



**MEETING MINUTES  
CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT COMMISSION (CIC)  
Wednesday, January 5, 2022, 7:00p.m.  
Remote Participation**

**1. Call to Order**

Chair Kolar called the meeting to order at 7:05 P.M.

**2. Roll Call**

**Present:** Commissioners Kill, Eid, and Chair Kolar

**Absent:** Commissioners O'Brien and Lott

**Also present:** Village Clerk Christina M. Waters

Village Clerk Waters read into the record a statement that the Village President has determined that an in-person public hearing is not practical or prudent due to the COVID-19 outbreak during Governor Pritzker's current disaster proclamation. It is also not feasible to have a person present at the public hearing due to the safety concern related to the COVID-19 outbreak.

**3. Approval of Agenda**

It was moved by Commissioner Kill and seconded by Commissioner Eid to approve the agenda as presented. A roll call was taken and the motion was approved. The roll call was as follows:

**Ayes:** Commissioners Kill, Eid and Chair Kolar

**Nayes:** None

**Absent:** Commissioners O'Brien and Lott

**4. Approval of Past Meeting Minutes**

It was moved by Commissioner Kill and seconded by Commissioner Eid to approve the December 1, 2021 meeting minutes as presented. A roll call was taken and the motion was approved. The roll call was as follows:

**Ayes:** Commissioners Kill, Eid and Chair Kolar

**Nayes:** None

**Absent:** Commissioners O'Brien and Lott

**5. Public Comment:**

There was no public comment.

**6. New Business:**

**a) Applicant Interviews**

**Sheila Wesonga - Citizen Involvement Commission**

Sheila Wesonga is President of COMMAND ATTENTION LLC, a faith-based consulting firm that provides business services, assisting clients within seven cornerstones of professional offerings using a project management approach. She has a passion for engagement and helping people connect. She is excited for this opportunity to get engaged and make a difference and looks forward to sharing her skills and helping the Village of Oak Park.

Commissioner Kill asked the candidate her thoughts to help increase participation from diverse people on the commissions.

Sheila responded awareness of the opportunities on the commissions in the community is key. Perhaps creating a quarterly highlight of the commissions and celebrate the work of the commissions and their members. In order for us to truly get people engaged we need to inform and educate.

**Gregory Buchanan – Community Development Citizens Advisory Committee**

Gregory Buchanan is an educator at Northwestern University in international programs with a focus on global studies. His experience at Northwestern providing funding for students to partake in Fellowships programs and research is very rewarding and he looks forward to bringing that experience to the commission to engage with his community and help guide Oak Park's development in a sustainable and economically strong place to live.

Commissioner Eid asked what drew him to this specific commission.

Gregory responded the idea of finding non-profit organizations in Oak Park who need funding sounds interesting and a great way to engage with parts of the community he is not aware of. He would like to learn about his community and the good that he can do.

Commissioner Kill asked what he sees the greatest needs are as ways we can help in the community.

Gregory responded affordable housing and job training are at the top of his list.

Chair Kolar asked how Greg thinks the commission could help promote funding.

Gregory responded the first step is conducting a complete an inventory of the community non-profits as a starting point to know where we are starting from, and then doing regular outreach to these organizations to connect them with the funding opportunities.

**Gary Arnold - Disability Access Commission**

Gary Arnold is the Program Director at the Progress Center in Forest Park. Gary would like to focus in getting involved and impact the local community. With an extensive volunteer and professional background working with disability organizations, Gary looks forward to bringing his knowledge and skillset to the commission.

Commissioner Kill asked how Gary see the unmet needs of Oak Park residence compared to the needs of people with disabilities on a national level.

Gary responded the needs are similar. A significant challenge is having access to home and community-based services and resources for people with disabilities who are low income, many of who could be living independently if they had access to a personal assistant or an affordable, accessible home.

Chair Kolar asked how Gary would like to see the DAC involved in the village.

Gary responded he sees a lot of opportunity for collaboration across the commissions. Gary would like to look at what issues are on the table now with other groups, and then see where the DAC can plug itself in to support what other groups are working on which could facilitate a better awareness for the Disability Access Commission.

#### **Brian Straw - Transportation Commission**

Brian Straw is an attorney with a law firm in downtown Chicago. He regularly navigates our community by foot, on his cargo bike, in his car, by bus and on CTA. He is an advocate of Complete Streets, streets designed and operated to prioritize safety, comfort, and access to destinations for all people who use the street. He feels a community should constantly be reevaluating their infrastructure to ensure it is meeting the community's needs. One of the most important things Oak Park can focus on in the coming decades is being a place where people can get around whatever their mode of transportation, ability, and economic situation.

Commissioner Kill asked for clarification on the meaning of the term Complete Streets.

Brian responded it is a philosophy around street design where everyone should be able to use the streets with every mode of transportation, and streets need to be safe for pedestrians, cyclists and drivers.

Brian sees a need to look at design and think of ways to prioritize pedestrians, make them more visible, and not always prioritizing vehicle traffic – especially on residential roads.

#### **Gabriela I. Sierra M., MA, BCBA - Disability Access Commission**

Gabriela Sierra has a background in psychology and has been in the profession of working with individuals with intellectual disabilities and severe mental illness. She sees a need in the community to provide accessibility and disability-friendly opportunities to help improve the quality of life for those individuals she serves. She is excited for this opportunity to take her passion and learn more about her community and find practical solutions for her clients who live in Oak Park.

Commissioner Kill asked how Gabriela was success in connecting with businesses with her clients who were looking for work opportunities.

Gabriela responded it was just going door to door and connecting with the businesses to explain the needs of her clients to see where they could fit in with what the business needed. She feels there has to be a more systematic and organized way to do this long-term for all people. To develop systems with information to these opportunities in a more organized way for people to access.

Chair Kolar asked how Gabriela would like to see the DAC involved in the village.

Gabriela responded she wants to work on jobs and leisure opportunities for individuals with intellectual learning disabilities, and to work on business relationships and developing systems.

#### **Applicant Interview discussions**

It was moved by Commissioner Kill, seconded by Commissioner Eid, to approve each of the applicants for the commissions they applied to join. A roll call vote was taken. The roll call was as follows:

Ayes: Commissioners Kill, Eid and Chair Kolar.

Nayes: None

Absent: Commissioners O'Brien & Lott

**7. Old Business**

Clerk Waters mentioned she will send documents out to the group, and solicit feedback on those documents to be discussed at the next Citizen Involvement Commission meeting.

Clerk Waters reminded commission members of the March 31, 2022 deadline to meet the commission chairs.

Clerk Waters discussed the idea of commission cohorts to achieve Board Goals.

**6. Adjourn**

It was moved by Commissioner Kill, seconded by Commissioner Eid, to adjourn the meeting. A roll call vote was taken at 8:21 PM. The roll call was as follows:

**Ayes:** Commissioners Kill, Eid and Chair Kolar

**Nayes:** None

**Absent:** Commissioners O'Brien and Lott

***NEXT MEETING: February 2, 2022 at 7:00PM***

Respectfully Submitted,  
Christina M. Waters, Village Clerk