

# City of Pekin

## Human Rights Committee

### Meeting Minutes

The regular meeting of the human rights committee is called to order January 12th, 2021 at 6:05pm via Zoom with the following members present:

Roy Beckham Sarah Newcomb, John Dossey, Nicholis Hall, Tonya Calvert. Amy McCoy with Chamber of Commerce is available. DeGroot, York, and Collins joined the meeting in progress.

There was no Public Input and Dossey explains how those outside can send in comments to the City Clerk for all City committees.

Approval of minutes from December 8<sup>th</sup> Motion from Beckham, second from Hall and there is discussion to include a change which will be reflected in the final minutes posted on the City's website. All present voted aye.

I. Old Business Discussion on progress for current projects included:

- **Art Collaboration** Tonya Calvert has not heard back from the high school and is going to follow up with Ms. Kahl and reach out to Ms. Odle regarding the art project.
- **Podcast** Chief Dossey has received all of the equipment and is doing a practice run next week. Nicholis has some suggestions for the podcast:
  - As previously discussed, Dirksen Center
  - NAACP ILAACP – shared values
  - Pekin High School and their plans for respecting diversity and discussions with
  - Safe Passage initiative and harm reduction
  - Pekin Park District and how they are working to make public spaces welcoming for everyone and ensure everyone feels safe there, including the Pekin Park District police

Dossey says he feels the committee members are on the same page. Dossey says the important thing is to have honest dialogue and discussions and show the community that we are being the leaders for change. Dossey suggests also having guests from the legislative branch and how the legislation process works as well as an episode on drug court. Homeless encampments are also discussed.

- **Town Hall Meetings** Beckham introduces Amy McCoy, the Executive Director of the Pekin Chamber of Commerce. Beckham reached out to the Peoria CEO Council and found out the Pekin Chamber was bringing virtual town halls to Pekin. McCoy discusses the Big Table program and those regional conversations, but McCoy hopes to have more specific conversations to Pekin using the professional facilitators to help lead the conversations. They are working on final topics will certainly include diversity and inclusion. Beckham offers city resources to help collaborate with the continued big table conversations. Dossey will be speaking with Kiwanis about the status of the department and also mentions the body cameras will be going

live within the next month. Hall has done some research on sundown towns and how they have worked to end the reputations associated with sundown towns. He shared a proclamation from Goshen IN and the "Sunup" initiative in Corbin KY. Corbin KY also funded a documentary and passed resolutions regarding diversity and inclusion, as well as a historical exhibit with discussions of some of the resistance to the sundown issues such as people involved in the underground railroad. Beckham suggests reaching out to some business owners and Dossey suggests the history room at the library. Dossey also has some ledgers going back to the 1800s and they serve as watch logs. Dossey says we need to be very careful and specific to Pekin and what exactly we are moving forward from. We could do a proclamation on the 10 shared principles and then after having completed research, we could move forward with the sundown town and Pekin's history.

- **Human Race Festival** Beckham updates the committee that McCoy has had experience with the marigold festival and the timing of the human race festival. 2021 will be the 48<sup>th</sup> the weekend after Labor Day. The Chamber will be happy to be a resource and will be happy to explore. Beckham says the HRC would like to have a booth at the Marigold Festival. McCoy says there are other opportunities for the HRC such as a Chamber Breakfast. Calvert thinks it would be awesome to have a presence at the parade as well a booth with some swag and literature about HRC in the Community Spotlight space. We could order some of the items with a logo or tag line. Calvert has familiarity with a printer and some ideas are discussed for items to share and suggests a banner or magnets for vehicles in parades. Hall asks McCoy her recommendations for the timing and wants to ensure we are not competing with the Marigold Festival. Newcomb mentions the Diversity Festival that we had previously and that it was in the summer. Beckham asks McCoy to explain the purpose of the Marigold Festival; she explains it was established to honor Everett Dirksen and a community involvement event.
- II. **New Business** as a follow up Hall asks that we consider drafting a resolution acknowledging the sundown town issue within City of Pekin. Beckham says he thinks sundown was mentioned in a council meeting before. Newcomb will reach out to the city clerk to find out more about any discussions at the City Council.
- III. **Other business** to come before the committee
- A. Committee members Beckham congratulates Hall on being appointed as a replacement for Stephanie Rhodes.
  - B. Dossey says the bill 63 being offered in the lame duck session in the state legislature regarding defunding of police is not a fair bill to most police departments in the state which are ethical and policy-oriented departments. Dossey is for change and the police departments need to have a seat at the table before legislation is finalized. Dossey admits there are issues with some

police officers, but the current bill is not the best way to deal with them. The Illinois Chiefs Association has been talking with the State about decertification processes. Newcomb discusses the Illinois Standards Board sharing with the committee that the police department is required to report terminated and resigned employees immediately in the State of Illinois. The IML has good information regarding the bill and stands in opposition of it as well. Hall asks about the issues with the no knock warrants and Hall asks if that is a discussion for the HRC. Dossey thinks no knocks will be a discussion at the state level and there needs to be some clarity with the rules and policies related to warrants. Hall asks about Briana's law also and if it could be discussed at the next meeting. Dossey suggests having one of the states attorneys explain how those rules work and the no knocks are very rare in Tazewell County.

- C. Dossey plans to have body cameras live this month. They are testing them now. Dossey will work to have a demonstration/presentation for the HRC.
- D. DeGroot states that she and Collins made up bags and delivered donated items to families in Pekin at Christmas. They also delivered 50 set of sheets and towels and gift bags to the Youth Farm. Collins donated hats and gloves to the senior citizen center in Pekin. Collins donated toys for 100 children at a church in Peoria and to the Children's Home. Collins is grateful to the committee and hopes we can do more to bless the community. The Pekin Outreach Initiative is opening a Day Center February 8<sup>th</sup>, downtown Pekin is looking for donations. Collins continues to run into issues with people not having photo IDs. Dossey says as soon as the DMV opens back up, he will reach out to his contact there to help those in need of IDs.
- E. The next meeting is February 9, 20201.
- F. The City made a proclamation for the Center for Prevention of Abuse regarding human trafficking. The Pekin Police Department's body works ordinance has worked at eliminating human trafficking issues within the City of Pekin.
- G. The committee thanks Amy McCoy.

IV. Adjournment 7:30 p.m.

Next meeting TBD at January 12th meeting at 6pm at via Zoom