

MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY RELATIONS ADVISORY BOARD METING HELD ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2016, IN THE MEETING ROOM AT SCHROM HILLS PARK.

The meeting began at 7:37 p.m.

Members present were: Rick Ransom, Jacquie Carrington, Kevin Hammett, Jamie Krauk, Dan Hamlin, Janet Jacobs-Parker, Sherry Burks, Edward Putens, Council Liaison and David Moran, Staff Liaison.

Also present were: Lore Rosenthal, Michael Hartman, Melissa Ehrenreich, Josh Hamlin, Naomi Littlefield, Stephanie Warner, Rohannie Bacchus and Bill Orleans.

Minutes from 1/12/2016

Dan moved approval. Jacquie seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Report 2016-1 - Turner Cemetery

Kevin moved approval. Dan seconded. The Report was approved unanimously.

Input from Community

Rohannie stated she wanted learn more about CRAB. Rick summarized some of CRAB past activities including Community Pledge, Spellman Overpass, etc.

Syrian Refugee Referral

Janet suggested the need for a group to form in Greenbelt in order to welcome Syrian refugees.

Josh indicated that he and others were working with a group called Maryland Welcomes Refugees. Josh stressed the need to engage people and address fears.

Lore suggested that CRAB discuss how Greenbelt welcomes refugees. She also stated that there was a concern about islamophobia in Greenbelt. She suggested that CRAB may need to hold forums to address these issues.

Jacquie indicated that community building was something that CRAB could do. She believed CRAB could start planning for this, solicit information from people being affected and educate the rest of the community about refugees. Jacquie suggested articles in the news review, information on the City's cable television channel and/or an educational forum.

Michael believed CRAB had an opportunity to help establish a welcoming environment in the City of Greenbelt.

Stephanie discussed her meeting with Lauren & Mohamed Schreiber, a Muslim who grew up in Greenbelt. She noted that Lauren worked in an outreach role and had conducted educational events. Stephanie stated there was a significant immigrant population in Greenbelt. She suggested there be opportunities for Muslim community members to meet their neighbors. Melissa stated that many mosques and groups were participating in service projects. She believed a more beneficial effort was to get people working together on these types of projects and activities.

Josh described the efforts of the Maryland Welcomes Refugees group and noted that Senator Raskin was circulating a letter.

Jamie agreed that the community needed to be prepared. She believed that addressing refugees, differences in our community was in line with CRAB's mission. Jamie believed this was an opportunity for CRAB to foster community relations. She favored holding community forums.

Michael believed these were things CRAB could take on. He also believed this could help CRAB become more well known in Greenbelt.

Jacquie believed the education piece was the first step.

Stephanie again offered the services of Lauren as a resource. She stressed that building relationships is an ongoing activity.

Sherry noted that most apartment complexes do not have tenant associations. She wanted to make sure that these residents are included in any efforts.

Stephanie believed that identifying leaders within the refugee/immigrant community was important.

Janet indicated that going to the Co-op Grocery store, Library, and New Deal Café was a good way to meet people from all over the community.

Jamie suggested the need for CRAB to meet and digest these issues.

Melissa indicated that people needed to meet and interact with each other. She expressed a willingness to help.

Michael stated that CRAB had a broad mandate. He encouraged CRAB to be more proactive and more involved.

Stephanie stated that there were real misconceptions out there. She stressed there are many immigrants and Muslims who are already here and we just need to get to know each other.

Rohannie noted that there are also Christian refugees from the Middle East that need to be welcomed.

Rick suggested a meeting where CRAB focused on what actions it can recommend/implement.

Kevin stated that Board needed to look at the bigger picture. He believed it was important for CRAB to be a welcoming community. Kevin believed there were broader values that CRAB could support.

Lore suggested that CRAB could change its role to be more of an action oriented group.

Ed indicated that City Boards were generally more policy oriented than City Committees.

#### Other Business

The Board scheduled the next meeting for Tuesday March 8.

The meeting ended at 9:05 p.m.