

Village of Niles

COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Minutes from the Community Relations Commission meeting held on Wednesday, November 9, 2022 at Village Hall, 1000 Civic Center Drive in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference room/EOC.

I. Call to Order:

Chair Jovan Marinac called the meeting to at 7:05 p.m. on Wednesday, November 9, 2022. Darren Brown called the roll for attendance.

II. Roll Call

**Members Present:** Jovan Marinac (Chair), Megan Roberts Esterling, Anela Hrnica, Jeffrey Kash, Tony Dati, Vicky Duka

**Members Absent:** Larry Mayer, Kathy Toy, Joe Kuffel, Trustee John Jekot

**Village Representatives:** Danielle Grcic (Village Attorney), Darren Brown (Family Services)

III. Approval of Meeting Summary

Tony Dati made a motion to accept the September 14, 2022 minutes as presented. Jeff Kash second the motion. 8 were in favor, 1 abstained, 0 opposed. Minutes approved.

IV. Public Comment

Alisa Sanders, Niles resident and organizer of the Niles Coalition, commented that the meeting notification for today's meeting of the Community Relations Commission was posted only two days prior to the meeting date and time. While that meets the requirements it is not beneficial to the community who would need to make arrangements to attend, especially when the only option is in-person and not offered virtually. She requested that the meeting be posted with more advance notice to the public. She had concerns about the current complaint submission procedure that goes to village staff and not directly to commissioners, she requested that this be addressed at tonight's meeting. Ms. Sanders also stated that public institutions like the Niles Maine District Library have come under attack and it is up to committees such as the Community Relations Commission to take action.

David Sutherland, presented two complaints at the last meeting including what he believes is police harassment at the 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade and was disappointed by the comments of commissioners asking what he [David Sutherland] had expected. He also reiterated that the Library is under attack. He is asking for a constructive approach to learning what the library means to our community, and that the CRC has a responsibility to protect it. Mr. Sutherland believes it is in eminent danger.

V. Old Business: Goals and Objectives

- a. Complaints from the September 14, 2022 Meeting
  - I. Library Issue – Commissioner Megan Roberts Esterling asked that the CRC adopt a public position on the library issue. Committee members discussed. No action was taken.
  - II. 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade Police Issue – Darren Brown reported on behalf of Chief Tigera that on 11/3/2022 a de-escalating training for the Niles Police Department VIP's staff was conducted. The VIP mentioned in the complaint was present at the training and shared his experience of the parade which made for productive conversations and learning for all those involved. Social workers will continue to provide these types of training. Jovan Marinac commented that the original complaint stated that discipline was not necessary. This was a positive response to the issue. Renee Sutherland, as a member of the public, was not satisfied with comments from commissioners at the last meeting. It was requested that the same de-escalating training be made available to the Community Relations Commissioners.
  - III. Housing Authority – The resident at the Huntington Apartments did receive a response from the Department of Human Rights and Ethics and is receiving representation from his complaint.
- b. Set Goals and Objectives – No discussion was held.

## VI. New Business

- a. Education on Open Meetings Act, FOIA Requests – Village Attorney, Danielle Grcic, gave a refresher on what it means to be part of a public body reviewing official business and how the public is able to hear the discussions. The function of the CRC is to facilitate and make recommendations to the Village Board of Trustees. This Community Relations Commission does not have the authority to take official action as the Village of Niles. Meeting minutes are taken and kept for the record; they are a summary of actions taken. The commission can make rules and procedures on how to make a more efficient meeting. There does have to be an opportunity for the public to be heard but it can be limited and cannot disrupt the efficiency of the meeting. The Chairperson has the authority to ensure the meeting is efficient and not disrupted. Remote participation is dictated by the State of Illinois Open Meetings Act. The Village Board would determine if remote participation were allowed during a declared disaster for the Board and committees like the CRC.

As a commissioner, writings, emails, texts, and exchange of information is subject to a FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) request. This includes your personal cell phone or personal email. However, as a commissioner you have the resources of the village staff including the village attorney.

For the CRC to adopt a rule or procedure, an item needs to be on an agenda posted 48 hours in advance, with a motion made by a commissioner, seconded, and then voted on with a majority vote.

Outside of meetings, any time there are two or more commissioners, Community Relations Commission business can not be discussed. Even casual conversations, texts or emails, that include two or more members is a violation of the Open Meetings Act.

- b. Adopt Rules and Procedures of the Community Relations Commission – Jovan Marinac presented the rules and procedures to the commission. This updated procedure provides a more transparent process for submitting complaints. Submitted complaints will go directly to Darren Brown, Director of Family Services who will respond to any issues that need immediate attention. All forms will be submitted to the Community Relations Commission even if it was handled by the Family Services department. Tony Dati made a motion to accept the Rules and Procedures of the Community Relations Commission for Citizen Complaints, Jeff Kash second the motion. All were in favor, none opposed. Motion passed.
- c. Adopt Complaint Form - Tony Dati motioned to accept the complaint form as presented and create an online version. Vicky Duka second the motion. All were in favor, none opposed. Motion passed.

## VI. Set Next Meeting

The next meeting was set for Wednesday, February 1, 2023 at 7:00 pm.

## VII. Adjournment

Tony Dati motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:59 p.m. Vicky Duka second the motion. All were in favor, none opposed. Meeting adjourned.

*Minutes Submitted by: Darren Brown and Katie Schneider, Staff Liaisons*