

COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMISSION
Meeting Summary
January 11, 2018

Persons in attendance: Jenny Lee (Chair)
Carolyn Drblik
Brian Sweeney
Trustee John C Jekot
Tony Hollenback – Director of Family Services
Sergeant Anthony Scipione
Eileen Heinemann (guest) – Y.W.C.A.

Persons absent: Dan Ryan
Joe Kuffel
Luis Tigera – Chief of Police
Steven Vinezeano – Village Manager

Chair Jenny Lee called the meeting to order at 6:08pm in the 3rd Floor Family Services Group Room at the Human Services Building, 999 Civic Center Drive.

Carolyn Drblik motioned to approve the October 12, 2017 meeting summary, seconded by Brian Sweeney, contingent upon a change to the “Persons in attendance” section. It was noted that Joe Kuffel was absent from the meeting and that change should be reflected in the official meeting summary. On voice vote, all concurred.

Reported Citizen Comments/Complaints

a. Police and Other Village Departments

Sergeant Anthony Scipione introduced himself and advised he would be a part of the meeting series going forward. Sergeant Scipione stated “Coffee with a Cop” will continue in 2018 with a goal of scheduling twice per month from February onward. Additionally, the Mobile Outreach Program is targeting at least four dates when the weather turns to interact with neighborhoods, pass out flyers, connect with the community, etc. Once dates are finalized over the next few weeks, they will be shared via social media, Nextdoor.com, and the community website. The plan is to have Mobile Outreach available at all community events as well.

Niles Police are working on a traffic calming initiative with the school districts with a focus on pick up and drop off times.

With it being tax season, there has been an increase in IRS scams. People should be aware of numbers that look like their own contacting them about a “tax” related manner. It is common for the caller to advise purchasing prepaid cash cards that can be provided to them via the phone to rectify debt. It should be noted that all real correspondence from the IRS would come via certified mail. Police recommend that if you do not know the number calling you, do not answer it; if you do answer the phone, you may hang up. Instances may be reported to the police; however, most numbers once traced are from outside of the country.

Lastly, there has been an increase in reported locker burglaries at XSport Fitness (9210 N. Milwaukee Ave.). The police advised to not leave valuables in lockers while using the facility; if possible, limit what is brought in to keys, clothes, and other essentials.

b. Telephone/Email Hotlines

Nothing new was reported to the Commission.

c. Commissioners

Jenny Lee and Brian Sweeney received an email the morning of January 11, 2018 from Niles resident Jason Trunco. Mr. Trunco's complaint centered around an interaction he had with Niles Park District Commissioner Ray Czarnik following the Park District Board Meeting on January 9, 2018. Following the meeting, Commissioner Czarnik allegedly threatened Mr. Trunco and made a derogatory comment centered around Mr. Trunco's ethnicity and religion in front of several witnesses. Mr. Trunco advised in his email that a formal statement would be included in a police report filed January 11, 2018, and that he had notified several Jewish organizations of it as well.

The members of the Commission in attendance discussed the complaint raised. Jenny Lee will be reaching out to Mr. Trunco to notify him of receipt of this complaint and inclusion of it in the meeting summary. Sergeant Scipione had not yet seen the report at the time of the meeting and will need to follow up.

The members of the Commission in attendance further discussed the process of managing community complaints. In most instances, Family Services is utilized to mediate disagreements, etc. In the instance of Mr. Trunco's complaint, the citizen stated he involved law enforcement which was his decision. The Community Relations Commission then discussed creating a more structured mechanism to track/log all community complaints that are received.

Old Business

In November, members of the Community Relations Commission attended the "Helping Hands Community Resource Event" at Niles West High School. The response to the event was very positive and over 150 people attended. This was the first time the community hosted such an event and it provided a good introduction to citizens as to the services offered in Niles. It is planned to make this an annual event with a similar mix of vendors available to support attendees.

A few items were discussed that could be considered for the future: having an onsite Russian speaker available, improve logistics related to where the event was hosted within the facility (proved to be difficult for some attendees to access and navigate), and attempt to alleviate scheduling conflicts with other events on the community calendar.

Open Discussion

Elaine Heinemann from the Y.W.C.A. joined to discuss programs they offer to eliminate racism and seek racial equity. Ms. Heinemann talked about their focus on domestic violence, economic empowerment, racial justice work, and equipping people with the proper skills to communicate with one another. Y.W.C.A. partners with District 63 and is at Gemini School monthly to focus on equity in education and diversity.

The Community Relations Commission discussed partnering with Y.W.C.A. in the future to sponsor a series of events, seminars, discussions, etc. within Niles to foster a better community. Ms. Heinemann will share a list of previous events they have hosted to Jenny Lee which will be shared with all members of the Commission in advance of April's meeting.

Public Comment

No members of the public were present to make public comment.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is Thursday, April 12, 2018 at 6:00pm.

Adjournment

With no further business or discussion to take place, the meeting concluded at 7:29pm. On voice vote all concurred.