

MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY RELATIONS ADVISORY BOARD METING HELD ON THURSDAY, AUGUST 13, 2015, IN THE CLUBHOUSE OF THE SPRINGHILL LAKE RECREATION CENTER.

The meeting began at 7:38p.m.

Members present were: Rick Ransom, Jacquie Carrington, Janet Jacobs Parker, Jamie Krauk, Dan Hamlin, Ed Putens, Council Liaison, and David Moran, Staff Liaison.

Also present were: Charlette Wilson, Pastor Kendra Smith, Michael Hartman, Susan Stewart, Shawn O'Neil and Carolyn Lambright-Davis

Overview of CRAB/History of CRAB Action

Mr. Ransom provided some background on the history of CRAB and described several of the issues CRAB had addressed in the past. There were introductions.

Minutes from 5/21/2015

Jamie moved approval. Dan seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Discussion of any pending Council referrals

Rick mentioned the ongoing referral regarding a Petition to create an Advisory Committee on Diversity and Inclusion. In a response to a query from Michael Hartmann about the status of that petition, Rick responded that Council had been given an interim report from CRAB and had not proceeded further so far as he knew.

Observations from CRAB members about what they are hearing "ear to the ground"

Rick commented on the letters in the News Review related to animals at the City's shelter and wondered if there was a role for CRAB under its purview of "Community Relations." There were concerns expressed that several dogs had been euthanized. Mr. Putens indicated there were issues Council could not discuss. Ms. Pope noted this was currently more of an internal matter and Council was handling it directly without referring it to a specific Board.

Jamie stated the Labor Day Festival was upcoming and she was hearing positive comments about it. Dan indicated transportation from Greenbelt West was an issue and asked about shuttle service to/from Greenbelt West. Ms. Pope indicated the shuttle had been discontinued many years ago due to lack of participation and lack of volunteer drivers, but she had heard that service to Franklin Park was to be re-established this year. David agreed to check with the Labor Day Festival Committee.

Input/Comments from the public

Janet asked Pastor Smith how to involve more people in the community. Pastor Smith noted her focus was community development.

Carolyn stated there were some concerns. She appreciated that meetings were coming to Franklin Park. She suggested connections were being made and stressed the need for one

Greenbelt. Janet suggested that Franklin Park residents put information in the “our neighbors” column. Rick suggested specific submissions to the News Review about activities that had been held in Franklin Park. Carolyn stated that News Review delivery at Franklin Park was improving. Carolyn stated that communication had gotten better. Janet stated Greenbelt was diverse and it made the community special.

Janet asked about use of the Library by Franklin Park residents and Carolyn indicated that many youth from Franklin Park attend programs at the Library. Transportation was identified as a definite problem in accessing facilities and programs in historic Greenbelt.

Ms. Pope discussed the Neighborhood Improvement Team program which existed when she lived in Franklin Park. Ed recounted the history of neighborhood (formerly known as Springhill Lake) noting that when he lived there it was very active and there was more voter participation. Carolyn indicated that Beltway Plaza was a central location for the residents of Franklin Park.

Dan asked if there was anyone else in the audience who wished to have an opportunity to speak. Rick noted that Shawn had been patient and asked if there was any specific issue he wished to present. Shawn responded he was there to listen.

Michael asked if CRAB members had attended Delegate Washington’s recent forum on race and class. Most members were aware of the forum, but none had been able to attend. Michael summarized the key topics at the forum including white privilege, institutional racism, and other topics. Michael noted the next follow-up meeting was in Palmer Park.

Charlette asked about crime in Franklin Park. She noted break-ins and a car-jacking which she had read about in the News Review Police Blotter. David agreed to provide her with a contact at the Police Department for follow-up.

Susan asked CRAB what was meant by “ear to the ground”. Rick responded that CRAB wanted to hear from the community and cited the problems with the former management of Empirian Village as an example indicating if CRAB had learned of the situation sooner, the Board could have been more proactive. Jamie stated that CRAB was changing its modus operandi and the Board wanted to share what they were hearing. CRAB wanted to keep its own ears to the ground, but also wanted to hear from the community regarding any concerns.

Susan suggested CRAB adopt a methodology for residents to raise concerns with CRAB other than attending a meeting. Susan expressed concern about parking tickets being issued disproportionately in certain neighborhoods. She was also concerned about an item in the News Review that was anti-gay in tone. Rick responded he was familiar with the item as well and that CRAB would look into the matter.

Dan suggested that CRAB was still feeling its way. He noted that CRAB could relay the public safety concerns that had been mentioned at this meeting to the Public Safety Advisory Committee.

Rick thanked everyone for coming and for their comments.

The meeting ended at 8:45 p.m.