



Faith-Based Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes of March 4, 2025

Present were committee members Dan Mahon, Rafael Vargas, and James Lafolette; Planning Assistant Heather LaBeau and Council Representative Allen Hayward. Councilor Kelso was in attendance. Terry Cummings and Council Representative Jackie Linton were not in attendance. Rafael opened the meeting in prayer at 4:00pm.

Introduction of Newest Committee Member

Rafael Vargas introduced himself and spoke briefly of his community involvement. He has been in Hermiston since 1999 and is currently the Hispanic Pastor at New Hope and a Board Member of Made to Thrive.

Public Comment-Stepping Stones Alliance Updates

Stepping Stones Alliance Navigation Center Director Carolina Delgado presented shelter updates. A new board member has been added, however there are still two open positions for the board. Two new classes, Budgeting and Resume Building, have been added for members. The classes will meet once a week. The center is soliciting sponsors for the October 11 gala. Currently the Conestoga huts are at full capacity with eight individuals on a waiting list. The Sleep Center is averaging 24-26 guests a night, with meal service for approximately 35 individuals a night. Volunteers are always needed for meals and food service. Volunteers must be over 18 years of age to serve. They are awaiting the necessary permits to install the stove in the navigation center and build additional huts.

Minutes

Approval of the February minutes was tabled for review at the next meeting.

Dan announced that Chris Hankel has resigned from the Faith Based Advisory Committee, citing a full calendar and increased responsibilities. Members were encouraged to reach out to those who may be interested in serving on the committee. Applications are available on the City's website and at City Hall. Committee vacancies are posted in various locations and on each council consent agenda.

FBAC & Faith Community Impact on the City Survey Update

Dan asked for feedback on the draft questions for the faith community and city leaders included in the meeting packet. James responded that the questions were good and he had nothing more to add to the list.

School Adoption Update

No additional action steps were taken since the last meeting. James offered to review the list of participants and make some of the follow-up calls.

Faith Leader Meeting Update

Dan reported on a meeting with Father Maxwell that went well. Father Maxwell, a part of the original FBAC group, was not aware the committee was still active.



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Dan was also able to meet with City Manager Byron Smith who shared that the city would begin reviewing committees and their purposes. The Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) program has not revitalized since Covid. The CAB is a program for first time youth misdemeanor offenders that assigned a mentor from the faith community to the family. The Juvenile Board has taken on the cases. There is interest to reengage conversing with the faith community on the subject.

Dan has a meeting scheduled with a regional leader of the LDS Church this evening.

Councilor Hayward suggested that the Faith Leader Meeting be available through Zoom as some may wish to participate who are unable to attend in person. He further suggested that the regular FBAC meetings and other various committee meetings also provide a Zoom option.

Daniel would like to create a diagram of resources (services and places) available for the faith community to engage and serve. This may help some churches develop additional programs to meet the needs of the community and allow those wishing to serve find places to become involved.

Unscheduled Communication

May 1st is the National Day of Prayer. Amy Palmer is coordinating the meetings as planning begins for the day's events. An evening prayer gathering is proposed.

May 17th & 18th is the I LOVE MY CITY event. Groups will be able to sign-up for specific projects online beginning in late March. Teresa Best at New Hope is the contact. Dan was encouraged by additional churches being interested in participating on Saturday.

Next Meeting

Tuesday, April 1st at 4:00pm in the Large Conference Room of the 2nd floor at City Hall.

Adjournment

There was no other business, and James adjourned the meeting in prayer at 4:40pm.