

Village of Niles

COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Minutes from the Community Relations Commission meeting held on Wednesday, September 14, 2022 at Village Hall, 1000 Civic Center Drive in the 2nd Floor Conference room/EOC.

Members Present:

Jovan Marinac (Chair), Megan Roberts Esterling, Anela Hrnac, Jeffrey Kash, Joe Kuffle, Larry Mayer, Kathy Toy

Members Absent:

Vicky Duka, Trustee John Jekot

Village Representatives:

Katie Schneider (Administration), Anthony Scipione (Police Department), Darren Brown (Family Services)

I. Call to Order:

Chair Jovan Marinac called the meeting to at 7:04 p.m. on Wednesday, September 14, 2022. Katie Schneider called the roll for attendance.

II. Approval of Meeting Summary

Jeff Kash made a motion to accept the December 7, 2021 minutes as presented. Joe Kuffel second the motion. All were in favor, none opposed. Minutes approved.

III. Commission Member Introductions

Jovan Marinac welcomed everyone to the meeting. Each member of the Community Relations Commission introduced themselves. This is the first meeting since the Village Board expanded the commission to nine appointed positions and revised the mission statement. Mayor Alpogianis was present at the meeting and commented that members are all from different backgrounds, different ethnicities and bring something unique to the table. He asked that discussions and agenda items stay away from politics and stay focused on bringing people together. Sgt. Anthony Scipione was present at the meeting and summarized recent community engagement and fundraising activities of the Niles Police Department including Special Olympics and Walk Like MADD.

IV. New Business: Goals and Objectives

Jovan Marinac asked that each member think about how they want to meet the mission of the Community Relations Commission and bring ideas to the next meeting. Members briefly discussed some ideas that included expanding block parties, having CRC members participate at existing events and find ways to be more visible in the community. Commission members wanted to learn what the needs of residents are and if there are issues or relevant trends that can be addressed. The group would like to explore ways to hear from residents. They briefly discussed a survey either electronically, paper or both. Commission members would like to learn more about existing Village communications including website, e-newsletters, social media, new resident packets and the cable channel. Members would like to find ways to promote the Commission at existing events and programs and not reinvent the wheel. Members asked for name badges for when attending events. Jovan reiterated to members to bring two to three goals and ideas to the next meeting.

V. Set Next Meeting

The next meeting was set for Wednesday, November 9, 2022 at 7:00 pm in person at Village Hall.

VI. Open Discussion and Public Comment

Darren Brown, Director of Family Services, reported a complaint between landlord and tenant that is being addressed at the Huntington Apartments with the help of Family Services.

David Sutherland was concerned about an incident at the 4th of July Parade that involved him and a volunteer of the Niles Police Department. Mr. Sutherland showed a video from his iPad recording the incident. Mr. Sutherland stated that he did not want the volunteer to "get in trouble" but wanted the chance to take a transformative justice approach where two sides talk together to understand different viewpoints. Commission members asked Mr. Sutherland questions and discussed the incident as well as the role of the Community Relations Commission in a matter like this. Since half of the members are new, the group wants to better understand what steps can they

take and what means do they have to address this incident. Members shared their opinion on the matter, but no action was taken. When asked about the incident, Sgt. Scipione stated he was unaware of the incident and that it was an issue that the Chief of Police would need to address.

David Sutherland also voiced concerns about the current Board at the Niles-Maine District Library and the impact it is having on residents in the community. Mr. Sutherland distributed a copy of an email that stated his concerns and his request that the Commission provide support and resources for those that have been harmed by the state of the Library.

VIII. Adjournment

Kathy Toy motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:19 p.m. Jeff Kash second the motion. All were in favor, none opposed. Meeting adjourned.

Minutes Submitted by: Katie Schneider, Staff Liaison