



Faith-Based Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes of April 1, 2025

Present were committee members Dan Mahon, Rafael Vargas, Terry Cummings, and James Lafolette (arrived at 4:18pm); City Recorder Lilly Alarcon-Strong and Council Representative Allen Hayward. Council Representative Jackie Linton was not in attendance. Terry opened the meeting in prayer at 4:07pm.

Public Comment

Stepping Stones Alliance (SSA) Updates: SSA Executive Director Jessalyn Cole presented updates to include: SSA is soliciting sponsors for the October 11 Gala; conestoga huts are at full capacity with 23 people in the units; the Sleep Center is averaging 8-15 guests per night with meal service for approximately 35 individuals a night; volunteers are desperately needed for meals and food service, specifically dinner; SSA recently received 3 grants for various items to include landscaping, gardens, bathroom fans, additional security measures, outdoor kitchen and other projects; Hermiston High School construction classes will be helping build planter boxes and other construction items. SSA will be having a strategic planning session regarding the 2nd acre of land they possess, as well as possible family units if space allows as SSA is currently at capacity with residents and guests.

Dan recommended SSA reach out to the High School Agriculture Class for a greenhouse partnership.

School Adoption Update

Dan stated he and James reviewed the list of participants and made follow-up calls to all; they are still waiting to hear back from some callers. They also encouraged participants to be consistently active in the school(s) they've adopted and were also given updates on what congregations are doing to serve their schools like Our Lady of Angels which provides translation services for Spanish speaking families at conferences. The list will continue to be edited as updates happen.

(James arrived 4:18pm)

Faith Community Survey Update

Dan stated the Survey is still in works and gave the Committee a spreadsheet (attached) created to show different networks that currently exist to help pastors and community leaders and stated the list can continue to be added to.

I Love My City and Faith & First Responders Saturday Lunch

Terry and Dan gave information regarding the May 17th & 18th I LOVE MY CITY event. Groups will be able to sign-up for specific projects online but any individual can sign up online or just show up. Eastern Oregon First-Responders Chaplains Association will host a Faith and First Responders prayer/blessing at the luncheon on Saturday May 17th at noon at McKenzie Park. Police and Fire vehicles will be on display for children and the community to view and tour. This event will be different from prior years and will continue to evolve. 10:00am on Sunday May 18th at EOTEC will be the Church Service Day lead by Zeal Pastor Austin.



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National Night Out Planning

The Committee that based on last year's discussions, their purpose is to push out this information and encourage the community, through their congregations, to host block parties and get to know their neighbors better. National Night Out is the 1st Tuesday in August each year, this year it will be Tuesday, August 5th. The City also does a scavenger hunt with the medallion winner receiving an Ice Cream Party for their neighborhood block party. Rafael stated he will push out this information at the next Pastor Breakfast.

Nomination or Postponement of Vice Chair

After some discussion, Dan moved and Terry seconded to nominate James as the Vice Chair. Motion carried unanimously.

Unscheduled Communication

Dan announced May 1st is the National Day of Prayer at 6pm at the Seventh-Day Adventist Church.

Dan reminded the Committee that the Vacancy Review Board is recommending Joe Sharon, the area President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, be appointed to fill the vacancy left by Chris. Dan has met with him twice and was also able to tour the Bishops Store House. It is obvious that Joe Sharon has a heart to serve the community and help when and where needed.

The Committee and Jesalyn spoke regarding the large donations, both in financial resources and volunteerism members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints have contributed to the Agape House and Stepping Stones Alliance.

Dan encouraged the Committee to attend the Public Meeting Training on May 14th at 4pm at Umatilla City Hall. All should have received an email from Lilly about this.

Minutes

James moved and Terry seconded to approve the minutes of the February meeting with amendments. Motion carried unanimously.

Rafael moved and James seconded to approve the minutes of the March meeting with amendments. Motion carried unanimously.

Next Meeting

Tuesday, June 3rd at 4:00pm in the Large Conference Room of the 2nd floor at City Hall. The Committee agreed not to meet in May due to the many community outreach projects and events they are helping with.

Adjournment

There was no other business, and Rafael adjourned the meeting in prayer at 4:46pm.

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