

Skokie Board of Health
April 12, 2018

Present

Mr. Abbasi
Ms. Black
Dr. Dave
Dr. Drachler
Dr. Gaynes
Ms. Nickisch Duggan
Dr. Prince

Absent

Dr. Shim
Dr. Sood
Ms. Urbanus
Dr. Usman
Dr. Varma
Dr. Werner

Excused

Ms. Jones
Mr. Pandya
Dr. Topouzian
Dr. Vernon
Dr. Williams

Dr. Catherine Counard, Director of Health
Mr. David Clough, Staff
Mr. Willard S. Evans, Jr., Chair, Human Relations Commission

Ms. Maria Wilson, MPH Student

Call to Order - The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. by Dr. Drachler, Chairman.

Approval of Minutes – Minutes from the March meeting were reviewed and approved.

Willard S. Evans, Jr., Chair, Human Relations Commission

Mr. Evans discussed the role of the Human Relations Commission with the Board of Health. The original purpose of the Commission was to act as arbiter in the enforcement of the Fair Housing Ordinance. Fortunately, Skokie rarely has a need to enforce its fair housing ordinance so the Commission engages in other activities as well. One of the other primary responsibilities is to judge the block club parties for block party of the year award.

Mr. Evans stressed the importance of block clubs in making neighborhoods safer. For example, older neighbors who don't work can watch the houses of working age neighbors during the day. Establishing block clubs in multi-unit neighborhoods is important but very difficult due the more transitional population.

The Human Relations Commission also partnered with the YWCA to bring the Stand Against Racism to Skokie. Village Hall, Lincoln Junior High, the Library, and the High Schools all participate and line up on Oakton Street. Everyone reads a statement about confronting racism and demonstrates their support for a diverse community. Mr. Evans and Dr. Counard invited Board of Health Members to come join the event on Friday April, 27th.

The commission also partners with the library for Coming Together in Skokie, a program that celebrates a new culture every year. This year they are celebrating Muslim cultures and they just had a kickoff event at Niles West with a very large turnout. The events are well attended and include speakers, poetry readings, and other educational events about the celebrated culture. The event further serves to celebrate Skokie's diversity in general. In a recent event Lou Lang commented that, "Skokie is probably one of the most diverse communities in America."

The Human Relations Commission was first established to manage the fair housing ordinance which was established in 1968. The fair housing ordinance was made to prevent discrimination by owners or realtors in rental or sale of housing based on race, color, creed, or religion. This was before the state of Illinois had a fair housing ordinance and before most communities did. Mr. Evans reminded everyone of the race riots at that point in time and how progressive it was to have a fair housing ordinance in the late 60's.

While this is the role of the commission, no complaints of discrimination have been officially made in the past two decades. The commission has informally resolved a few issues but the Village does a good job of educating landlords about the ordinance to mitigate the problem before it happens. The official complaint process involves coming to Village Hall to fill out a form making allegations against the landlord. The commission reviews the allegations and first attempts to resolve it informally through a conversation with the landlord and the individual filing the complaint. If that doesn't work a public hearing is held and the commission budget can be used to provide a lawyer. Interventions start with a Cease and Desist order and can escalate as high as fining the landlord. Fortunately, while two forms have been filled out in the last twelve years, nothing has gone to a hearing in any commissioner's memory.

There are twenty commissioners and the diversity of commission members reflects the diversity of Skokie. This is done intentionally to ensure that all parts of the community are well represented in the process.

Ms. Duggan asked how they notify the public of their work and make potential renters aware that the ordinance exists. Mr. Evans stated that they first complain to Village Hall and then are referred to the Human Relations Commission.

Ms. Black asked if they handled housing sales or just rental issues. Mr. Evans stated that Corporation Counsel would first have to determine jurisdiction.

Mr. Abbasi asked if there were any professionals such as lawyers on the commission. Mr. Evans replied that there were several lawyers as well as a good mix of other professions.

Dr. Werner asked if there was anything pertaining to gender identity or the LGBTQ community in the ordinance. Mr. Evans stated that the ordinance hadn't been specifically updated with that language but they would still handle a complaint of that nature if it came up.

Chair's Report

Mr. Irtaza Usman introduced himself. He came to the US in 1982 and worked at Northwestern in the Department of Pathology. He has worked with Northwestern University and then Northwestern Medicine in Pathology throughout his career and now looks forward to serving on the Board of Health.

Dr. Drachler spoke to the Skokie Economic Development Commission on Tobacco 21 and they voted unanimously to support it. The proposal will be presented to the Village Board on April 16th. Dr. Drachler, Dr. Williams, Dr. Counard, and Dr. Tim Sanborn, Head of Cardiology for NorthShore University HealthSystem, will all present on the issue.

The 8th annual Public Health Partners in Excellence awards will also be presented at that Village Board meeting. This year the award recipients are the Niles Township Food Pantry and the Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County (SWANCC).

On April 23rd, Dr. Drachler will speak with the Village Board at the annual budget hearing.

The Board of Health dinner in August will be coming up soon. Dr. Drachler is accepting suggestions for restaurants for the dinner on Tuesday, August 9th.

Director's Monthly Report

Dr. Counard reviewed the monthly report. A copy is attached.

Personal Health and Human Services Divisions Facilitated Discussion

A facilitated discussion was led by Village Manager John Lockerby for the Personal Health and Human Services Divisions. This was conducted in order to assist the integration and collaboration between the two Divisions, and was very well received by staff.

Proposed Tobacco 21 Ordinance Supported by Economic Development Commission

Dr. A. Michael Drachler, Board of Health Chair, and Mr. Bruce Jones presented the proposed Tobacco 21 ordinance to the Economic Development Commission. The ordinance change will increase the age to purchase or sell tobacco products to 21 years. Commission members unanimously supported the proposed ordinance.

Annual Summary of Rat Control Program for 2017

Since 2011 many procedures and policies have been implemented to systematically prevent and eliminate rat infestations in the Village. While these efforts appeared to have had a substantial and sustained impact, with many fewer rat infestations reported during 2014 and 2015, the number of infestations rebounded in 2016 and 2017. This was a nation-wide phenomenon. The reasons for the increase are unclear, although it is likely due to multiple factors. Dr. Counard reported on new efforts to bring data analytics into the rodent control process.

Dr. Dave thanked Sue Reisberg for responding quickly to an issue she brought up regarding vaping in schools. Sue has helped to organize an educational presentation on vaping on April 25th to educate parents from all school districts.

There was a discussion of vaping and the new products being introduced to make it easier to conceal from parents and teachers. Ms. Black asked if vaping would be included in the Tobacco 21 law being proposed. Dr. Counard responded that it would.

Old Business

No old business

New Business

Dr. Werner asked if the synthetic marijuana with rat poison that has led to hospitalizations in other parts of the country had been found in Skokie. Dr. Counard reported that it had not.

Ms. Urbanus brought up an article she read regarding Northbrook attempting to pass an ordinance banning bump stocks and AR-15s. She asked if it was possible to pass something like that in Skokie. Dr. Counard replied that assault weapons were already banned in Skokie.

Dr. Dave reported that Dr. Namratha Kandula would be giving a presentation on understanding your heart health score at the Skokie Public library on Thursday, April 19th and invited all Board of Health members to attend.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 PM.

Next meeting:

Thursday, May 10 at 7:00 PM

Skokie Village Hall

2nd floor Conference Rooms D & E
