

**APPROVED MINUTES OF THE  
COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING  
Wednesday, January 17, 2024  
Village Hall Rm 201 @ 7:00 p.m.**

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order 7:17 p.m. Meeting was held in room 201  
Staff present: Cassandra Adediran, Dr. Danielle Walker.  
Trustee Liaison present: Trustee Enyia (via phone)

Roll Call:

PRESENT: Comms. Rodriguez, Griffin, Coats, Terretta, Puentes

ABSENT: Comm. Quinn-Pasin

A motion to rearrange the agenda for public comment and to allow the late arrival of a Commissioner was made by Comm Puentes and seconded by Comm. Griffin.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

Chair Rodriguez proposed to re-arrange the agenda to have public comment be moved to the last item to give the public time to arrive and comment as well as to switch the order of New Business items 5a and 5b. Motion to approve the rearranged agenda was made by Comm. Puentes and seconded by Comm. Griffin.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Chair Rodriguez moved the approval of minutes to another part of the agenda. Per Dr. Walker, the minutes go to the staff to be approved before it goes to the commissioners for approval so that it gets to the commissioners ahead of the meeting. Chair Rodriguez commented that the process mentioned is different than before because [the minutes] used to be sent to the commissioners for discussion for approval. Per Dr. Walker, Dr. Walker and the Chair approve the minutes first. The matter was cleared up.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Discussion on Commission Vacancies. The discussion on commission vacancies centered around the priority need for one attorney and the provision that one commissioner can be a high school student. Chair Rodriguez will inform the CIC of the criteria of who the commission is looking for. Chair Rodriguez also asked the CRC members to reach out to the high school students who are doing the work there. It was suggested and agreed upon that there should be a meeting to rest the expectations of the CRC to make sure that young people come into an environment that is inspiring as some of the Commissioners still do not have a clear understating of the purpose of the CRC. Chair Rodriguez will speak with Village staff to see what is available for improving their understanding.

Vote on 2024 work plan. Regarding the workplan, Chair Rodriguez shared that there was mixed feedback on whether or not the CRC should do the grant program. Comm Terretta related that she senses that the CRC is moving toward being a team with specific expectations to which the

CRC will be held to. Comm Terretta also asked what will be the role of the Village and what will the CRC's actions be? A brief conversation was had about the CRC's involvement with the Juneteenth celebration and what the involvement would look like. Comm. Griffin explained that the CRC's role should not be the Juneteenth event as Juneteenth is a community event and there should be a planning committee from the community which the CRC can support. Comm Griffin gave some background history on the involvement of the community and the Village staff and again stated that there should be a planning committee. Chair Rodriguez suggested that the CRC can be more effective in an advisory role.

Comm Puentes related her experience in a "citizen" capacity to stress the point that anyone who wants to can serve on the planning committee. After discussing that community events should not be owned by the Village, that community organizing across all taxing bodies is necessary, and that there is understanding that more discussions are needed around the policies and responsibilities in relationship to the role of the Village of Oak Park, the commissioners agreed. That Juneteenth is a vital part of Oak Park and an American-recognized holiday.

There was sentiment that the CRC should be supporting cultural events. Comm Griffin asked the CRC what is it doing when it has all of the cultures represented and can get things done. Comm Griffin referenced that the migrants, the marginalized communities, and the middle-class people are getting pushed out of the Village. Chair Rodriguez introduced having a line item specifically for Juneteenth with the intent of leaving it broad enough to allow the commission to be flexible.

Commission members referenced the 2023 workplan while completing the work plan for 2024. The project and outcomes for the Institutional Change remained the same with no amount for the budget. The outcome for Education was amended to add "Racial Equity toolkit training for the CRC" \$1500. Community Outreach and Community Engagement were combined to add Juneteenth as the project for the 2024 work plan with a budget of \$10,000 in lieu of the grant program. The budget for the 2024 work plan totaled \$11,500.

Dr. Walker reminded the commission that the work plan has to align with the Board's work plan. Clarity was sought on the educating of commission members through the Village of Oak Park about aligning with the Board's goals, understanding the role of the Trustee Liaison, and the understanding the overall developing and creating a work plan. Comm. Terretta sought input/comment from Dr. Walker, asking about the acceptance, by the Board, of CRC's proposal for Institutional Change on the workplan as it is deeply important as a legacy for the commissioners and in the past, this type of input has been completely ignored and not welcome. Per Dr. Walker, expressed certainty as the commission works with the staff liaison.

Roll call to vote on the 2024 workplan. Motion was made by Comm. Puentes and seconded by Comm. Terretta.

Griffin – Yes

Terretta – Yes

Rodriguez - Yes

Coats – Yes

Puentes – Yes

The work plan will be presented to the Board during the January 30<sup>th</sup> or February 6<sup>th</sup> meeting. Comm. Terretta suggested that all CRC members attend the Board meeting or watch it and then afterwards, get together to make sure that the CRC members understand so as to get clarity and not misinterpret what the CRC will be doing.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None

Next meeting is scheduled for February 21, 2024.

Motion to adjourn was made by Comm. Puentes and seconded by Comm. Coats. Meeting adjourned at 8:59p.m.