

Community Diversity Committee
Meeting Minutes
March 3, 2009 – 5:00 p.m.

Administrative Conference Room
Municipal Government Center

1. Call to Order

Committee Members Present: Chairman, Terry Wright, Vice-Chairman, Larry Hamilton, Helen Cuff, Bill Vogt, and Leah Freed. Not Present: Fred Enderle, Gordon Wise. Guest(s): Andy Burner, city staff. Mr. Wise had called in order to be excused from the meeting and Mr. Enderle had asked to be excused due to a heavy meeting and appointment schedule.

Chairman Terry Wright called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Leah Freed agreed to take minutes. Her consent to do so was thanked by the Chairman.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on February 3, 2009 were approved with one correction. The Black History Month contest sponsorship was moved for approval by Gordon Wise not Gordon Wise Cuff. The motion to approve these minutes was made by Mr. Vogt, seconded by Mr. Wright and approved by unanimous voice vote of the Committee.

3. Old Business

a. Tabled Policy – City Facility/Street Naming Policy. Mr. Burner reviewed the policy in general bringing all members up to date pointing out the changes from the initial draft and 1st revision dated 11/14/2008. Furthermore, he reminded all that it reflected the policy adopted regarding diversity from the first Diversity Committee. Portions of this draft ordinance were taken from other cities' policies and some of the numbers or thresholds were a median figure of those found in other ordinances. None of those amounts or percentages has been cast in stone. All, as are portions of the policy draft are points to for this Committee to discuss.

Mr. Hamilton suggested that the Right Concept be noted. It was noted that the Right Concept is at the core of the first committee's policy that was adopted. That policy and the subsequent City Resolution No. R-110-07 is reflected in this policy. The word "individual" was inserted in the paragraph which now reads, "The benefit the community, state or nation received from the positive work of the individual, elected official, volunteer or organization."

Discussion about the minimum of service required ensued and the entire paragraph was omitted. The next paragraph prompted discussion about the process and decision made by the Piqua School District's recent announced naming rights arrangement with Premier Health Partners. Mr. Burner pointed out that the School District property and facilities are indeed public as Mr. Hamilton states but the City of Piqua's policies have no affect on public property owned by the Piqua City School District.

The paragraph on page one about the relationship between the facility and that for whom it is to be named after was debated, but nothing was decided. Some spoke out against any relationship at all being a suggested criterion. Mr. Burner pointed out that the words “should be” not “must be” were used specifically to give flexibility. Such flexibility in policy wording is used in a number of places.

The issue of a dual name and naming in memoriam found on page two was discussed at length. Signage naming a street in memory of someone, an organization, etc. and is not a formal name change, i.e. the Brown Street / Erma Bombeck Way is in Dayton, was not objectionable to anyone. A permanent dual naming was agreed to be unnecessary for the very purposes stated in the policy.

The paragraph “Once a facility is named, the name should remain for a minimum period of 30 years (unless the facility ceases to exist).” was requested to be omitted because of the 30 or any number of years being an artificial barrier to recognition or naming. It was pointed out that this criterion is used by cities and is proposed here in Piqua’s to make a naming or renaming a more permanent action recognizing a significant person, organization, etc. for their importance.

The five reasons for “names to be avoided” engendered discussion on the fifth and last point, “Names that are cumbersome or excessive in length”. Most members felt that either reason could be an artificial barrier and felt it should be deleted. The point was made that if a highly hyphenated, long name was suggested it could stand on its merit and either be accepted or rejected by the City Commission.

The subject of the process for naming a facility was discussed at length. The administrative fee was reduced from \$300 to \$50 because that was the recommendation from the Ad Hoc Diversity Committee. Mr. Burner stated that the \$300 was a median amount found in other cities and was meant to reflect the total staff time required to process the request. Cities suggested that a low fee might spur requests some of which might not be as serious as others.

In the application process, the concept of having percentage of residents who must sign a petition was discussed at length. Feelings were again much as they were at the February 3rd meeting. Mr. Burner stated that no matter what percentage was adopted, any change must have “significant” and broad community support under this language as proposed. The concept of having an indication of significant and broad support for naming or renaming a street or other facility in a neighborhood was the context for this provision. Some expressed concern that any percentage would continue past instances where barriers stopped a renaming or a “few individuals” prevailed in a naming situation. It was pointed out that the renaming of the Ft. Piqua Plaza was stopped when a great number spoke out against the change to city commissioners. There was agreement that the language should allow for requiring 51% to sign a petition for a re-naming. No majority, just broad support, should be required for the naming of a new facility.

Some discussion on the exact place the Diversity Committee should have input in the process occurred. Mr. Burner suggested that it might work to place the Diversity Committee input earlier than proposed in the draft version to accomplish its role in a naming or renaming.

Discussion on the rest was tabled until the April 3 meeting. The Committee felt it needed to finish its agenda. Motion to table until the April 7, 2009 meeting by Mr. Vogt, seconded by Mr. Hamilton. Motion carried unanimously.

b. Review applications submitted for the Committee on Community Diversity. Discussion occurred with several members upset that the proposed candidates for membership had not been invited to the meeting. Mr. Burner reiterated Mr. Enderle's comment at the February 3 meeting that no one had instructed him to have them invited. Discussion occurred whether some might still be interested given the time they applied and now. Mr. Burner asked Chairman Wright to get a letter to Mr. Enderle's executive secretary and she will mail them.

Messrs. Hamilton and Wright were upset that police officer Kris Lee was not a candidate for one of the vacancies on the Committee. Mr. Burner stated that Mr. Enderle's statement at the February 3 meeting was still his policy. Employees work for him and should not be a voting member on a committee. He has, as city manager, the right and will exclude city staff members from being committee members. Mr. Vogt expressed the fact that the city manager can make such a policy and has. The Committee was reminded that Mr. Lee and other staff members can serve as volunteers and Mr. Lee was aware of that and is okay with that.

c. McCulloch Square Dedication Ceremony Update. Mr. Burner said that the ceremony is scheduled for Thursday, July 2 at 7:00 pm. The goal is to have the ceremony be less than 40 minutes in length. Mike Gutmann will emcee the dedication ceremony. The Civic Band's regular concert will be at the dedication not at Hance Pavillion. Choral groups from the High School and Joe Taylor's Dayton church choirs are being considered as well. The President has been invited and no word has been received from his office. Mr. McCulloch's daughter will have a significant part. National legacy speakers are being invited. The 100th anniversary of the establishment of the NAACP might well work into the ceremony. Mr. Hamilton suggested several NAACP contacts and additional national speakers. Mr. Burner said that a letter to go to those we're most interested in to speak are ready. Messrs. Burner and Hamilton will need to get together and proceed with that once all addresses are discovered. Mr. Burner said that the suggestion by Mr. Vogt about having a dinner for the VIPs on Wednesday might work best for the out-of-town VIPS as a Thursday luncheon. Mr. Vogt offered his wife's services to read the poem "Praise Song for the Day" read at the January Inaugural at the dedication.

d. Follow-up on the Black History Month. Mr. Hamilton updated the Committee of the first year of this event. Participation was a modest five persons from Piqua. The timing of having one round on Valentines Day was not helpful. He was encouraged by members of the Committee to do a second contest in 2010 and perhaps make it an area event. Mr. Hamilton encouraged all to watch the event on March 16 on Access TV Channel 5.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 7 at 5:00 pm in this same location.

Mr. Vogt moved for adjournment, seconded by Mr. Hamilton. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Andy Burner

Note: Ms. Freed had to leave at the end of the discussion on the Naming Policy. Andy Burner finished taking the minutes.