MINUTES

Rosenwald Community Advisory Board

Tuesday, November 28, 2023 - 6:00 PM
Mary C. Jenkins Community & Cultural Center

Members Present:	Maurice Jones, Co-Chair, Council Member Randy Lytle, Co-Chair Victor Foster, Citizen Member Susan Threlkel, Citizen Member Edith Darity, Citizen Member Ella Jones, Citizen Member Rebecca Wynn, Citizen Member Mayor Maureen Copelof, Ex-Officio
Staff Present:	Wilson Hooper, City Manager Tyree Griffin, Community Center Director Alex Shepherd, Assistant to the City Manager
Guest:	Pamela Holder

A. Welcome & Call to Order

Co-Chair Maurice Jones welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

B. Invocation

Mr. Foster offered an invocation.

C. Certification of Quorum

Quorum was certified by Assistant to the City Manager Alex Shepherd.

D. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Ms. Threlkel, seconded by Mr. Foster to approve the agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

E. Approval of Minutes

Motion by Ms. Wynn, seconded by Mr. Lytle to approve the minutes of the October 26, 2023 meeting as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

F. MCJCCC Security Measures Update

Mr. Hooper informed the committee that staff is working with Comporium to gather quotes for security cameras for French Broad Place and the Train Depot. We are consulting with our insurance carrier with the League of Municipalities to find grant dollars to fund those security measures. We are hoping to offset some of the costs with this grant. We hope to bring back more information at the next meeting.

G. Juneteenth Celebration Debrief

Mr. Griffin said that he wanted the celebration to bring cohesiveness and unity within the community. He said that he is working to mirror last year's event in terms of coordinating with the police department to close streets, paramedics on standby, and organizing other logistics such as mobile restrooms and vendors.

Ms. Threlkel discussed the outline she had created for the Juneteenth Festival that included its purpose, goals, and organizational matters.

Mr. Lytle informed the committee since Juneteenth falls on a Wednesday this year, we are going to host events on the Saturday prior to Juneteenth, which is June 15, 2024. We are looking to hold the festival near the playground with vendors, food, arts and crafts, live music, and other activities. Then on Sunday, we are hoping the five local churches will have a combined service and program. Mr. Lytle said that we believe that Bethel A will host and coordinate the service. On the actual day of Juneteenth, we will have an educational program at Mary C. Jenkins Community Center with a speaker to tell the story and historical significance of Juneteenth.

Mr. Jones asked if the Juneteenth planning committee is taking consideration from outside entities that want to have a part of the Juneteenth Celebration. For example, Ursala's basketball tournament and would that be incorporated because she usually has this on a Saturday.

Mr. Foster mentioned the outline that was passed out is a rough draft and it is not a finalized copy. We are going to work together to include all ideas.

Mayor Copelof asked if Saturday is going to be the big event with food, fun activities, and history. Then, Sunday is going to be the service with the five churches. She then asked, but we don't have any intention of trying to incorporate the basketball tournament.

Mr. Foster said we could incorporate that after the church service on Sunday. However, the outline is a rough draft because the committee has not gotten together to start organizing everything.

Mayor Copelof mentioned that she would suggest bringing Ursala together to discuss and possibly assign her to help on the steering committee since she has been part of this for the last three years. It would be beneficial to get her ideas.

Mr. Foster informed the committee that we can include her in January when we meet, but the steering committee has not met yet. Our goal is to be inclusive.

Mr. Lytle said that while we are trying to be inclusive, if you look at Juneteenth Celebrations across the United States, there is not a basketball tournament held on Juneteenth. We would prefer that the event are educational and we do not want basketball to be the focus; we want them to learn about Juneteenth.

Mayor Copelof mentioned that when we started the City-sponsored basketball tournament we combined it with the block party that we have done every year for the last decade. The City funds the food, ice cream truck, and tents. It is an event to say thank you, and it's something that the City does for the entire City. I am just concerned because the funding from the City is supposed to go to the block party. The funding was never designated for Juneteenth.

Mr. Lytle said he does not think so. I think that if the City wants to have a block party, then have a block party but not on Juneteenth.

Ms. Threlkel said she hoped that the City would still fund the event because we would not have a way to sponsor the whole event.

Mr. Foster mentioned that when we first started working on Juneteenth there was a block party that had nothing to do with Juneteenth until the former City Manager said he wanted to try and provide funding. They were separate events but then we started to combine them.

Mr. Lytle said in all honesty he thought that the City provided funding for Juneteenth and not the basketball tournament.

Mayor Copelof said no, the funds have always been assigned to the community block party and Mr. Jones agreed. The basketball tournament was a part of the block party.

Ms. Threlkel mentioned that she thought Juneteenth became a substitute for the block party.

Mayor Copelof said no, we have had a block party for years. Then we combined the events and advertised it as such.

Ms. Darity said yes, we did combine the events however the steering committee would like the event to be educational and to explain the historical significance.

Ms. Jones suggested that the steering committee and Ursala should collaborate to define the nature of the event. Once clarified, Council can then vote on the allocation of funds, whether for a block party or a combined Juneteenth and block party event. Ultimately, Council will need to make the final determination.

Ms. Holder raised the question of whether the absence of the basketball tournament would affect young people's participation in the educational aspect of Juneteenth. She expressed concern that without the tournament, youth might not be inclined to attend the educational portion.

Mr. Foster explained that efforts are being made to present Juneteenth with elements like black art, history, and diverse vendors to attract and engage the youth. He acknowledged the challenge and emphasized the need to shift the focus away from basketball.

Mayor Copelof suggested inviting Ursala to the steering committee, and Mr. Foster agreed to extend the invitation.

Ms. Jones highlighted the struggle in conveying the importance of black history to the youth and emphasized the need for basketball to be a part, though not the sole focus, of Juneteenth.

Mr. Hooper stressed the importance of incorporating both celebratory sports and engaging educational components. He mentioned the potential to leverage social media to share stories from significant figures knowledgeable about the history of Juneteenth, making the educational aspect more appealing to the younger population.

H. Set Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday, January 11, 2024 at 6:00 PM at the Mary C. Jenkins Community & Cultural Center.

I. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:59 PM.

X _____
Pamela Holder
Co-Chair

Minutes Approved: January 11, 2024

X _____
Alex Shepherd,
Assistant to the City Manager