

## Community Relations Committee Meeting

September 4, 2019

7:00 p.m. – Town Hall

The meeting was called to order at 7:09 p.m. in the Town Hall.

Members Present: Wicca Davidson (Acting Chair), Michele Marston, Emily Helms Williams, Anne deFontnouvelle, Cathy Wolf, Julia Bellinger, Marjorie Shaw, Quynh Tran, Peter Ladegaard, Maryanne Courtney, Julie Stanish, Ronni Jolles

### General Business

- The minutes of the June 2019 meeting were presented and approved by the Committee. Marjorie moved to approve the minutes, and Julia seconded the motion.
- There were no public comments.
- The Committee reviewed the mission of the group and the mission statement, which includes hosting events that include time for neighbors to meet and to get to know each other, improving communications between Town residents, and supporting those in need in Montgomery County.
- Each member of the Committee introduced themselves.

### Old Business

#### Events and Community Service:

- Rockville Concert Band – Julie reported that the event was held on June 9. Due to inclement weather, the event was held indoors. Only one food truck joined due to the weather; they did a nice job. There were about 40-50 attendees. The event was well received and enjoyed by both the band members and Town residents.
- 4<sup>th</sup> of July Picnic & Parade – Wicca reported on the event, which is the Town's biggest of the year, on behalf of Aki. We offered vegan food for the first time, which was well received. We had a lot of volunteers, and the band was great. The reading of the Declaration of Independence was challenging, as has been the case in past years. We are considering having one person do the reading next year. We coordinated with the environmental subcommittee on water and recycling. The water logistics went well, and we did not need any bottled water. We will consider how to work with the environmental subcommittee to improve the recycling and composting, since the system used in past years seemed to work well for attendees. There were 400-500 attendees this year. The amount of food was well planned, and the little excess was donated to a shelter. The Committee discussed the menu and items we might not want to order in coming years.
- Rising K-2nd Graders Play Date in the Park – Wicca reported on the event on behalf of Aki. This annual event was on the weekend before school started, and was a play date for children and families to meet. The event was fun and well liked. About the same number of people attended as in past years.

#### Communications:

- Instagram – Quynh reviewed the purpose of the Instagram account, which is not an official Town account, and how it can be used to build community. We currently have about 60 followers, many of whom are small business owners in the Town. The Committee discussed encouraging residents to take pictures at every event and post them, and we can develop hash tags for particular events. We can also advertise events on the platform.
- Facebook – Wicca reported that the Town resident's Facebook page, which is not the official Town account, has about 250 members, a number which has increased since the account was advertised in the Forecast.
- Town Electronic Bulletin Board – Following up on prior Committee discussions, Wicca reported that we have researched the possibility of obtaining an electronic bulletin board and determined that it is cost prohibitive.

- Welcome Bags – Michele reported that the Town’s employee Emily keeps a supply of the bags in the office and has distributed 9 recently. Committee members signed up to distribute bags to neighbors who are new to the Town. Michele will confirm whether the Instagram account is included on the information sheet included with the bags.

New Business

Events and Community Service:

- Acoustic Music Jam Session – Wicca has been coordinating with Jim Mich on an event to be held on September 19. This will be the second session, the first of which was fun and well attended. Committee members volunteered to assist with the event.
- Annual Repeating Event Calendar – The Committee reviewed the list of events that have been held in past years. Wicca informed the Committee that events must be reported for the Forecast by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the preceding month and must go first to her. Wicca then sends them all at one time to the Office staff.
- Planning Discussion for Future Events – Last October, we held a Pumpkin Painting event for kids, and the Committee discussed holding the event again this year. We decided to hold the event on Saturday, October 26. The group brainstormed other events for October. Peter and Quynh agreed to explore the possibility of a beer tasting event on October 13.
- Discussions and Desserts – The Committee discussed Town residents who have spoken at past events and brainstormed those that we might consider asking to speak at future events.
- Movie Nights – The Committee discussed continuing the tradition of movie nights for kids on the first Friday of certain months, when it is dark enough to show movies in the Town Hall. The group also discussed exploring a few movie nights for adults during the winter months.
- Back Pack Drive – Wicca reported that Jane Root, who has successfully organized a drive to collect new backpacks and school supplies (nearly 120 were donated this year), has asked the Committee to consider organizing this event in future years. The Committee discussed and agreed to head up this event going forward.
- Entertainer for Family Event – The group discussed that we have hosted an event with a magician or entertainer for kids each spring. Wicca solicited ideas for entertainers we could contact, and Cathy volunteered to follow up on this point.

Communications:

- Event Survey Forms – Quynh led a discussion of the survey forms, both paper and electronic, that have been used at past events. She will investigate a subscription for an electronic survey service and will report back at a future meeting.
- Community Engagement Project – Wicca noted that participation in local elections is exceedingly low and proposed that the Committee consider a long-term project to explore ways to generate more interest and engagement in the community, particularly in local elections. The group discussed town residents we could consult with expertise in this area.

Other Business

- Wicca reported upcoming travel plans to the Committee. Julia volunteered to act for her at the next Committee meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:28 p.m. Julie moved to adjourn the meeting, and Quynh seconded the motion.

Respectfully submitted,

Emily Helms Williams