

COMMUNITY RELATIONS BOARD MINUTES

February 13, 2013, 6 PM., MUNICIPAL BUILDING

Present: Chair Susanne Wagner, Vice Chair Dianne Wainwright, Carl Templin, Nancy Carroll, Karen Durham.

Call to order: Vice Chair Dianne Wagner called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. Chair Susanne Wagner presided over the meeting.

Consideration of January 2013 Minutes: Minutes were approved unanimously with one correction.

Citizen Comments: There were no citizen comments

Topic of the Month: South Hills Interfaith Ministries Executive Director James Guffey and Community Relations Assistant Tim Brown discussed SHIM's programs and services. SHIM, once funded primarily by religious congregations, now gets only 20 percent of its budget from those congregations and no longer does interfaith programming. The agency's focus today is "to empower struggling families to achieve self-sufficiency." SHIM now has case managers on staff and helps families "get back on track" by setting goals, leaning financial management skills and preparing for employment. They also have a tutoring program that assists the area's growing non-native population. SHIM runs a community garden that helps supply its food bank, which serves suburban poor families, including a number of families from Mt. Lebanon. This SHIM partners with many other agencies and currently is seeking partners who can help families with mental health issues. "If you are struggling or know someone who is struggling, here is a resource," Mr. Guffey said.

Board member Carl Templin, who lives for many years in Africa and speaks several African languages, volunteered his assistance, as a number of the refugees coming to this area from African nations.

Chair's Report: Susanne Wagner expressed gratitude at having been appointed by Mt Lebanon Commission to another three-year term and thanked Dianne Wainwright for composing the letter to the Commission.

Susanne announced that Mt. Lebanon Village's Ann Bateman has resigned. There currently are 50 members. Susanne said Tracy Limegrover, the volunteer executive director, needs help designing a new brochure. Susan Morgans said the Public Information Office could design the brochure.

Commission Liaison Report: There was no commission liaison report.

Staff Liaison Report: Susan Morgans reported that Commissioner Kelly Fraasch and School Board Member Jo Posti are working together to convene a task force to address what is perceived to be a growing drug problem in Mt Lebanon.

Continuing Business: The board discussed the idea of having a forum next fall that would introduce the community to some of the nonprofit agencies that are resources. Susanne suggested building on Mr. Rogers' "Look for the Helpers." Other suggestions for titles included "Homegrown Helper" or "Hometown Hearts." Susan Morgans suggested November, as the municipal calendar is already full of events for September and October.

New Residents Web Page: Susanne suggested that if board members have specific ideas for a web page, they should send Susan Morgans an e-mail.

New Business: The board asked Susan to find out why the Community Relations Board vacancies were not included in a recent ad that appeared in The Almanac.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm. Next meeting is Wednesday, March 13, at 6 p.m. in the municipal building.