

Youth Commission
Wednesday, September 4, 2024
Virtual
5:00 pm

Members Present – J. Aponte, M. Tavarez - in person; R. Flores, M. Perez - virtually

Others Present – S. Smith, G. Arias – in person; J. Tinoco, C. Trachte - virtually

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:10 pm by Ms. Tavarez. She stated that a quorum is not present.

All present introduced themselves and Ms. Tavarez welcomed Mr. Tinoco.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

APPROVAL OF MEETING SUMMARY

Ms. Smith stated that Ms. D. Perez did not submit the August notes for approval.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Ms. Smith stated that no new purchases were made.

SOCIAL MEDIA REPORT

Ms. Aponte stated that she has no report.

EVENT PLANNING

- Youth Conference

Ms. Arias stated that the Youth Commission's participation was requested by City Councilor Ventura.

Ms. Smith questioned if anyone followed up with Ms. Ventura. Ms. Tavarez and Ms. Arias stated that they have not contacted her yet.

Ms. Arias stated that she will follow up with Ms. Ventura if the group is interested in participating.

Ms. Tavaréz questioned the role of the Youth Commission in this event. Ms. Arias stated that members would mingle with those in attendance.

Ms. Aponte stated that she is interested but her participation would depend on when the event is held.

Ms. Arias stated that this invitation email was sent in March. She stated that she will follow up with Ms. Ventura.

OLD BUSINESS

- Adopt-a-Block

Ms. Smith stated that she received the agreement from Mr. Bradley and that it is part of this meeting's agenda packet.

Ms. Tavaréz questioned when the cleanups must occur. Ms. Smith stated that weekly cleanups are required.

Ms. Tavaréz questioned if members preferred a weekday or weekend.

Ms. M. Perez stated that it would depend on the time.

Ms. Suero connected to the meeting virtually at this time. (*Note: a quorum is now present.*)

Ms. Smith suggested that rather than choose a specific day and time, prepare a schedule of who is cleaning a particular week and allow that person to perform the cleanup at their convenience. All agreed with this suggestion.

Ms. Arias stated that she will cleanup the first week.

Ms. Tavaréz suggested setting up a schedule and repeating it.

Ms. Arias noted the need for all to report the amount of trash removed in the group chat so that it can be reported to Mr. Bradley. She stated that members may also work together if they'd like.

Mr. Tinoco stated that he would be glad to share the schedule with other School Board members and invite them to participate.

Ms. Smith explained that the group will be adopting the grassy triangle on N 13th St across from the Geigle Complex at RHS. (*Note: this property is privately owned by Douglass Miller.*)

The application was completed by Ms. Tavarez. Ms. Smith stated that she will submit the application to Mr. Bradley.

NEW BUSINESS

- Walk Bike Berks

Mr. Trachte provided a brief background on this organization. He stated that it is currently reorganizing and is looking for input and volunteers. He stated that he hopes to hold community meetings and encourage residents to attend the Reading Area Transportation Authority (RATS) meetings. He noted his hope that the organization will partner with health and environmental organizations.

Ms. Tavarez thanked Mr. Trachte for this information and questioned how this Commission can assist.

Mr. Trachte noted the need for volunteers to collect data regarding transportation issues focusing on bicycles and pedestrians. He stated that he requested busing information at the last School Board meeting and was told that this information cannot be released. He stated that submission of a Right to Know request will provide the number of riders only. He noted the need for increased safety at intersections and to document missing or damaged sidewalk areas.

Mr. Butler connected to the meeting virtually at this time.

Mr. Trachte stated that Reading has utilized a Safe Routes to School grant in the past. He noted his hope for increased youth engagement in City business. He noted the need to allay fears of City leaders and to ensure that their voices are heard.

Ms. Arias questioned the manner of collecting the data. Mr. Trachte stated that he has walk and bike audits which can be completed as a survey. He stated that he can also provide guidelines and instructions to complete the survey and how to provide the data collected. He noted that the surveys should be used to determine how and where safety improvements are needed. He stated that an increased number of trees can lead to a reduction in crime, for example.

Ms. Arias questioned if the surveys are completed by observing surroundings. Mr. Trachte stated that this is correct and that notes can be added as well.

Ms. Tavaréz suggested recruiting RHS students to complete the surveys as many students walk to and from school.

Mr. Trachte stated that he will provide the guidelines and survey information to Ms. Smith to share with the group. He stated that he is also a member of the City Planning Commission and that some audits have been completed. He noted his hope that the data collected will influence the Planning Commission and Zoning Hearing Board to make adjustments when they are reviewing plans. He is also requesting input from this Commission about locations in the community to hold resident meetings in each neighborhood.

Ms. Arias stated that the guidelines and survey will be shared with the group.

Mr. Tinoco suggested speaking with school crossing guards. Mr. Trachte stated that he is unsure how to contact them. He stated that he encountered resistance when he requested information at the School Board meeting. He stated that he is autistic and sometimes struggles with expressing himself clearly.

Mr. Tinoco stated that the City hires the crossing guards. Ms. Smith stated that the crossing guards had been hired directly by the City in the past but that there is now a third party contractor. She stated that she will try to find contact information.

Mr. Tinoco suggested speaking with the guard that works at S 5th & Spruce Sts. He stated that she will be very helpful. He suggested that Mr. Trachte visit her while she is working to introduce himself and the project and ask for her suggestions

The group determined that it would participate.

- Nemesis Run

Ms. Arias stated that the next run is scheduled for Saturday evening October 12 at 6 pm at 5th & Penn Sts. She described the sponsorship package options. She stated that this is a glow run and will have a block party atmosphere.

Ms. Tavaréz suggested that the Youth Commission be a bronze sponsor. She stated that this will provide a tent, table, and the logo on the tee shirt. Mr. Flores agreed.

Ms. Arias suggested that the Commission also do face painting again since they already have all the supplies. All agreed.

Ms. Suero questioned if there is a group chat. She stated that she has not been included. Ms. Tavaréz stated that she just sent a message today that includes Ms. Suero.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Youth Commission will be held on Wednesday, October 2 at 5 pm hybridly via Zoom and in the Penn Room of City Hall.

Mr. Tinoco stated that he may not be able to attend the next meeting but that one of the other School Board members will attend.

Ms. Arias thanked Mr. Trachte for bringing this project to the Commission.

The meeting adjourned at 5:52 pm.

Respectfully submitted by
Shelly Smith, CMC
Deputy City Clerk