

MINUTES OF COMMISSION MEETING
Thursday, October 19, 2017
Elmhurst City Hall-Conference Rm #2
CITY OF ELMHURST AND ELMHURST COLLEGE COMMISSION

1. Call to Order

Chairman Griffin called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m.

Present: Desiree Chen-Menichini, Sarah Diamond, Peter Griffin, Andy Joseph, Thomas D. Marcucci, Richard W. Reichert, Gail Robertson

Absent: Diana Riekse

Also in attendance: City Manager James Grabowski and Lee Daniels

2. Public Comment

None

3. Approval of Minutes

Motion to accept draft minutes from August 10, 2017 meeting was made by Vice-Chairman Diamond. Desiree Chen-Menichini seconded. Voice vote. Motion carried.

4. Old Business

a. Continued Discussion on Role and Purpose of Commission

Chairman Griffin asked the Commissioners to think about how the Commission falls into place with all of the other entities in the City and asked how the Commission is unique. He stated that the Commission needs to find its identity and should develop a mission statement. The Commission should help students become better citizens.

b. Sesquicentennial Celebrations (2019 & 2021)

Chairman Griffin stated there is an opportunity for a multi-year celebration instead of a one year celebration.

Vice-Chairman Diamond stated the celebration may be a good opportunity for the new Director of the Elmhurst History Museum, David Oberg. City Manager Grabowski agreed and provided background of the new Director and the selection process.

Commissioner Marcucci emphasized the community's involvement in local history and stated Elmhurst really cherishes history. This is reflected in our History Museum.

c. Continued Discussion of Communication Tools for Use by Community and College and Ways to Enhance- Explore Elmhurst, Visitor and Tourism

Commissioner Chen-Menichini provided an overview of the Visitor and Tourism group and Explore Elmhurst. The main goal of the V&T group is to form partnerships between a variety of community entities. The group's current endeavor is the "Holly Trolley" and an Elmhurst Visitor's guide. The guide would be a great resource for students and their parents.

Vice-Chairman Diamond stated the Commission should look into getting the College and the City on the cover of West Suburban Living for their respective sesquicentennial celebrations.

5. New Business

a. Public Transportation Opportunities for Community and College

Commissioner Marcucci provided an overview of PACE's history of changing routes to accommodate specific groups. Requests to create diversions on routes are usually subsidized by organizations, the ridership doesn't typically develop and routes go back to the original course. PACE has recently cleaned up the maps to allow for direct routes with less diversions or detours off the main route. He indicated that Elmhurst College does not have the ridership numbers to successfully change a route for students.

Commissioner Joseph stated the Commission should be promoting these connections of PACE and Metra to the students. Commissioner Marcucci stated that he will reach out to PACE to discuss having representatives at a student orientation to educate students of the services such as the routes and the PACE live tracker. This information could be presented during the required "First Year Seminar" every fall.

Chairman Griffin stated there are campus busses that are available for transportation to small groups that need to get off campus such as the jazz band and nursing students. It is sometimes used to bring students to local shopping centers.

b. Parent Information and Access for Parents of College Students and New Members Community

The Commission discussed information for parents such as where to stay and eat.

Discussion ensued regarding welcome wagons, chamber involvement, and potential social media connections for parents.

c. Enhancing and Better Communicating Off Campus Experiences for Students Including Housing/Retail Stores/Restaurants/Entertainment Venues

Vice-Chairman Diamond stated that a lot of things go on at the College and the City that bypass the Commission. She presented the example of student housing. With the rising

number of student enrollment, housing may become an issue in the near future. Vice-Chairman suggested a resource for housing to be created to provide information about housing numbers, costs, quality, landlord information, etc. for both on and off campus housing. Students may not currently be aware of all of their options.

Vice-Chairman Diamond suggested that there may be an opportunity to make a connection between the College and landlords and leasing agents. Commissioner Reichert recommended a potential leasing agent and landlord event that would encourage these individuals to work with students on more consistent basis.

Commissioner Reichert asked City Manager Grabowski if there was any indication of how landlords or residents feel about apartments being occupied by students and if there are issues with non-standard living arrangements. City Manager Grabowski stated that the City typically never hears about nonstandard issues unless it's a problem.

The Commission discussed previous student housing options such as leases at Elm Terrace. Commissioner Joseph provided background on student housing at Elm Terrace and suggested that this may be an option again if the College approached it as a business agreement and committed to specific terms such as minimum number of units utilized by students.

City Manager Grabowski asked if the College has a plan for student housing and asked if students still want to live in dorms. Commissioner Chen-Menichini estimated that the student housing is 97% filled with approximately 900 beds. Chairman Griffin stated there are potential plans with the College to update the dorms. The College wants to attract more students to stay on campus and they will have to provide modern amenities, such as air conditioning, to make it more attractive.

Commissioner Marcucci provided an example of a housing development on the DePaul Campus. Buildings were put in a dense neighborhood and the development allowed for retail store fronts on the first floor with dorms/apartments above.

Commissioner Joseph stated the mission of the Commission should be to find these issues and make recommendations to the correct entity to execute it. Commissioner Chen-Menichini will contact student housing to find out what resources already exist for students and parents.

Student housing discussion ensued.

Commissioner Chen-Menichini gave overview of the Taste of Elmhurst and stated the event needs to attract more restaurant and businesses. This could promote their sales and serve as a way to find student help if they are hiring. The Commission should explore current opportunities with Student Affairs for student opportunities.

Chairman Griffin stated that opportunities for connecting students to entertainment venues should be explored.

6. Other Business

Lee Daniels provided information about the 11th Annual Governmental Forum on April 18th, 2018. Jeb Bush will be the keynote speaker. The forum will continue to be elevated to the next level and is looking to obtain major speakers for the governmental forums going forward.

Lee Daniels recommended that the Commission members look into other town & gown communities for success stories. There are examples of other similar groups that can serve as great models. Some examples include alternating meeting locations to explore other areas of the City for involvement and encouraging a “State of the School” address at the President’s breakfast.

Lee Daniels stated the College has already started discussion for the sesquicentennial celebrations.

City Manager Grabowski stated the City just received the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality program (CMAQ) grant for the Elmhurst Metra station. The \$10 million dollar grant will go towards the estimated \$16 million dollar renovation of the existing station. The City will continue to move forward in searching for additional funding sources. He stated the current station is about 1/3 of the size it should be to accommodate the daily users.

Chairman Griffin stated the College has previously hosted the Wind Ensemble Concerts at the American Legion. This year they will be doing a concert in the chapel on Veteran’s Day. The 1-hour event will have speakers and the band. The goal is to make the younger population more aware of veterans and their service.

Commissioner Reichert provided an overview of the retail component of the Opus Project. He stated there is still potential for a bookstore component in the retail portion of the project. City Manager Grabowski continued with an update on the Opus and FFC project.

7. Proposed Next Meeting – January 18, 2018, 4:00 p.m. – Elmhurst City Hall

Commissioner Reichert moved to adjourn the meeting. Vice-Chairman Diamond seconded. Voice vote. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

Submitted as a draft by City Manager James Grabowski.