

**CITY OF La PORTE
DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
July 28, 2022 at 5:00 p.m.**

Call to Order

A Meeting of the City of La Porte Diversity and Inclusion Committee was called to order by Chair Marvin McCoy on July 28, 2022, at 5:05 pm. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Roll Call

Present: Chair Marvin McCoy, Vice-Chair Elissa Affeld, Secretary Selah Brooks, Members Frank Zolvinski and Brenda Eguizabal. Also noted in attendance Attorney Nick Otis, City Councilman Tim Franke, Jeff Batchelor, and Human Resource Director Andrea Smith. There was a quorum.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

A Motion was made by Frank and seconded by both Selah and Brenda to approve the June 23, 2022, Meeting Minutes. Motion carried 5-0.

Claims

None.

Public Comment

Ms. Michelle Bonick of 4888 E 200 S., Pleasant Township, La Porte, Indiana approached the podium and spoke about the display case inside of City Hall in June that contained "a homosexual and gender confused flag." She questioned why the flag was put in the case by this Committee. Marvin stated the flag was not placed in the display case by this Committee. It was gifted to the Diversity and Inclusion Committee and stored in the Mayor's office.

Attorney Otis stated the Mayor's office is generally in charge of what goes inside the display case and it usually changes every month.

Ms. Bonick continued "Why was the flag in that case and I have pictures of it."

Attorney Otis reminded Ms. Bonick this item is not on the Agenda. Ms. Bonick wanted to know how she can get an item on the Agenda, and Attorney Otis explained she does not decide what goes on the Agenda, the Chair or Committee does.

Attorney Otis asked Ms. Bonick if she is a City of La Porte resident or votes in City of La Porte elections. Ms. Bonick stated no but buys gas, does business in the City of La Porte, and votes in County elections. She pays County property taxes and that money trickles down to the City of La Porte. There are members in her group who live in the City of La Porte who will want to get on the Agenda and speak at the next meeting.

Attorney Otis stated City of La Porte residents have a right to come to a meeting to express their thoughts or concerns, but Ms. Bonick is not a City of La Porte resident.

Marvin agreed everyone loves stickers asking Attorney Otis if this is a permissible expense. Attorney Otis said it is, the Committee has a budget but to make sure there is enough time to order items for Sunflower Fest. At the August meeting, the Committee can finalize things for the Sunflower Fest.

Frank asked what the process is for using the display case; however, did not want to make too much out of this. Councilman Franke believes this is left to the Mayor. If the Committee is confused, the public must be confused. Councilman Franke will speak with Annette to see if there is something procedurally regarding placing items in the display case.

Elissa noted this was the first time someone uninvited showed up for public comment. Having the public here is vital and the Committee believes there was an agenda behind Ms. Burdick being at the Meeting tonight.

Elissa said the agenda was people being gay. The Committee should be talking about these issues much more. The gay community is marginalized in many ways including healthcare and housing. There are a lot of things that people do not consider when it comes to LGBTQ+ community.

Marvin and Selah both spoke about the importance of hearing what the public has to say, acknowledging their concerns and discussing, if the item is on the Agenda. Ms. Burdick wanted to put the Committee on the spot.

Hearing no other Comments from Committee Members, Comments were closed.

Adjournment

At 6:03 pm, there being no other questions or comments, Frank made a Motion to adjourn the Meeting, which was seconded by Brenda and Selah. The Motion carried 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,



Andrea Smith
Human Resource Director, City of La Porte

Approved: September 22, 2022