appointments, and helping homeless get their photo ID's. POI just opened the center this year, which offers showers, haircuts, and laundry facilities to homeless and less fortunate. The POI proposal takes into consideration the approximate \$400 per month utility.
- D. Johnson also presents a request for Dist. 108, Homeless Liaison program. They have a toiletries and hygiene products closet which costs about \$400 per month. She is requesting approximately 2 months of toiletries because they recently received a large donation of toiletries and hygiene products.
- E. The War Room, Tim Sorrells, presents a request for hygiene products as they spend about \$1500 to 2000 per month and are requesting half of that from the HRC. The War Room experienced exponential growth last year and has distributed 30,000 items to over 500 families. They also have diapers, incontinence products, and feminine hygiene products. They are starting a mobile distribution next month and will help approximately 50 families at a time.

Newcomb and Beckham explain some funding programs available through CDBG such as the new utility assistance program. Beckham commends the guests for bringing their programs to us and Beckham thanks Collins for her extra efforts. DeGroot also says she appreciates the collaboration and feels we are connecting the right people together.

II. Old Business

- A. Hall makes a motion to approve minutes with a second from Collins from February 9 all present voted in approval.
- B. Ongoing projects
 - Art Collaboration-City Murals Beckham contacted Grow UP who would be willing to provide the space for a mural. Beckham suggests a photo of Dirksen and MLK that is owned by Wayne State. Newcomb recommends reaching out to Dirksen Center for photos first, which Naughtin volunteers to do. Adams Outdoor can print the mural. Esker provides a suggested quote from Dirksen which might be a good for a mural.
 - Podcast–Dossey says the Eeten is working on the art work, getting the subscriptions set,

are planning a test run in the next month with the first podcast as an introduction.

- Town Hall Meetings-The HRC is working on a collaboration with Pekin Chamber through the Big Table program in collaboration with GPEDC.
- Human Race Festival- Beckham contacted the T-Shirt House for a quote for giveaways and expects them to be approximately \$1200 which might be recuperated by registration fees. There is an event registration fee of \$25 and may be a cost for police coverage, which is determined by the City Manager and the Police Chief. Beckham is continuing to reach out to TCRC. Calvert and Newcomb discuss the supply of totes and pens that say "Pekin A community made stronger by the presence of diversity". Bill Calvert suggests adding a flyer in the bags to give them away at the Marigold Festival

III. New Business

There is discussion about the Police Shared Principles and Accreditations. The HRC supports the Illinois Chiefs' Association's shared principles and Chief Dossey will have an annual proclamation for the shared principles on the 3/22 council meeting, as the original presentation of the principles was in March 2018. The City participated in a collaborations with the Illinois Chiefs' Association and the Peoria NAACP to develop the shared principles. Several committee members believe reaffirming the Police Department's commitment to the principles draws attention to the City Council and City's commitment to ensuring the safety of all.

There is lengthy discussion about the Police Reform Bill (HB3653) recently passed in the state of Illinois. It is expected there will be some trailer bills and clean up language that is going to be necessary on qualified immunity, body cameras, report writing and tasers. Dossey states he is holding his officers 100% accountable and ensuring they are doing their job and doing it the best way possible.

Hall states concerns about school resource officers which leads to further discussion about how much training on mental health the Pekin Police Department completes now and sadly how many of the resources have been cut for all sorts of mental and social health services. Dossey states he is working on a deflection program with Unity Point and is seeking alternatives for our officers. Dossey believes community policing, education and the SRO is another layer of protection for the community especially in the social services along with the Safe Passages and Drug Court programs. Community policing is a philosophy used within the Pekin Police Department and he is working on a lot of the issues addressed in the bill that will continue to keep the City of Pekin on the right course.

- CIERT Reporting Hall made a FOIA request to see if the information is being collected by the City. Dossey explains that CIERT is an intergovernmental group that the City of Pekin is a *member* of and was set up in the early 2000s and that the City of Pekin cannot write a code or policy obligating another agency. Dossey explains how CIERT works and what types of cases they are involved in. Calvert asks how that whole discussion is pertinent to the HRC. Hall says the CIERT concern is related to delivery from violence. Beckham says the reconvening of the HRC manifested from enthusiasm to engage the community on human rights issues. Based on our first meeting, we focused on changing the perception or perspective of Pekin or how people see Pekin. The desire of the HRC was to help communicate the importance of diversity, equality and human rights. Beckham says he believes the issues Hall raises align with the purpose and goals of the HRC. Open communication and these discussions are important.
- Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Budget Draft and discussion Beckham states there has been no change to the budget at this time.

IV. Other business to come before the committee DeGroot is going to send a couple of items for the next meeting. Committee members discuss their appreciation for the committee and the mix of perspectives and hearing about some of the programs available in Pekin. Sharon discusses an interest for the committee to collaborate with the Pekin Housing Authority on helping with homelessness in Pekin.

V. Meeting Adjourns at 8:16

Next meeting: April 13th meeting at 6pm