

HRC Minutes
October 25, 2016

In attendance: Heath Carter, Tatiana Cochran, Angelys Torres, Ivan Bodensteiner, Jacob Williams, Ric Frataccia, Cicely Powell, Mike Glorioso, Beth Wrobel, Jake Klotz, John Seibert

Absent: Marisa Johnson, Mike Brickner, Bill Lewis, John Albers

Meeting starts at 5:30 pm and the minutes were approved by members.

Item 1: Patrick Lyp: Complaint form instructions are online. The Reconciliation Committee is aware of its charge and have met to talk a few times. We are ready to go, no questions.

Item 2: Community Cultural Grant Program - Heath Carter gave a quick background about how this fits into the HRC's mission. Melissa Washburn and Tina Porter have attended to talk about the revised draft. The HRC members moved to adopt this version.

Item 3: VCS Diversity and Inclusion - Ric Frataccia doesn't believe that many minorities apply to work at the schools. The application process is blind to race. He is working with placement offices from Purdue Northwest and Indiana University Northwest to encourage minority graduates to apply. VCS wants to communicate that this school wants a diverse employment group. They have hired more minorities in the last two years than have ever been hired. Additionally, Parkview has a dual-language program (Spanish) that has been utilized recently. Cicely will provide the newsletter to Heath so that he can post it on the HRC website. Cicely added information about the counseling and support that she provides for the students.

Ric Frattacia talked about the need for minority teachers in different areas (foreign languages, STEM, etc). Elizabeth Lynn adds that the Education department at Valparaiso University would benefit from his words about future employment.

Item 4: Heath gave a quick background about Altogether Valpo and its relation to the Valpo NEXT's initiative/mission. The Report to the Mayor & City Council from the Altogether Task Force (September 2016) about all of the areas/subcommittees with recommendations is on the website.

Ivan Bodensteiner: How does the city populate its bodies and boards? He suspects that it is very homogenous. Ric and Ivan talked about ways to get more diversity. Tatiana suggested the idea of having a statement of diversity on their application. The applicant can say how they have worked with different groups of students or how they have been advocates or representatives in some way.

Heath asks about the most important piece of the information presented. Many of the members agree that Hiring a Housing and Community Relations Director. Cicely adds that there needs to be more than one person doing this job - there should be a team.

Ivan Bodensteiner: We need to have some assurance from the City Council that they are serious about adopting some of these initiatives. Should we take a position on the City Council decision?

Tatiana Cochran: The public needs to email their council members and tell them how they feel about the recommendation to hire this Director position.

John Seibert: There are other affordable housing projects that can still move forward.

Rob Cotton: There are different perspectives that we need to consider. Things really won't change by taking a stand without a plan.

Jane Schreiner: Expresses her disappointment about the City Council disappointment last night. She would like to see the HRC express disappointment in a decision to go against Altogether Valpo.

Elizabeth Lynn: ValpoNEXT initiatives express a need for "staffing". She believes that there needs to be a person who is leading. A proper response to last night's council vote would be the HCRD (Housing and Community Relations Director).

Christopher Pupillo: Our leaders really should have stood up to the fear in the audience. He recommends that the HRC needs to draft a response. We need someone to advocate and the city council needs to prove that they value all the work of the HRC and other groups.

Heath: Budgetary question - concerns about the city council approving a senior level position. City council members will have questions with respect to that. In Columbus, Indiana - Ms. Ramirez will talk about the work she does as Director (January 17). Heath will invite the City Council and Mayor to ask questions.

Angelys Torres: Let's think about why this was a priority in the first place. If the Housing project didn't have much publicity. Why was this important to the Council back in 2014 when they approved the Valpo Next Initiative?

Elizabeth Lynn: This new hire would be responsible for the HRO and lots of other initiatives - someone needs to coordinate and lead these if they are to succeed and be effective.

Ric Frataccia: Continuing education will be a requirement going forward. Part of the Director's job would be to communicate with the Council and the community in order to reduce fear.

Jane Schreiner: At least one member of the council was persuaded to say no due to the number of phone calls, emails, and communication received. Where is the education piece?

Heath would like to convey the sense that there is a lot of support for the position. He wants to convey our concern and also our hope. He will share with the Mayor about Ms. Ramirez coming to speak to Valparaiso.