

Abington Human Relations Commission

October 6, 2021

Present: Shelley, Joanne, Rosemary, Kristin, Jeffrey, Michelle. Staff: Maria and Ashley

The minutes from last month were approved.

Old Business:

Community Garden: Rosemary reported that she had spoken to the Chief of the Yeadon PD who has been the moving force for their community garden. Her notes will be included. The basic recommendations are to make it a community endeavor and not to feel that we have to have everything lined up and ready before we begin. It's a "work in process." Given that, Joanne is going to reach out to the APD and ask for someone who would be interested in coordinating it. We would hope to use this winter to plan and be able to plant in the spring.

Asian-American History Project: We're showing the video and having a Q&A on November 13 from 11-1. Michelle did a great flier, which we'll be posting in a variety of places and sending to the commissioners to send out to their constituents. We'll also be sending it to Tri-State, local houses of worship, and several other organizations.

Incident in Willow Grove: Joanne hasn't heard anything further and believes that it's been resolved. She'll check on it.

New Business:

Upper Gynwyd HRC: They have reached out to Rosemary and want to meet with representatives from our HRC in order to learn from us.

Critical Race Theory: Jeffrey suggested that our next program be on critical race theory. He has in mind a panel of experts who would be invited to share their knowledge and answer questions. The experts could be scholars, lawyers, authors of books on the topic. The response was favorable so we'll discuss this again after the November program.

Minutes Re Community Garden:

Rosemary spoke with Yeadon Police Chief Anthony Paparo about the Yeadon Police L.O.V.E. Community Garden. The goal of their garden is to get police/community interaction that was not traffic stop or emergency call related. He called it a hub fest and love fest.

Location – he put it in a community park. Here is his experience and suggestions:

- There was a great community response for donations – he raised \$500 and AJ Ali matched it. Enough money to put up a split rail fence.
- Veggie garden with tomatoes, cucumbers, lettuce, peppers, kale, etc. Produce was harvested and people came in and helped themselves. Chief hopes that future gardens might yield enough for donations to local church food pantries.
- Plans for 5 more gardens; AJ Ali committed to \$500 for each garden. There are plans for areas such as flower gardens along the roadways (islands in the roadway where safe)

- Don't be afraid to reach out to local tool rental companies. Many will donate the equipment rental and several even made cash donations.
- Use rain barrels; initially had the fire department come out and water the area.
- Sent soil samples to the Agricultural school at Penn State University.
- Mural – the location in the park butts up to a local business who will allow a mural on their building. There is a contest underway for mural designs.
- The biggest problem is keeping weeds out because you are not permitted to use standard weed killers. He recommends vinegar and water and then wait a few weeks to start planting.
- He ordered raised beds from Amazon business so that they would be accessible for those who needed them raised.
- They included bench seating. The benches are secured with bicycle locks and alarmed padlocks in case anyone tried to disturb them.
- School is back in person now so he is reaching out to put together a student committee and maybe put a garden at each of the three schools.
- Don't feel like you have to meet every rule/goal before opening the garden. It is a work in progress.

Next Meeting: November 3. 7-9 pm. Zoom.