City *of* **Upper Arlington**®

MINUTES
COMMUNITY RELATIONS
ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

3600 Tremont Road | Upper Arlington, OH 43221
614-583-5030 | **upperarlingtonoh.gov**

October 18, 2019 | Noon

The meeting of the Community Relations Assessment Committee was called to order at Noon in the Council Committee Room located at 3600 Tremont Road by Co-Chair Sue Ralph.

Members Present

Sue Ralph, City Council	Jim Lynch, City Council	Michele Hoyle, City Council
Michelle Montgomery, Equal UA	Nic Fortkamp, Equal UA	Marianne Mitchell, Equal UA
Jenn Faure, UA Library	Tricia Fellinger, UA Schools	Steve Schoeny, City Manager
Steve Farmer, Police Chief	Emma Speight, Comm. Affairs Director	

Members Absent

MINUTES

1. **Welcome**

2. **Approval of October 2, 2019 Meeting Minutes**
   Motioned: Jim Lynch   *Seconded:* Jenn Faure
   Motion unanimously passed

3. **Complete the review/discussion of existing community relations initiatives, groups and strategic plans**
   UA Schools – Tricia Fellinger
   - A group of Schools representatives received Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) training from the Ohio Education Association. In turn, those representatives have been providing training to their colleagues.
   - At the UA High School:
     o Representatives from OSU's Kirwan Institute have provided training on implicit basis and microaggressions with students and staff.
     o The Ambassadors of Change group was formed as a result of this training. Beginning with 30 students, it has expanded to 60. The group meets at lunch.
     o The High School has been implementing the "Start With Hello" program offered through the Sandy Hook Promise Foundation to help address social isolation in children. The program teaches students to be more socially inclusive and connected to each other.

Start With Hello program summary Per Sandy Hook website:

With activities and curricula available for all ages, the free *Start With Hello* training program empowers students to end social isolation by teaching them three easy steps:
- ***See Someone Alone***: how to recognize the signs of loneliness and social isolation
- ***Reach Out and Help***: what students can do to help others feel included
- ***Start With Hello***: how to break the ice and strike up a conversation

Start With Hello includes activities and lesson plans that can be used to teach students the skills they need to create a culture of inclusion in their school and community.

It is hoped that this program will expand to more UA Schools in the future, and that safety forces can be involved also.

o A collaborative project with the UA Library is in the planning stages, focused on how to make different religions more visible.
o In partnership with Equal UA, the Schools hosted a Conflict Kitchen discussion, introducing students to the experiences of a refugee from Syria. Another lunch is planned for April 2020, with hopes to also invite community members.

4. Brainstorming Session
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Sue

WELCOME/QUICK OVERVIEW   **5 minutes**

Brainstorming Rules of Engagement:
- Participate with an open mind   - Be present
- Listen to understand   - Think before speaking
- One person speaks at a time   - Don't interrupt

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Emma

WARM UP EXERCISES   **20 minutes**

Supplies: *Large index cards, pens*
- Think of a time that you were new to a community, school or job (1 card)
  o What made you feel welcome?
  o What was lacking?
  o What would you want in the future?
- Why do you choose to live/work in UA? (1 card)
- If you were to introduce someone to UA, what would you tell them and/or show them? (1 card)

Each participant shares from their notes | We write themes up on large notepads

Think of a time that you were new to a school/job/community – what made you feel welcome?
- Invitations to do things
- People stopping by to welcome, taking two minutes out of their way
- Mentoring
- Personal interaction, people going out of their way to say hi or to help
- Being seen as a whole person, not just a new person
- Share excitement/passion that you're there
- People asking what you need/offering help

- OSU – formalized welcome program for new staff and families – show them around, follow up to see you how you are doing
- Having a specific person assigned to you as a mentor/helper
- Social invitation to join neighbors
- Recognition that you're new

What was lacking?
- Lack of orientation
- Lack of help/assumption that you know everything you need to know, or that your prior knowledge makes you an expert in your new job or community, but in actuality you don't know.
- Lack of awareness of how an outsider can feel – especially when people in a community live there for long periods of time. Particularly when new to a country (culture shock)
- If you are in a place that you don't fit the norm, status or a group of certain status level can be a barrier (clannishness, not welcoming)
- Not open to new perspectives (culture, gender, etc.)
- When being new and entering a current structure that's been place, it can be very daunting as the new people

What would you want in the future?
- Opportunities for involvement
- Social opportunities (less structured) trying to find your social group/friend group.
- A lot of times it starts in the school but what do people do if you don't have kids in the schools?
- Support and encouragement – to join classes, to join organizations, encouraged to get out and do social activities

Why do you choose to live or work in UA?
- People
- Safety
- Schools
- Proximity
- People that spoke highly of the community and workforce
- It's been our home before and wanted to make it as my new home
- Columbus and other communities – comprised of lots of neighborhoods, lack of connection. UA is one cohesive community – could be one high school, it could be no delineations (but there are some neighborhood prioritizations; example-people from south of lane)
- There are compartmentalized traditions to groups, there is a different culture between Jones and Hastings middle schools
- Certain neighborhood area is referred to in a derogatory way.

If you were to introduce someone to UA – what would you show them or tell them?
- Great schools, great people
- Central location
- UA offers a lot of amenities (parks, libraries, pools, etc.)
- Encourage people to get involved/join something
- Students in the schools – great representation of what the community is

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- Outsiders are in awe of the beautiful homes/architecture
- So many styles of homes and variety-not a cookie cutter neighborhood.

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Jenn
COMMUNITY RELATIONS DEFINED   **30 minutes**
Supplies: *Sticky notes*
- What words come to mind when you think of community relations? (1 per sticky note)
- Pick your top five from this list

Each participant shares their top 5, and posts on wall/notepad
We group them/discuss common themes
The group revisits the proposed definition from October 2, and reviews other examples (separate sheet provided)
Group discussion with the goal of drafting final UA definition
Emma to draft final to share back with group at next meeting

What five words do you think of when you hear/think of community relations?

Inclusion	Belonging	Welcome
Respectful	Neighbors	Connections
Kindness	Events	Active
Community	Safe	Communication
Openness	Acceptance	Kindness
Accepted	Noticed	Sharing
Reflecting	Outreach	Listener
Open-minded	Education	

Proposed/draft definition from October 2 Meeting:
Community relations is how we define ourselves, present that to the world, then evolve.

Trying to define what community relations means to our (UA) community.

Thoughts from this:
- Interaction needs to be involved; community relations is interacting with other people.
- The above definition is broad which is a positive.
- Taking an active interest and role in the wellbeing of the community - should be added to the above proposed definition.
- Connections between the people and the community, then the community to the city.
- Add words: taking an active interest, and fostering the wellbeing community?
- Connections create wellbeing. Inclusion creates wellbeing.
- Wellbeing is the outcome but connections ties more into the output.
- Some of the words above are more actions
- Also- the more words you add to the less likely people will remember the definition
- Suggestion that the above statement isn't a definition.
- Community relations is very ambiguous. It means so many things to different people.
- The "we" should be left open ended. It's important for people in the community to define themselves. The we can apply to anyone that interactions in the community "
- "live out the we" "be the we" "we are the we" "be the we we want to be"

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Amended definition:
Community relations is how we define ourselves, present that back to the world and evolve, by taking an active interest and role in fostering the wellbeing of all in Upper Arlington.

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Michelle
MISSION, VISION AND ACTION STATEMENTS   **45 minutes**
Supplies: Document of sample mission statements, highlighter pens, large notepad
- Review the examples provided (list of various mission statements, etc.)
- Mark the examples that you like
- Highlight the phrases/intent within them that you like
Group discussion:
- Which ones emerged as most popular? Why?
- What words/phrases resonate for UA's purpose?
- What should we include in our Mission Statement?
- What should we include in our Vision Statement?
- Do we want an Action Statement? If yes, what should be in it?
(Emma to draft proposed statements to share back with group at next meeting)

Overall thoughts:
- You can get lost in some of the mission statements with a lot of words.
- Chevy Chase is favored with group
- And Village of Northbrook
- *Phrase from Farmington:* welcomes all people with integrity, fairness and respect.
- Likes "coalition of individuals and groups, promoting the values of respect"
- "Deep sense of community and neighborliness"

What are some key initiatives that we want to ground into our mission? Core activities:
- Creating connections – helping people plug in
- Education and awareness
- Bridges of understanding
- Events and programs
- Supporting community programs

We should consider Equal UA's mission statement and see how this new mission statement can meld/compliment.

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Emma
IDENTIFY AREAS OF FOCUS AND GOALS   **30 minutes**
Supplies: Large notepads/sheets – 1 per focus area that is defined
Group discussion:
- To define the key areas of focus (buckets)
- To identify initial set of goals for each focus area
(Propose it would be the purpose of whatever group is formed to revisit these areas of focus and goals, and to develop strategies and objectives, with timelines for actual implementation.)

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Buckets and Examples of Supporting Action Steps:

Welcome | Connect | Belong
- Welcome wagon/portal (app)
- Buddy/mentor program – ambassadors, neighborhood captains
- Businesses – new resident discount, socials
- Community block party – block party kit (tent, cooler, coupons, permit, barricades)
- Parade – new resident seating, incentives to invite new neighbors, Realtors to sponsor wake up call for new neighbors
- School/City/Realtors – list of new residents, proactively contact/reach out
- Community Initiative – "you belong" – we are all UA
- Hi Neighbor – it starts with "hello"

Educate | Inform | Awareness
(Present back to the world falls in this bucket)
- Speaker series/training (implicit bias)
- Promote UA outside of the bubble
- Digital and analog branding
- Is there some kind of certification (HRC)?
- Digital activity matching
- Sponsorship of regional events

Gather | Exchange/Share | Celebrate
- ***Objective***–plan & implement activities, events that support the goals of the entity
  o Culture fair, UA idea day, speaker series
- ***Objective***–provide opportunities for community members to share experiences and ideas.
  o Conflict kitchen, community coffees, panel discussions, collaborate with existing groups
- ***Objective***–build on existing events to create invitations/connections
- ***Objective***–share stories about UA residents and groups (celebrate)

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Jenn

ENTITY STRUCTURE   **30 minutes**

Supplies: Sheet detailing options and parameters associated with each
Revisit different models of operation
  o *Advisory Board or Commission*
  o *Coalition Group*
  o *Task Force*
  o *Other?*
Group discussion on the pros and cons of each, based on what we have accomplished
Can we reach consensus on the best approach to recommend to Council?

Structure of the future group types:
Coalition
Strengths:
- All sectors under one umbrella
- Not silo'd approach

Weaknesses:
- Herding cats
- Lapse in engagement once launched
- To make a cultural shift, it takes years to actually see results sometime
- Funding – private donors to start but City could end up paying the bill

501(c)3
Strengths:
- Perception as "grassroots"
- More attractive to funders
- People might be more open to get involved or give money because it's not run by government

Weaknesses:
- Dependability on funding
- Burden of fundraising
- Relies heavily on volunteers
- Board makeup critical to success (members should have skin in the game)
- Leadership is critical (quality of director)
- Lack of institutional identity & ownership/stability/commitment
- Could take away funding from Equal UA or other similar entities

Other Comments:
- Commitments from various viable entities that would agree to pay a certain amount every year.
- Commission on aging is example – didn't raise more money for commission to expand
- How do you get the people to join the 501c3
- Need to make sure how the board is made up (this is critical to the function) and to have enough members of the board that can put skin (money) in the game. If this can happen, people will buy in if they have a seat at a table. This gives advantage to fundraising standpoint.
- By having a board though- this gets away from the original mission of the group, because the community doesn't get the input that they might have if they go a different direction. It is important who is leading that group, and help picks the board.
- A council member should be assigned and City staff resources.
- Question - is the city presenting this back to the world or community?

Advisory board/commission/committee
Strengths:
- It presents back to the world "this is who we are"

Weaknesses:
- Subject to changes in makeup and priorities of City Council

Other Comments:
- What does a commission actually look like (in general)?
- This could be a board that has representatives from different groups, but be similar to tree commission, "boots on the ground" helping to get things accomplished
- What does this group say back to the world, if we go 5013c like Equal UA, the impact could get lost
- Where is the sense of community in UA, how we interact with people?

- The group is telling the story of Upper Arlington. The City has the forum and resources to tell the story.
- The biggest weakness – this body would be subject to changes in makeup of City Council. This is a risk that you have to acknowledge. There probably won't be a pendulum swing but if there is, that serves as a barometer of where the City stands on the current culture in UA
- Afraid that the minute it becomes a government program (another one) it loses appeal

Is there a hybrid model? Could we institutionalize a coalition through an advisory board?

CLOSE/BACK TO AGENDA

The next time we meet:
- Review the proposed mission, vision and definition.
- The goal will be to ratify them after making any final revisions.
- Come with a proposed structure for an advisory board. Who do you think should be on it (keep to @ 12)?
- Need to come up with ways to get the underrepresented represented. Should subcommittees be created? Yes, it could grow the group.

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5. **Finalize Meeting Schedule**

The following meeting dates were confirmed:
- Noon, Tuesday, November 12, 2019 – Lower Level Meeting Room
- Noon, Tuesday, November 26, 2019 – Lower Level Meeting Room

ADJOURNMENT

Motioned: Jenn Faure   *Seconded: Steve Schoeny*

Motion Passed   *Meeting was adjourned at 2:55 pm*

ATTEST: _____   CHAIR: _____