

DIVERSITY AND HERITAGE ADVISORY BOARD CITY OF PEMBROKE PINES, FL

April 18, 2023

The regular meeting of the **DIVERSITY AND HERITAGE ADVISORY BOARD** was called to order at 6:35 P.M. by Chair Hicks-Lee at the Southwest Focal Point Senior Center Pembroke Pines, FL 33025

DIVERSITY AND HERITAGE ADIVSORY BOARD

Present: Chair Hicks-Lee, Vice Chair Prospect; Members Tewari, Burns, Industrious, Potter, Landrian; Alternate Member Acuna

Absent: Members Brewster, Comfort, Sicard, Edwards, Mathew, Surin, Azad, and Burgess

Also Present: Liaison Shechter, Heather Needleman Assistant City Attorney; Assistant City Manager Christina Sorenson; Board Secretary Nicole Lafrance

OATH OF OFFICE

Current alternate member Industrious took the Oath of Office to become a regular member of the Diversity and Heritage Advisory Board.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

On a motion by Member Potter seconded by member Industrious to approve the excused absences of Members Azad, Comfort, Acuna and Burns from the January meeting passed unanimously.

On a motion by Member Landrian seconded by member Burns to approve the excused absences of Chair Hicks-Lee and Member Potter from the February meeting passed unanimously.

On a motion by Member Industrious seconded by member Landrian to approve the excused absences of Members Brewster and Mathews from the March meeting passed unanimously.

On a motion by Member Landrian seconded by member Burns to approve the excused absences of Member Comfort from the March meeting passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion by Member Potter seconded by Member Landrian to approve previous Minutes for March 21, 2023, passed unanimously.

LIAISON REPORT

Liaison Shechter opened the meeting by discussing various events that are coming up in the city, including Pines Day. Liaison Shechter also mentioned the possibility of events for the future including Hispanic Heritage Festival and Caribbean Culture Night. He then went on to introduce City Assistant Manager Christina Sorenson to elaborate on such events.

OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

NEW BUSINESS

City Assistant Manager Christina Sorenson began by mentioning how last meeting she and the Board discussed future events and ideas for more cultural events that this Board would be able to bring to the Commission for consideration. Ms. Sorenson mentioned that she has gotten with Holly Bonkowski, the Assistant Director of Cultural Arts, regarding an event for the Veterans in the City and how they can collaborate with a sketch artist to have portraits done and to bring that art factor to an event. Ms. Sorenson said that this will definitely be an event that will happen in 2024. Member Hicks-Lee asked how the city will target different veterans in the community, Ms. Sorenson mentioned this will be a big outreach effort, including word of mouth and a mention in City Connect. Ms. Sorenson also mentioned the city works with United Way and would be able to get the veteran statistics from them. Member Potter suggested the veteran's home that the city could reach out to. Liaison Shechter mentioned the lunch that the SWFP Center does for the veterans home once a month getting them out of the house and putting on a lunch for them.

City Assistant Manager Christina Sorenson went on to mention another possible event, which was previously brought up by Member Acuna, could be a Hispanic Heritage Festival. Ms. Sorenson mentioned how there are Hispanic events, but not specific to families and children. An event like this could be musically based, whereas another suggested event, Caribbean Night, would be more educational, as well as having music and food. Ms. Sorenson suggested another way to have, and event could be to combine all the above and do a big multi-Cultural event. Member Landrian asked if the board were to combine these events and do a multi-Cultural event, would the price be more feasible. Ms. Sorenson responded that they would not combine all of the budgets together for one big event, but doing one event would be more cost-effective.

Member Burns mentioned that she likes the idea of the multi-Cultural event, including music and food. Member Industrious asked if these are all ideas for 2024, and Ms. Sorenson confirmed yes. Member Potter mentioned doing an International Caribbean food fair, this idea could include dishes from specific countries with food trucks and possibly some demonstrations on how to prepare certain dishes. Member Acuna mentioned an idea to combine Latin cultures and Caribbean cultures by doing a Carnival event. Member Tewari stated that he had recently been on a cruise to the Caribbean where he found it very educational, and this is something they could include while putting on this type of event.

Member Prospect asked if the city could do a "City Spotlight" each month to include members of the community, businesses, and employees. Chair Hicks-Lee asked where something like this could be published. Member Prospect replied that it could be posted on social media, the city's website, a billboard and City Connect. Ms. Sorenson stated she thinks that is a great idea, and the city's police department does something like that. Member Potter mentioned a new Indian Market that opened, Member Acuna mentioned a new Middle Eastern restaurant that opened as well as a Black owned business, Brandon's Bistro. Liaison Shechter mentioned that he visited Brandon's Bistro and welcomed them to the community. Member Acuna asked if the city could spotlight certain restaurants, to which Ms. Sorenson replied that the city needs to be careful with that because they cannot "sponsor" businesses directly. Member Potter mentioned that the city could possibly reach out to these businesses to do events. Chair Hicks-Lee mentioned that if they do a "spotlight" maybe at the end of the year they could put on a lunch to celebrate these members of the community.

Chair Hicks-Lee mentioned a list provided of events which included Juneteenth, she reached out to Old Skool Gang, a professional performance group, that could possibly provide the city with entertainment. Chair Hicks-Lee mentioned the groups following and how they would be able to draw a big crowd at an event. Chair Hicks-Lee also brought up the possibility of doing an Independent Film Night, this event could possibly take place the Susan P Kats Theater. Ms. Sorenson agreed that the Susan P Katz theater would be a better possibility than perhaps City Center. Liaison Shechter brought up the possibility of doing that event at the SWFP Center, they have a movie screen in that location and can seat 350 people. Chair Hicks-Lee mentioned the possibility of doing a comedy event, for example having Oliver Samuel, a Jamaican comedian who could also draw a large crowd during Caribbean events. Ms. Sorenson mentions that sometimes you don't always have to do such a large event, you can do multiple small events such as Film Night and Comedy Night. Liaison Shechter added that smaller events don't require as many resources such as Fire and Police. He went on to say that the SWFP Center used to do an Open Mic Night, which he says didn't turn out great. Member Industrious asked if they were advertising it using the "Senior Center" and that could be a reason not so many people showed up.

Member Hicks-Lee asked what Ms. Sorenson's staff said about different ways the city can get the word out when having different events. Ms. Sorenson mentioned she did bring up with her staff the possibility of advertising on EventBright. Member

Burns says whenever she is having an event, she always publishes it on EventBright since it is free, and even if you pay a couple dollars for an AD, they will push your event out to more people. Ms. Sorenson mentioned the city of Miramar and how they do a good job promoting their events, however she feels they put on too many events, Member Burns agreed. Member Acuna mentioned the city of Miramar had a helicopter come and drop the eggs for the children at the Easter event.

Ms. Sorenson then encouraged Members to make a motion to recommend to the Commission regarding funding and events they would like to see in the future, mentioning at this stage it does not need to be specific. Chair Hicks-Lee asked if once they make the motion, will the Board get any say on the specific events they would like to see. Ms. Sorenson lets her know that she will have the final say, but she does listen to the members and their opinions. Chair Hicks-Lee asked for example, if the Board votes on a 100k budget for diverse and cultural events will the Board have an input into where that money would go towards. Ms. Sorenson suggested that they make this recommendation to the Commission sooner rather than later, as the city's budget approval is approaching. Ms. Sorenson tells members that there is always time to go back and be more specific about things or events that are being recommended. Member Potter asked about how the wording for the recommendation would be. Member Acuna asked if they need to include specific dates for recommended events, to which Ms. Sorenson said no, they will not need to include that. Liaison Shechter mentioned that these recommendations will be presented in May at Board Night, so he suggested that members make this motion tonight. Chair Hicks-Lee stated that she believes a budget for a decent event is about \$50,000 so if the board wanted to do multiple events, they should ask for more than that amount.

On a motion by Member Burns, seconded by Member Potter to approach the Commission for a budget of \$150,000 for future multi-Cultural events/festivals passed unanimously.

Ms. Sorenson mentioned that this should be included in the Board Report to be present to the Commission during Board Night. Member Industrious asked if during Board Night do they need to have a general description of where that money would be going to specifically. Ms. Sorenson said that the Chairperson will have a report that the Commission will also have to review the recommendations presented. Liaison Shechter also mentioned at Board Night he will have all the motions, summaries, and agenda packets with him at Board Night, as well as the Commission. Ms. Sorenson mentioned it would be a good idea to also include the "Spotlight" and Independent Film Night idea in the Board Report, as these are smaller events the Commission could approve. Member Tewari agreed that Chair Hicks-Lee did a great job at the last Board Night and congratulated her for her new position on the Charter Review Board.

Ms. Sorenson went on to briefly discuss the Public Arts Master Plan, she then handed out a survey QR Code flyer and asked members to participate. They will be trying to get feedback on this survey during Pines Day, and via social media. Chair Hicks-Lee asked if they should continue to recommend entertainers, Ms. Sorenson

mentioned yes, to send the information through Liaison Shechter. Member Tewari asked if the Board had any collaborations with the Arts and Culture Board that would be included in the Annual Report, Chair Hicks-Lee stated that they have not had any collaborations to include. Liaison Shechter stated he is trying to work out having Dr. Libidinsky come to a meeting, but due to the school year coming to an end it might not be until school starts back up again.

Member Prospect mentioned that the city of Miramar Commissioners “sponsors” certain events and if that is something the City of Pembroke Pines could do. Ms. Sorenson said that it would be up to the Commissioners discretion if they wanted to “sponsor” certain events. Member Tewari asked if there is a list of businesses that they could reference for possible events. Ms. Sorenson explained that they have access to all the business licenses in Pembroke Pines, however they would only be classified as “restaurant” not specifically what type of food they offer. Member Burns stated that she previously requested information from different businesses in District 4 to be featured in her magazine, but it was difficult to get in touch with them because a lot of businesses weren’t answering their phone. Chair Hicks-Lee stated a lot of businesses have not been answering the phone since Covid. Member Hicks-Lee asked about what happened to the Chili Kick-Off event, Liaison Shechter mentioned that was a county event, and Ms. Sorenson stated she believes there is some kind of rule with the County that there must be a waiting time between events.

Ms. Sorenson closed with letting members know that she is not going to be at every meeting, but if Members want her to come to a meeting to please give her notice and she will try to be there.

REQUESTS FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

There was none.

ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chair Prospect adjourned the meeting at 7:33 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole Lafrance
Board Secretary

Adjourned: 7:33 PM

Approved: