

AGENDA
Minnetonka Community Commission
Monday, March 28, 2011, 6:30 p.m.
Shady Oak Room
Minnetonka City Hall

1. Roll Call
Paul Ansolabehere, Priscille Biehlmann, Bruce Gefvert, Betty Johnson, Michael Kelly, Marli Komarek, Jay Mega, Jr., Tammy Nelson, Heather Odland (chair), David Simon, Naomi Stock, Lucie Taylor (vice-chair)
2. Discussion Items
 - A. New member introductions
 - Tammy Nelson
 - Bruce Gefvert
 - B. Approval of Minutes
 - February 28, 2011
 - C. Commission member check-in
 - D. Minnetonka Reads
 - E. Sister City Program (Jay Mega)
 - F. Next meeting: April 25, 6:30 p.m.
3. Adjourn

Minutes
Minnetonka Community Commission
Meeting of February 28, 2011

1. Roll Call

Commission members present: Paul Ansolabehere, Priscille Biehlmann, Betty Johnson, Marli Komarek, Jay Mega, Jr., Heather Odland (chair-arrived late), Naomi Stock, Lucie Taylor (vice chair)

Commission members absent: Bruce Gefvert, Michael Kelly, Tammy Nelson, David Simon

Staff: Jacque Larson

In the absence of chair Heather Odland, vice-chair Lucie Taylor called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. Odland arrived later in the meeting.

2. Discussion Items

A. New member introductions

Naomi Stock has lived in the area for 10 years. She worked for the American Red Cross and is a psychologist.

Jay Mega, Jr., wanted to be more active in grassroots government. He is retired now, but previously owned an ad agency specializing in food service.

The previous members of the commission introduced themselves as well.

B. Approval of minutes: January 24, 2011

Komarek moved, Biehlmann seconded a motion to approve the minutes as written for the January 24, 2011, meeting. All voted in favor.

C. Commission Member Check-In

Commission members checked in during new member introductions.

D. Photo calendar project

There were several suggestions related to this project, including using the photo calendar to raise money for the food shelf.

Mega expressed concern about the viability of a calendar. He suggested if the project moves ahead, to consider the following to make it cost effective:

- July-June calendar

- Sell or give away at Minnetonka Farmers' Market
- Black and white instead of color
- Promote city events on the calendar

E. Minnetonka Reads

Taylor reported on the progress of Minnetonka Reads. She read a variety of books she thought would be candidates for this program. She suggests kicking off the program at the 2012 Kids' Fest event.

The group discussed whether Minnetonka Reads should be just one book, or if there should be several books for various age levels.

Stock suggested a group of people, like seniors, should go out and read to children. Ansolabehere said if the goal is to get people to read, the program shouldn't be too structured.

Odland thought maybe the program could be more about a theme versus a particular book. Biehlmann suggested having older kids read to younger kids and having an essay contest.

Ansolabahere said he thought it would be good to host this as a summer reading program, so kids would be encouraged to keep reading when school is out.

The group decided a subcommittee would be formed to work on this project. Volunteers are Taylor, Ansolabehere, Odland and Biehlmann. They will meet at 3 p.m. Thursday, March 10, at the Minnetonka Community Center. Larson will reserve a room for the group.

F. Miscellaneous

Mega asked Larson about participation in the Williston Center's spring break escape. Larson said she would check and get back to him.

G. Next meeting: March 28, 6:30 p.m.

3. Adjourn

Ansolabehere moved, Stock seconded a motion to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacque Larson
Community Relations Manager

Minnetonka Community Commission
Minnetonka Reads Subcommittee
Thursday, March 10, 2011, 3 p.m.
Gray's Bay Meeting Room, Minnetonka Community Center

Present: Paul Ansolabehere, Lucie Taylor, Priscille Biehlmann, Heather Odland

Staff: Jacque Larson

- Taylor suggested "The Red Umbrella" by Christina Diaz Gonzalez. This is a piece of history that is not well known and shows the immigrant experience for America – how tragic events elsewhere brought strong citizens to America.

Description: Grade 6–9—Fourteen-year-old Lucia lives an easy middle-class life in 1961 Cuba, thinking only about clothes, boys, and dances. When Communist revolutionaries occupy her town, an escalating witch hunt against capitalists compels her parents to send her and her brother to the U.S. under the care of the Catholic Welfare Bureau (as part of "Operation Pedro Pan," which—the endnotes explain—was the largest-ever exodus of unaccompanied children in the West). Lucia eventually settles with a foster family in Nebraska, where she comes to terms with her dual identity as a Cuban exile and an American teen. She must also piece together a picture of what's happening to her parents and friends at home from interrupted phone calls, censored letters, and newspaper articles. This well-written novel has a thoroughly believable protagonist and well-chosen period details. It should be noted, however, that Gonzalez portrays the single sympathetic Communist character as increasingly brainwashed. Few readers will recognize the polemics driving this convincing story, but as an introduction to the history and politics of the Cuban-exile community, it could generate some excellent classroom discussions.—Rhona Campbell, Washington, DC Public Library
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- Biehlmann suggested determining the Lexile reading score for students who are using that system. (Note: According to www.lexile.com, this book has not been assigned a lexile reading score.)
- Ideas for the Minnetonka Reads program around this book included:
 - Recruit high school kids who need volunteer credit to read to younger kids or help at library book clubs. (Biehlmann)
 - Work with library (Ridgedale and Minnetonka) to schedule reading discussion groups.
 - Give kids a certificate at the end for reading the book and participating in a discussion – maybe a DQ coupon too.
 - Purchase 100 books to give away to those who sign up for the book clubs/reading discussions.
 - Host a Cuban cooking demo at the farmers' market in 2012.
 - Host a Cuban music evening at the 2012 Music in the Park.
 - Suggest a grandparent/grandchild book club around this book at the Minnetonka Senior Center. (Jacque Larson)

- Contact JoAnne Robinson about involving kids at Minnetonka Heights in the book clubs. (*Jacque Larson*)
- Contact author via email to see if she will be traveling to Minnesota next year for any reason and could talk to our group.
- If author not available, or in addition to author talk, try to find a community member who is Cuban and would have some experiences to share.