

January 23, 2018 HRC Meeting Minutes

- Present: Alex Clanton, Angelys Torres, Cicely Powell, John Seibert, Roxanne Mendez Johnson, Heath Carter, Margeaux Lustina, Willow Walsh
- Meeting started at 5:30 p.m.

1) Approved minutes of November 28th meeting.

2) Heath Carter introduced a new non-voting member representing Valparaiso University students: Willow Walsh

3) Heath Carter shared two updates on old business

- a) The city expects to complete the hire process for a Community Relations Director by the time of our next meeting;
- b) The HRC Cultural Arts Grant program is currently accepting applications, with a deadline for this first wave of March 15th

4) Police Chief Jeff Balon made an extensive presentation highlighting some of the new initiatives he's spearheaded since assuming his new position in August 2017. For example:

- a) body cameras have been purchased and will soon be introduced;
- b) the department's officers will be undergoing de-escalation training in April
- c) exploring a citizens' academy in cooperation with Valparaiso University
- d) ongoing focus on recruiting diverse applicants into job pools
- d) etc, etc.

5) Heath Carter invited the public to share their hopes and concerns at the start of this new year. A number of people spoke. Some of the comments included:

- a) Paul Schreiner expressed ongoing concern regarding the cost of housing in Valparaiso. He asked when the Altogether Valpo Task Force's recommendation for an advisory housing committee would be implemented.
- b) Julie Storbeck read a statement regarding the challenges facing local persons with disabilities and encouraged the HRC to include this community in its work on inclusion.
- c) Joe Frankus urged ongoing vigilance and advocacy with respect to the rights and experiences of the local LGBT community.
- d) A number of local residents expressed concerns regarding a proposed change to the Valparaiso Community Schools calendar, in which Martin Luther King Jr. Day would no longer be observed as a day off from school.

-Adjourned at 7:00pm.