

Community Relations Board (CRB) Minutes

Wednesday, February 10, 2016, 6 p.m.

Municipal Building

Attendance: Susanne Wagner, chair, Dianne Wainwright, Robert Taylor, Annette Bassett, Dana Hackley, Kiersten Lane, Steve Silverman, commission liaison; Susan Morgans, staff liaison; Joseph Berkley, chief inspector

Call to order Chair Susanne Wagner called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

Consideration of Minutes The January minutes were unanimously approved with corrections.

Public Comment Bob Ralston of Peters Township, representing the outreach committee of Mt. Lebanon Evangelical Presbyterian Church, talked about his congregation's wish to provide services and funding to help people in need in Dormont and Mt. Lebanon. The church's current outreach efforts include Mission Possible and Fired Up Fridays. They are talking to various community groups to identify where help would be most beneficial. Mr. Ralston stayed to hear Chief Inspector Joe Berkley's presentation.

Topic of the Month Chief Inspector Joe Berkley discussed situations (and showed pictures) of desperate living conditions that he sometimes encounters in responding to complaints. He is not a trained social worker and is not permitted by law to address such situations, which include hoarding and other issues typically experienced by people with mental illness. Public safety personnel can enter a property when they get a 911 call. At that point, Mt. Lebanon can call in the county health department, but the county is dealing with an overload of such cases in less affluent suburbs, so help is not always quickly available.

Several board members suggested that volunteers, including members of religious congregations, could be enlisted. Mr. Berkley agreed that volunteers could help make repairs and improve the living conditions, provided a professional with mental health background conducts an initial assessment. In response to a question, Mr. Berkley said that working with a social worker from St. Clair Hospital would be helpful, although the municipality currently has no such arrangement. Bob Taylor suggested that the board could create a resource list for people in need and their families. Susanne Wagner noted that the discussion was in line with her personal hope that Mt. Lebanon eventually might have an organization similar to Outreach but for people of all ages. The board voted unanimously to put this issue on an upcoming agenda for further discussion.

Chair's Report Susanne Wagner formally welcomed new member Kristen Lane to the board. (Members had introduced themselves to her at the start of the meeting.) Kristen, a lawyer, lives in Sunset Hills and has been involved in school and community volunteer work. Commissioner Silverman thanked Kristen for volunteering for the board.

Commission Liaison Report Commissioner Silverman reported that the Commission voted to have a reassessment program again this year. It will involve 27 properties that are grossly under assessed, and a strict formula was used to identify these. It is not a "newcomers" tax. Only five to 10 percent of those to be reassessed are new homeowners. Mr. Silverman also said that the Commission would be introducing an ordinance to fine people who walk against the signal at a crosswalk. Police Chief Aaron Lauth suggested this course of action, as half of all pedestrian/vehicular crashes in Mt. Lebanon are the fault of the pedestrian.

Staff Liaison Report Susan Morgans will follow up with Lisa Borelli Dorn regarding recognition for the winner of the Volunteer Recognition Award.

CONTINUING BUSINESS

Community Service Award Susan will bring nominations to the next meeting.

Community Engagement Annette Bassett did a great job on the first "Get Engaged" Column. Bob Taylor will write the next column for May magazine, due March 10.

Mediations Lisa Borelli Dorn tried very hard to bring two parties together for a mediation referred by Judge Blaise Larotonda. Unfortunately one party refused to participate, so the matter is going back to the judge. The judge might issue an order requiring mediation.

Dianne Wainwright will send Susan Morgans the mediation form/forms to be posted on www.mtlebanon.org.

Officers Please email Dianne Wainwright, if you are interested in serving as chair or vice chair for the coming year. Board will vote in April.

Community Coffees Board will discuss this at next meeting. Manager Keith McGill may want to attend the meeting and join in the discussion.

Next Meeting/Adjournment The next meeting is Wednesday, March 9, at 6 p.m., in the municipal building. The meeting adjourned at 7:35.