



AGENDA

June 15, 2022

The regular meeting of the commUNITY alliance will be held at City Hall on Wednesday, June 15, 2022 @ 6 p.m.

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Approval of Minutes from May 18, 2022
4. Agenda Items:
 - a. Group Bonding Exercise
 - b. Recent Activities Recap / Feedback
 - c. Strategic Plan Updates
 - i. DEI Event Checklist
 - ii. Resolution and Social Media Calendars
 - iii. Disability Awareness Workshops
 - iv. Human Library
6. Old Business
 - a. REMINDER - Juneteenth Event an Pride Picnic
7. New Business
 - a. Next Year's Meetings
8. Adjournment

The City of Sterling Heights will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services to individuals with disabilities at the meeting upon seven days notice to the Community Relations Department at (586) 446-CITY (2489)



STERLING HEIGHTS CommUNITY Alliance
Minutes of Wednesday, May 18, 2022 Meeting
Location: City Hall

Members Present: Stacy Bahri, Cindy Bjornson, Ricardo Harris, Sarah Itoh, Nakia Powell-Thomas and Rich Rubba

Members Absent: Tim Doppel

Representing the City: Melanie Davis

Meeting called to order at 6 :06 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES :

Motion to approve the meeting minutes of the April 20, 2022 CommUNITY Alliance made by R. Rubba; Seconded by: S. Bahri and voted all in favor.

AGENDA ITEMS:

- A. Pride Flag Raising Ceremony** - M. Davis thanked C. Bjornson for coming to the May 17 council meeting to speak in support of the resolution to designate June 2022 as Pride Month in the city of Sterling Heights. Council approved the resolution, and as part of this recognition, M. Davis noted the City will be hosting a Pride Flag Raising Ceremony on June 7 at 6 p.m. with the mayor and city council at the City Hall flagpole. C. Bjornson confirmed she will attend on behalf of the Alliance and make brief remarks. M. Davis noted that representatives from Macomb County Pride may also be in attendance.
- B. Memorial Day Parade** - M. Davis asked Alliance members if they would like to march in the City's 43rd annual Memorial Day Parade on May 30 and provided specifics about the commitment. C. Bjornson said she was participate and look into purchasing candy to hand out. R. Rubba said he would attend and possibly bring his wife. N. Powell-Thomas said she would attend with her two daughters. R. Harris said he would attend.
- C. Strategic Plan Updates**
 - a. Resolution and Social Media Calendars - M. Davis noted that the Pride Month and National Gun Violence Awareness resolutions were approved at the May 17 council meeting, and the Juneteenth resolution is on the June 7 council meeting agenda (she will work

with our African American Coalition to find someone to come and speak in support of it at the meeting). She will work to get the Immigrant Heritage Month and national Men's Health Month on the agenda for the June 21 council meeting. We will plan social media posts on June 21 for National Indigenous Peoples Day and June 28 Pride Day. M. Davis said she believes T. Doppel was working on bullets we could use for each post.

- b. Disability Awareness Workshops - C. Bjornson noted that she will reach out about renting the disability workshop stations. The group's goal is to host a couple stations at the Feb. 24 Cultural Exchange and then do a full blown workshop for the community the following week for March's National Disability Awareness Month. R. Harris recommended we work within well-established events in the future, and the group agreed. M. Davis will ask Parks and Recreation Director if we can have some space at a "summer Thursday" in Dodge Park in summer 2023 to host one of these workshops.
- c. Human Library - C. Bjornson noted that she and M. Davis met with SH Public Library Director Tammy Turgeon and the library's PR / Programming staff Amanda Itria. They loved the idea of hosting a Human Library through the SHPL and agreed to apply to receive approval to utilize the copyright and program with the International Human Library organization. The goal would be to host a table to promote it at the Cultural Exchange and then host a full event on April 13, 2023. Incentives for attending (like a book on diversity) were discussed. More to come.

OLD BUSINESS: R. Harris reminded the group to take another look at the checklist / audit for events he had drafted. Per the group's strategic plan, we had hoped to have this complete by the end of June. M. Davis will re-circulate to the group and add it to the June meeting agenda.

NEW BUSINESS :

- A. M. Davis updated the Alliance on a new Juneteenth event on June 17 from 5-9 pm in the Dodge Park Farmers Market Pavilion that is being hosted by the City's African American Coalition. This is a first of its kind event in Sterling Heights, and the next closest Juneteenth celebration is in Madison Heights, so this will be a welcome addition to resident offerings.
- B. C. Bjornson noted that Macomb Pride is hosting a Pride Picnic on Sunday, June 26 from noon - 4 p.m. in Dodge Park Pavilion #2. It is "bring your own food" and is intended for LGBTQ+ community members and allies.
- C. M. Davis reminded the group that next month will be S. Itoh's last meeting, and a recommendation has been made to City Council for a resident to fill her position. The group thanked S. Itoh for the work she had put in to helping get the Alliance of the ground.
- D. N. Powell-Thomas recommended that we spend a few minutes at the beginning of each meeting doing some exercises to help us get to know

each other better aside from just the work we come together to do. She will put together a few exercises, and the group agreed to begin doing them at the June meeting.

ADJOURNMENT :

The meeting was adjourned at 7:27 p.m. on a motion from N. Powell-Thomas seconded by R. Rubba and voted all in favor.

CommUNITY Alliance Strategic Plan

Approved January 20, 2022

VISION STATEMENT

We will build a culture within Sterling Heights that intentionally honors and celebrates all people.

MISSION STATEMENT

To create an inclusive environment that is intentional about celebrating acceptance of all people through education, exposure, and events to make Sterling Heights a destination for all.

Research

Primary

- 1) In the recent resident survey, 31% of residents strongly agree and 61% agree with the statement “From my perception, I feel Sterling Heights is an inclusive community.” 6% disagree and 1% strongly disagree.
- 2) In the same survey, 28% of residents feel that race relations in the city of Sterling Heights have improved since they have lived here (83% of respondents have lived here for more than 10 years). 58% of residents feel race relations have stayed the same and 14% feel they have become worse.

Anecdotal

- 3) CommUNITY Alliance members agree that there are challenges with the concept of unity within the City, but especially among our young people and in our schools which is a great place to start with education to help foster change.
- 4) Members also agree that many of the events we put together don’t have components that appeal to everyone in our community. Many don’t feel like these events are something they’d be excited to attend, especially due to the lack of diversity at the events.

Problem Statement

Research suggests that race and cultural relations in the City are positive. However, anecdotal feedback suggests some intolerance and misunderstanding still exists due to a lack of education, mutual exposure, and biased viewpoints. This could cause more serious problems for the City in the future, if not addressed.

Goal

The Community Alliance has been formed to address inequities, both real and perceived, that exist in the City. The Alliance will engage residents in events, activities and initiatives that focus on education, inclusion and leadership as a pathway to creating a community culture that intentionally honors and celebrates all people.

Measurable Objectives

Education

Promote unity among our youth by hosting at least two unity building workshops for ages 12-18 with a target of 25 attendees each by June 30, 2023. (Rubba, Bahri)

Promote understanding of others through a bi-weekly social media and e-news campaign featuring 12-months of pre-planned content by June 30, 2023. (Doppel)

Promote unity among all residents by hosting two live panel discussions/town halls encouraging engagement and understanding of unique issues facing different groups within the City by June 30, 2024. (Powell-Thomas)

Host 6 celebrations from the annual calendar (e.g. flag raising ceremonies, city council resolution presentations, piggybacking off other events like MLK Day of Services) by June 30, 2023. (Doppel)

Inclusion

Make Sterling Heights the most accessible community for those with special needs by: 1) conducting an assessment of any barrier-free gaps that might exist on City property by June 30, 2022 and 2) piggybacking on at least two existing events and providing at least 100 members of the community an opportunity to navigate these events by wheelchair, or with noise canceling headphones, etc. to understand what it is like for those who have special needs by June 30, 2023. (Bjornson)

Leadership

Ensure events and amenities (like public art) throughout the City are appealing to all residents by 1) auditing at least four existing events and amenities to assess how inclusive they are by June 30, 2023 and recommending adjustments as necessary and 2) creating a process/checklist that ensures all future events and amenities are inclusive and appealing for all by June 30, 2022. (Harris)

Strategies

Education

Potentially partner with the Macomb Diversity Summit (500 student attendees selected to participate by the schools) to host a 45-60 minute presentation in February 2023.

Work with local schools, churches and the City's Youth Advisory Board to design, host and promote a second unity building workshop.

Work with Community Relations Department to create a calendar of social media posts and content for the bi-weekly City News that is a standing section for each issue. These can include content about annual celebrations (like Pride Month, Black History Month, etc.) as well as a "Did You Know..." section in City News.

In order to attract attendance at the panel discussions, include a personal invitation from the mayor as well as a chance to win raffles and prizes - the more you educate yourself, the more chances you have to win.

Inclusion

Work with Facilities Maintenance to identify any barrier-free gaps that might exist on City property.

Work with Community Relations and Parks & Recreation to identify events that might be best suited for allowing a tent/booth promoting understanding of what it is like to live with disabilities in our community.

Leadership

Work with Community Relations and Parks and Recreation, as well as other appropriate city leadership, to choose the best events to audit first for their inclusion and appeal for all. Work with city leadership to determine what items should be included on the checklist and work with event planners to help them understand the checklist, how it should be used, and why it's important.

Tactics

Education (Powell-Thomas, Rubba, Bahri)

- Contact UCS and WCS to see what their process is for hosting educational workshops with students.
- Contact Youth Advisory Board members to see if they'd like to include a unity workshop as part of their DE&I strategic plan.
- Contact the Clergy Forum members to see if they have youth groups and if they'd like to participate in a joint unity workshop with all groups. (Rubba, Bahri)

- Research potential workshop consultants or facilitators who might be willing to host the workshop for free.
- Take existing calendar of diversity and inclusion celebrations and create a cadence of social media posts and e-news content for 2022. Work with digital content coordinator to create content for each post. Begin with an introduction of all CommUNITY Alliance members to the community (i.e. “meet your commUNITY alliance commissioner Stacy Bahri.”) (Doppel)
- Research and secure great moderators and panelists for panel discussions and work with community relations and panelists to secure dates for the panel discussion events. Schedule room at community center and work with community relations to promote.
- Have community relations draft personal invitation from the mayor.
- Secure raffle prizes as incentives to attend and create process for raffle entry (a cultural “passport” that residents need to fill out in order to be entered to win a prize). (Rubba)
- Put together a list of annual resolutions for special occasions for City Council to adopt (i.e. Pride Month, Black History Month, World Refugee Day, National Immigrant Heritage Month, etc.) (Doppel)

Inclusion (Cindy - knows people who could do the inclusive lived experience excercises)

- Contact facilities maintenance to outline all buildings and city properties that need to be audited for barrier-free access. Work to address any gaps identified and create a plan to remove them with FM.
- Develop a list of events where we can have a booth/tent.
- Locate a medical equipment vendor that would donate the use of a wheelchair, etc. and a company who would donate noise canceling headphones, etc.
- Secure volunteers to help run the tent at each event.
- Promote this unique feature in advance of the event through press release, social media, magazine. (Doppel)
- Take video of residents participating and gather their thoughts in an interview for use on social media.

Leadership (Harris, Doppel)

- Develop an inclusion and appeal checklist for all future events and initiatives.
- Meet with event planners to educate on use of the checklist.
- Make a list of existing events to audit for inclusion and appeal.
- Conduct audit of those events and determine gaps where changes can be made to increase the event’s inclusion and appeal.

DEI EVENT CHECKLIST

When we look at our checklist it has to go far beyond just diversity and inclusion. It must include factors such as age, physical abilities, economic impact (affordability), religion, etc. The goal of every event or city initiative should be to strive to ensure, as best as possible, everything is done to mirror the diversity of the city of Sterling Heights

1. Event/Initiative Name
2. Scope and Goal of Event/Initiative
3. Target Audience and why?
4. Location and Why?
 - a. Is the location wheelchair accessible?
 - b. Do you need a sign Language interpreter?
 - c. Passing out Literature? Is a translated version of the literature being offered?
 - d. Are animals allowed?
5. How are you marketing the event/initiative?
 - a. Is there an accessible event website?
 - b. Is the information presented considering all factors of DEI and have imagery that represents the target audience?
 - c. Is the information available in another language?
 - d. Does the event require name tags? Are they allowed to set up their pronunciation and/or pronouns?
6. Is the event affordable?
 - a. Event Scholarships
 - b. Multiple ticket options
 - c. Hybrid event options? (i.e. Virtual)
7. Food
 - a. Have multiple ethnic cuisines been considered? Who?
 - b. Have you exhausted your list of available Sterling Heights vendors prior to going outside the city?
 - c. Have vegan, vegetarian, nut-free, gluten free, dairy free food been considered?
 - i. NOTE: Please consider the month and time of your event as they could be impacted due to religious calendars (Ramadan, Passover, Lent, etc.)
8. Does your event have entertainment or speakers?
 - a. Does the entertainment/speakers being considered cater to the diversity of Sterling Heights?
 - b. How many minority entertainers or speakers have been selected for this event/initiative? If no minorities have been selected, please provide your justification?
9. Is there a participation survey offered at the end of the event?

City of Sterling Heights CommUNITY Alliance

Resolution Calendar

- ✓ Signifies Resolutions issued by SH City Council in the past

January

Poverty in America Awareness Month

January 4: World Braille Day

Third Monday in January: Martin Luther King Jr. Day

January 27: International Holocaust Remembrance Day

February

- ✓ Black History Month

February 20: World Day of Social Justice

March

National Disability Awareness Month

- ✓ National Women's History Month

Ethnic Equality Month

Gender Equality Month

March 6: Black Balloon Day

March 8: International Women's Day

March 25: International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade

- ✓ March 26: Bangladesh National Flag Day

March 31: International Transgender Day of Visibility

April

Celebrate Diversity Month

Autism Awareness Month

National Volunteer Month

National Arab American Heritage Month

Sikh Awareness Month

April 2: World Autism Awareness Day

April 15: National American Sign Language Day

April 22: Earth Day

- ✓ April 24: Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day

April 28: Workers Memorial Day

May

Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

Jewish American Heritage Month

Mental Health Awareness Month

Older Americans Month

May 17: International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia

May 22: World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development
May 30: Memorial Day

June

- ✓ LGBTQ+ Pride Month
- ✓ Immigrant Heritage Month
- ✓ June 19: Juneteenth
- ✓ National Men's Health Month
- ✓ **June 3ish: National Gun Violence Awareness Day**
- June 20: World Refugee Day**
- June 21: National Indigenous Peoples Day
- June 28: Pride Day

July

July 4: Independence Day
July 26: National Disability Independence Day
July 30: International Day of Friendship

August

Black August – observes the sacrifices that descendants of enslaved Africans in America made for civil rights

August 9: International Day of the World's Indigenous People
August 26: Women's Equality Day

September

Hispanic Heritage Month
First Monday in September: Labor Day
✓ September 15-22: National Welcoming Week

October

Global Diversity Awareness Month
LGBTQ+ History Month
✓ National Disability Employment Awareness Month
✓ Filipino American History Month
October 10: World Mental Health Day
Second Monday in October: Indigenous Peoples' Day

November

National Native American Heritage Month
Fourth Friday in November: Native American Heritage Day
November 11: Veteran's Day

December

December 10: International Human Rights Day

City of Sterling Heights CommUNITY Alliance

Social Post Calendar

1. Meet your CommUNITY Alliance Commissioner: Stacy Bahri
2. Meet your CommUNITY Alliance Commissioner: Ricardo Harris
3. Meet your CommUNITY Alliance Commissioner: Nakia Powell-Thomas
4. Meet your CommUNITY Alliance Commissioner: Sarah Itoh
5. Meet your CommUNITY Alliance Commissioner: Cindy Bjornson
6. Meet your CommUNITY Alliance Commissioner: Richard Rubba
7. Meet your CommUNITY Alliance Commissioner: Tim Doppel
8. Martin Luther King, JR. Day (3rd Mon of Jan)
9. Black History Month
10. World Day of Social Justice (Feb 20)
11. Women's History Month
12. National Disability Awareness Month
13. Autism Awareness Month
14. Arab-American Heritage Month
15. Asian Pacific American Heritage Month
16. World Day for Cultural Diversity (May 22)
17. LGBTQ+ Pride Month
18. Immigrant Heritage Month
19. Juneteenth (June 19)
20. National Disability Independence Day (July 26)
21. Hispanic Heritage Month
22. LGBTQ+ History Month
23. National Disability Employment Awareness Month
24. Indigenous Peoples Day (2nd mon. of Oct)
25. Native American Heritage Month
26. International Human Rights Day (Dec 10)

CommUNITY Alliance

2022-2023 Meeting Schedule

Third Wednesday of every month from 6 - 7:30 pm. Community Center or City Hall Conference Rooms

July 20, 2022

August 17, 2022

September 21, 2022

October 19, 2022

November 16, 2022

December 21, 2022

January 18, 2023

February 15, 2023

March 15, 2023

April 19, 2023

May 17, 2023

June 21, 2023