

AGENDA
Minnetonka Community Commission
Monday, January 28, 2008, 6:30 p.m.
Shady Oak Room, Minnetonka Community Center

1. Roll Call

David Hakensen, Eduardo Jimenez, Michael Kelly, Robbie Rosenthal, Laura Stotts Gorans, Paul Thyren, Anne VanHorne, Barb Westmoreland, Courtney Wieden, Melissa Williamson-Herren

2. Discussion Items

- a. Review January 7, 2008, meeting minutes
- b. New commission members
- c. Star Tribune article: "From classroom to community" (1-9-08)
- d. Spring Eggs-travaganza
 - Saturday, March 22, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.
 - Suggested activity: Ukrainian Easter Egg demonstration
- e. Preparation for Feb. 10 Kids' Fest activities
 - Cut handprint paper
 - Trace and cut out tree trunk
 - Books ordered from Barnes and Noble
 - Review staffing assignments for day

3. Adjourn

**Minutes
Minnetonka Community Commission
Meeting of January 7, 2008**

1. Roll Call

Commission members present: David Hakensen, Eduardo Jimenez, Michael Kelly, Robbie Rosenthal, Paul Thyren, Anne Vanhorne, Barb Westmoreland, Courtney Wieden, Melissa Williamson-Herren

Commission members absent: Laura Stotts Gorans

Staff: Jacque Larson

Chair Hakensen called the meeting to order at 6:39 p.m.

2. Discussion Items:

a. Review November 26, 2007 meeting minutes

Hakensen asked commission members if they had any changes or additions to the November 26, 2007, minutes.

Williamson-Herren asked that the minutes be amended to reflect that \$5,000 has been budgeted for 2008 for activities of the Minnetonka Community Commission.

Kelly moved, Wieden seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the November 26, 2007, community commission meeting. All voted "yes." Motion carried.

b. Additional commission members

Larson reported to the group that four community commission members were reappointed by the Minnetonka City Council to the community commission. While these members were only recently appointed to the commission, terms were staggered so that all members of the commission aren't up for reappointment or replacement at the same time.

Members reappointed to terms beginning Feb. 1, 2008, and ending Jan. 31, 2010, include Eduardo Jimenez, Michael Kelly, Robbie Rosenthal and Laura Stotts Gorans.

Larson also reminded members that the commission is still two members short of its 12 members called for by ordinance, and asked members to let her know of any likely candidates.

c. Follow up to Nov. 26 discussion

The group resumed discussion from Nov. 26 about appropriate activities for Kids' Fest. One idea was to host a community reading event, similar to the 50th Anniversary Minnetonka Reads program.

Kelly shared with the group information from the American Library Association about books and videos geared toward diversity.

The group discussed the question of whether the selection should be a children's book, or two books – one for adults, and one for children.

Kelly suggested that at Kids' Fest the commission videotape children talking about heritage, then edit the tape and show it on the city Web site and cable channel.

Jimenez related that Ridgedale Library recently featured a project where librarians talked about their heritage. He also recalled the library hosting a photo display showing how immigrants make a difference in the community.

Rosenthal said his school did a project asking students to tell stories about their holiday traditions.

Jimenez suggested a "family tree" at Kids' Fest, with each branch showing the country from which members of the family immigrated.

Rosenthal asked if Kids' Fest is publicized through the elementary schools, and if not, suggested it should be.

Thyren said Kids' Fest should be used as a platform for the launch of a book discussion, and suggested the question asked for videotaping should be something that will stimulate response.

Kelly told the group about the "Village of 100" project, which showcases what the demographics would be if the world's population was reduced to a village of precisely 100 people. According to the project Web site at http://www.familycare.org/news/if_the_world.htm, the village would look like this:

The village would have 60 Asians, 14 Africans, 12 Europeans, 8 Latin Americans, 5 from the USA and Canada, and 1 from the South Pacific

51 would be male, 49 would be female

82 would be non-white; 18 white

67 would be non-Christian; 33 would be Christian

80 would live in substandard housing

67 would be unable to read

50 would be malnourished and 1 dying of starvation

33 would be without access to a safe water supply

39 would lack access to improved sanitation

24 would not have any electricity (And of the 76 that do have electricity, most would only use it for light at night.)

7 people would have access to the Internet

1 would have a college education

1 would have HIV

2 would be near birth; 1 near death

5 would control 32% of the entire world's wealth; all 5 would be US citizens

33 would be receiving --and attempting to live on-- only 3% of the income of "the village"

Williamson-Herren suggested having a supply of flags from around the world, then asking children to choose the flag representing the country from which their relatives immigrated. Children could then talk on videotape about their heritage.

Thyren was concerned that many kids represent a mix of heritages and are so far removed from their immigrant relatives that they wouldn't be able to pinpoint any experience in their lives directly related to their heritage.

Kelly suggested asking kids to explain, "What is diversity?" and "What is heritage?"

Rosenthal responded by saying that if the kids are asked many questions, one is bound to resonate and elicit a good response.

Those who are able to attend Kids Fest include Westmoreland, Hakensen, Williamson-Herren, Kelly, Wieden, VanHorne, and Thyren.

Jimenez suggested it would be important to let people know ahead of time about the videotaping activity and what questions would be asked. Larson said she would include an article in the February Minnetonka Memo, along with the Kids' Fest activity schedule.

Thyren suggested posting information about Kids' Fest at businesses and apartment complexes, including Minnetonka Heights.

Kelly thought the questions asked should be:

- What are traditions?
- What is diversity?
- What do you think culture is?
- What are your holiday traditions?

Members discussed having a second, craft-type activity for kids to enjoy while they wait to be videotaped. Jimenez suggested having a computer and printer on hand and printing out certificates showing the meaning of the child's last names.

VanHorne suggested the children draw pictures of their families, with provided skin-tone crayons.

Wieden suggested a "hand tree," where children trace and cut out their handprint on a piece of green paper, then write on the hand information about their heritage. The "leaf hands" are then pasted onto a large cutout paper tree trunk. Larson suggested this tree could be displayed during Kids' Fest on the brick wall just inside the community center.

Hakensen suggested the commission invite JoAnne Robinson from Minnetonka Heights to speak about needs in that community, and how the commission might help address those needs.

Hakensen also mentioned the 2008 Citizen Academy to commission members and suggested if they'd like to attend it's a great way to learn more about the city.

Commission members agree to meet again Monday, Jan. 28, to finalize details for Kids' Fest and work on materials for that event.

3. Additional Items

Thyren brought up a concern about child abuse in the community and wondered if there was any way the commission could participate in making the city more responsive to this issue. Westmoreland suggested working with school liaisons on this concern, and Hakensen said he thought this issue was outside of the scope of the commission's abilities.

4. Adjourn

VanHorne moved; Rosenthal seconded the motion to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 8:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacque Larson
Community Relations Manager

From classroom to community

A public affairs class is organizing a cultural event for recent immigrants. "We're helping out people in our community," one senior said.

By **EMILY JOHNS**, Star Tribune

Last update: January 9, 2008 - 10:24 PM

Burnsville High School seniors Christina McGuire and Luke Abrahamson have attended school in the Burnsville-Eagan-Savage school district for most of their lives, and have watched it transform before their eyes.

When they graduate this spring, almost one-third of the district will be made up of students of color, which is about triple the number that attended the district when they started. More than 10 percent of the district's students are still learning English.

That's why the students and their classmates took it to heart this fall when their public affairs teacher told them they would help plan a Cultural Festival and Resource Fair for recent immigrants to their community, to welcome the immigrants and help them learn how to live in the United States.

"We're helping out people in our community," said 18-year-old Chris Brunner. "These are people that actually go to this school."

The 20 members of David McDevitt's public affairs class have worked with Community Action Council to plan the event, which is scheduled for Saturday. They expect anywhere from 800 to 1,000 people to attend.

It will offer cultural festivities, such as folk dancing, as well as advice for immigrants from more than 30 vendors on subjects such as taxes, education, the health system and how to buy a house.

For every student in the class, 50 percent of their grade is based on their work at the fair.

"Public affairs is different than your usual class at school," McGuire said. "It gives us a chance to get out in the community."

The class has also raised more than \$4,000, with the help of the school's Student Council and some area businesses, and plans on buying winter coats to distribute as prizes at some of the games.

It's the second semester that the class has been offered: Last spring, McDevitt's class of seniors helped organize the "Sparky Sprint," half-mile and 1-mile races for kids that coincided with Burnsville's Heart of the City Half Marathon and 5K. They also traveled to different elementary schools in the district to encourage students to start running and participate in the event.

According to the high school's registration guide, the public affairs class gives students "the opportunity to work with their local, county and state community on an actual public concern."


And that "through an examination of the impact of active citizens solving community problems, students will recognize the contributions they can make to their community."

For the students, the fair provides a chance to meet some of the newest members of their community.

"We want them to feel welcomed into the neighborhood and in our school," McGuire said.

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