

VILLAGE OF LIBERTYVILLE
Human Relations Commission

Minutes
September 2, 2020

A meeting of the Human Relations Commission was held on September 2, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. virtually through GoToMeeting. Those in attendance included Commission Members: Sharon Starr, Tom Gore, Wolfgang Josenhans, Rashied Davis, Brenda O'Connell, Jennifer Rich and Trustee Donna Johnson (5:41 p.m.). Also, in attendance was Deputy Village Administrator Ashley Engelmann.

Approval of Minutes

Chair Starr called for a motion to approve the minutes of the August 12, 2020 minutes. Member Gore made a motion to approve the minutes, Member Davis seconded. The motion carried on roll call vote as follows:

AYES: Starr, Gore, Josenhans, Davis, O'Connell, Rich

NAYS: None

Member Rich asked if an explanation of the language required to make a motion could be provided. Deputy Administrator Engelmann provided a brief explanation of Roberts Rules of Order.

Review of Survey Data

Deputy Administrator Engelmann discussed the survey response rate as well as the efforts used to promote the survey. She noted that there were 537 responses. The survey was available for a two-week period. Social media posts were made multiple times (Facebook, Twitter, Nextdoor and Instagram). Two Village e-news articles were published as well as an e-news article in the MainStreet newsletter. A press release was issued which resulted in an article in the Daily Herald. A sign was also placed in the lobby of Village Hall advising visitors of the survey. She also noted that 128 individuals provided their contact information so that they could be notified of small group discussions in the future.

Member O'Connell asked if we have any additional data for the individuals who provided their contact information. Deputy Administrator Engelmann responded that she could sort the data so that their data will be sorted for segmentation purposes only.

Chair Starr stated that in reviewing the response to question 1 (As a place to live, how does Libertyville compare with other communities in the area?) the strongest results were seen in the categories of public safety, events and ease of making friends. The two that were at the lower end were diversity and affordability. Member Gore commented that when respondents entered their responses to the question, he wondered what towns they were comparing Libertyville to. Chair Starr commented that the responses to the second question (What should Libertyville aspire to be to attract new residents?) reinforce the answers seen in the first question. The two areas that stand out are more affordable and more racially and ethnically diverse. Member Rich asked if there are other ways to break down the data based on age and length of residence in Libertyville. Deputy Administrator Engelmann stated that she can provide that data for the next meeting. The demographic data appeared to be representative for age and ethnicity. Most of the responses were also from Libertyville residents.

Chair Starr prepared a summary of the open-ended question. She discussed the summary with the group. There was a total of five categories she broke them into: No improvement needed, affordability, parks and public spaces, events, and sidewalks. Discussion ensued regarding the comments.

The group asked for an explanation of the parks system in Libertyville. Deputy Administrator Engelmann provided an explanation of how parks and recreation is funded in Libertyville. She explained that it is not a separate taxing body or district as the neighboring communities have. For a Park District to be formed a Referendum would have

to occur and the creation of a new governmental body forming a Park District would have to be approved. This would also mean that an additional taxing body would appear on resident's tax bills.

She gave a brief overview of some of the park's initiatives. She also noted that a Parks Master Plan was approved recently. Member Davis asked about the number of outdoor basketball courts in the Village and what the plan is for reopening the Sports Complex. Deputy Administrator Engelmann responded that there are some outdoor basketball courts but that they need repair. She referenced the Parks Master Plan and stated that she would send a link to it to the group. She also responded that the Sports Complex is currently closed due to the Restore Illinois Phase 4 guidelines but that the Board does intend to re-open it when it is safe to do so. The group discussed the need for a diverse group of outdoor play spaces within the community.

Member Davis, in response to the comments regarding sidewalks in the community asked if the Village could clean up some of the issues with sidewalks ending without a connection. He also inquired as to whether the Village has ever considered a public theater for live events.

Deputy Administrator Engelmann responded to the comment regarding sidewalks and explained that the Village does have an annual sidewalk replacement program and stated that the Village is conducting a gap analysis of sidewalks gaps in the community. She also noted that often neighborhoods do not want sidewalks. Trustee Johnson echoed her comments regarding sidewalks and preference for a sidewalk or no sidewalk in certain areas. Trustee Johnson also responded that the Village would consider a theater, but no plans have come to fruition to build one.

Member Gore asked if it would be helpful to share the comments that were received with other Departments in the Village. Deputy Administrator Engelmann will forward them on to Department Heads.

Member Rich stated that we may want to publish a final report once the small group discussions are completed with recommendations which would also include a summary of the survey results received.

Member Gore also noted that if Department Heads review the results there may be topics that they would like us to focus on or bring up during the small group discussions.

Deputy Administrator Engelmann reminded the group that a summary report would need to maintain confidentiality of responses.

Trustee Johnson agreed that a window view into the survey results would be a good idea. She also noted that we may want to do additional promotion to get additional community members interested in participating in small group discussions.

Member Davis followed up that it may be helpful in the messaging to state that "we have heard your feedback based on the survey and now we need your assistance to move forward and have you participate in small group discussions".

Member Rich stated that in the recommendations it would be helpful to include both big and small recommendations (short, medium, and long-term goals) as well as recommendations that call for action.

Next Steps for Small Group Discussions

Chair Starr asked the group what the objectives are for the small group meetings.

Member Rich responded that the buckets that have been developed based on the survey are a good start. She noted that we can do a deeper dive into them. She also stated that we did not ask what people love about Libertyville. It would be helpful to know that and what keeps people here. What should we enhance and strengthen?

Chair Starr agreed we can use the buckets we have created and would like to go beyond them as well.

Trustee Johnson stated that the groups should not be at 80,000 feet but should be given a specific topic to discuss at a granular level. She gave the example of police and fire as a topic.

Member Davis noted that he has not seen a lot of community engagement from police and fire. He stated that you see them patrolling but he does not see a lot of community activities connecting them with the community. He thinks it would be a good idea to encourage this and we could bring this up at the small group discussions.

Member Wolf stated that once the small groups start and the word spreads, we may be able to get more interest.

Chair Starr will draft a list of issues/questions that could be the basic outline for the small group discussions and circulate it to the group prior to the next meeting.

Trustee Johnson stated that she believes it would be ok if someone has overlapping interests in participating in more than one small group discussion. She also noted that it might be helpful for she and Deputy Administrator Engelmann to bring the small groups together when they are completed and have a summary wrap-up meeting.

The agenda for the small groups was discussed by the group.

Member Rich suggested that the groups be brainstorming sessions on action steps. For example: How to make public safety more inclusive, events more inclusive, etc. Each group could brainstorm for ten minutes a piece per topic.

Member Davis noted that we should inquire during the small group discussions if residents are interested in holding cultural art shows at different times of the year in the downtown. It could help to educate as well as invite others into the community.

Member O'Connell responded that we should develop the use of public spaces as an opportunity for community events.

Deputy Administrator Engelmann responded that the Arts Commission is always interested in community arts initiatives. She shared with the group that there is a community mural project that is underway as well as other initiatives.

Discussion regarding in-person small group sessions versus virtual sessions ensued. The group decided it would be a good idea to try to offer it both ways. The Civic Center was identified as a good location to hold the meetings.

Discussion also occurred regarding holding a group in Spanish. The group discussed the fact that if we do have a Spanish speaking moderator, we need to ensure we can certify the translation. There are no expenses allocated at this point for hiring a moderator.

Chair Starr asked the group if members would feel comfortable leading a small group. Members Rich, O'Connell and Gore responded that they would.

Member O'Connell noted that she has a contact at the Libertyville Highschool foreign language department who has offered to translate documents in the future for the group. She will also inquire about facilitating a group.

Trustee Johnson stated that she would act as a scribe during group discussions.

The group also discussed including religious leaders in the small group discussions.

Chair Starr recommended that the members who are interested in leading discussions should e-mail Deputy Administrator Engelmann with dates and times that work for them.

Group discussion ensued regarding ensuring that when the small groups meet that a clear agenda needs to be identified for the participants. The moderator needs to set the tone at the beginning of the meeting on what will be discussed and the length for each discussion topic.

Chair Starr will develop a draft outline for the small group discussions and send it to the group for feedback before the next meeting.

Deputy Administrator Engelmann reminded the group to e-mail her if they have a conflict with the meeting dates and times.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 6:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ashley Engelmann
Deputy Village Administrator