

The North Iowa Diversity Appreciation Team (NIDAT) met on Wednesday, October 8, 2008 in the 2nd floor conference room of City Hall in Mason City. Those present included: Dan Gapinski, Linda Woodcock, Libby Lembke, Joy Drennen, Marshall Huffman, Lahoma Counts, Alice Phillips, Melissa Weiner, Scott Pardoe, Jane Ginapp, Jennifer Andrade and Dixie Lamoreux.

Jane called the meeting to order at 4 pm.

Joy gave the treasurer's report and we have a bank balance of \$1780.89. Dan announced that we received a \$750 grant from Principal and that will give us a total of \$2530.89.

Jane gave a brief wrap up of the "Lunch by the Park" event stating that it was a success. Most of the vendors were happy with their outcomes. NIVC didn't do well, but this was their first attempt and chili was not a big sell this year. Weather was way too warm for it and the ones from NIVC understood that. There was \$600 more taken in this year than last year. We did have many more vendors and that was great.

Dixie will be sending a thank you to those who helped make the event a success and will include the date for next year's event, reminding people to keep the date in mind.

Jane received a note from Eric Branson stating that he will be leaving Mason City and moving to Dubuque. He also suggested that if we want to keep the information fair as a part of the September event, we need to get that word out. Many of those who were there felt that it was not worthwhile for them to be there. It could be a good partnership but word has to get out that agencies are there sharing important information about what they have to offer people.

Another issue that needs to be addressed and action taken to remedy is the lack of set up/tear down help. Steve Wendt was the sole person left returning tables with the help of the Affordables Truck and a couple of workers from the store. This is way too big a task for one person. One suggestion for the future is that each vendor provide their own table. Another is that if NIDAT furnishes tables we need to perhaps load tables in a truck the evening before the event and have them ready to go first thing. Time became a huge issue this year.

The next topic discussed was our annual Black History event that we hold in February of each year. It was suggested by Scott that we work harder at involving more of the area schools. An early start will certainly help us accomplish that. Scott also suggested that since we are a diversity team and that we have so much more diversity in the area than just our black heritage, we might consider an event more inclusive to all diversity. This was discussed and most were in agreement that this would be a better fit for our vision. We would also change from February to March for the event because March is diversity awareness month. This extra time could be a benefit too as we always seem to be too soon after the holiday vacations that schools have. Dan made the motion that we have the event in March and rename it the "Embracing Diversity Art and Writing Contest". Marshall seconded the motion and after a unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Scott will also be doing the page of stamps for the art winners again. This was a wonderful idea and very well received. Scott will be contacting Hal Minear about getting more area schools involved.

Even though we are changing the event title and month we discussed still doing the Proclamation that the mayor does from the city each year. Linda made the motion that we do the proclamation in 2009 and then change to a diversity proclamation after that. Dan seconded the motion. It carried unanimously.

Jane also will be working on having a book printed like we did in 2008 with all of the entries for the event in it. Since we have some money in our account this will be a little easier to accomplish this time. Jane has a contact at NIACC and that is where they were done last time.

Libby told us that the Downtown Association has a window in the downtown area that NIDAT could use as a communication tool for diversity-related events and issues throughout the year. We could do this on a quarterly basis or however we want to do it. It was suggested that perhaps a committee could be formed to handle this.

Jane reserved a February date at the art museum for an awards ceremony. She will check with them about changing the date to March 5th for the event. In 2008 we had the room at the museum from 4 to 7 which included both setup and takedown times. This seems fine.

Jennifer Andrade shared with us her preliminary work on a resource directory. She began with Cerro Gordo County and asked for our thoughts. There were a few changes that were offered mostly in the way of wording but all in all it is a great start. Jane suggested that perhaps if it were done in table form it would be easier to read and understand. Jennifer will check into that and says that the computer program she used allows most any format you desire. It was also suggested that maybe each agency be allowed to word things the way they see fit.

Dan then started going over the notes everyone received on the strategic planning session that was done in September. One of the first and very basic things that we need to do is to adopt a more formal structure for our meeting. Dan strongly suggests using Roberts Rules and this does seem to be a widely accepted way to go. He stated that this would give any newcomers a better impression than the informal approach we use now.

Before we adjourned Dan made a motion that we form a steering committee to meet at least once before our November meeting and try and come up with some internal committees as a way to handle our major events and other business that we may have. Marshall seconded the motion. It was voted on and carried unanimously. Dan, Dixie, Joy, Linda and Aimee Kern will be on the initial committee. By Laws will also be reviewed and amended as we progress in this process.

The final motion was made by Jane and that was a motion to keep our Mission Statement as written and to change the Vision Statement to reflect adding the words “embracing diversity” to the end of the statement. Linda seconded the motion and it was voted on and unanimously carried.

The meeting adjourned a little after 5 pm. Next meeting will be on Wednesday, November 12th at 4 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Dixie Lamoreux