

Ability Awareness Committee

Minutes of the Meeting on
July 6, 2021

**Village of Homer Glen
14240 W 151st Street, Homer Glen, IL 60491
Village Board Room**

1. Call to Order.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chair/Trustee Nicole LaHa

2. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

3. Roll Call was taken by Matt Walsh

Ability Awareness Committee	Title	Attendance
Nicole LaHa	Chairperson	Present
Christina Neitzke-Troike	Committee Member	Present
Karen Adamczyk	Committee Member	Present
Heather Bleck	Committee Member	Present
Angela McKenna	Committee Member	Absent
Robert O'Connor	Committee Member	Present
James Cronos	Committee Member	Present
Matthew Walsh	Staff Liaison	Present
Stacy Patrianakos	Staff Liaison	Present

4. Approval of Minutes.

- No minutes to approve.

5. Approval of Amendments to the Agenda.

- There were no amendments.

6. Public Comment.

Lori McAleavy a resident over 22 years.

- She has a 25-year-old son with autism.
- Years ago, she was a member of another committee with the township that did not go too far.
- Noted that the community is sorely lacking in services for people with disabilities.
- Township changed website to include tab for special recreation.
 - Resident must pay out of district fees however the township pays 1/3rd this is on a first come/first serve basis and many time funds are depleted quickly.
- Lincoln-Way is a palace, don't expect the same but this community is lacking.
- Carnival was great, smaller group is good.
- Would like to see information included on Village website regarding what the committee is about, the goals and focus on awareness.

7. Reports from Chair

a) **Carnival:**

- Received a ton of positive feedback.
- The volunteers were great and very accommodating.
- Participants were very complimentary.
- Received a few suggestions.

b) **Donations Raised:**

- Committee raised a total of \$2,247.00.
- Funds were deposited directly into ability awareness fund on July 2, 2021 by Sue Steilen.

c) **Pop Top Challenge:**

- Very successful event.
- All (Homer Glen & New Lenox) pop tabs were delivered to the RMHC house in Oak Lawn. It was the largest donation they have ever received.
- Great job by Christina.

d) **Market in the Glen:**

- 7 stations were set up, Karen and Heather manned table and did a great job introducing kids to experience of living with a disability.
- A couple of schools reached out requesting if we can plan a similar event at their school.

e) **Meeting with Keith Wallis**

- Trustee LaHa contacted with Keith Wallace, executive director of the Lincolnway Special Recreation association.
- Trustee LaHa is meeting with Keith Wallace on Thursday, July 8, 2021 to discuss possible partnership with The Village.

8. Old Business.

None.

9. New Business.

a) **Community Survey**

- Trustee LaHa reported that creating and sending out a community survey it is an important first step for the committee as we are here to serve the community. VM Walsh added that the Village utilizes Survey Monkey and has a database with over 2000 residential/commercial contacts already. It was agreed upon that Committee members should send proposed survey questions to Staff Liaison Patrianakos by July 13, 2021. Trustee LaHa and Staff Liaison Patrianakos will work on pulling together survey. Trustee LaHa requested that once survey was complete, the link be added to Ability Awareness page on Village website. In addition, the committee motto and mission statement needs to be added to website.

b) Disability Pride Month/Day is July 16, 2021.

- Trustee LaHa would like to acknowledge disability pride month/day and suggested the committee host a photo challenge. The photo challenge will require Homer Glen residents to take a picture of something that brings attention to special needs and upload their photo to Village's Facebook page. The purpose of the challenge is to raise awareness and give people the ability to view things from a different perspective.
- The challenge to be announced on July 16, 2021 and will run through July 31, 2021.

10. Staff & Committee Member Updates.

- a. Village Manager, Matt Walsh: Nothing to report
- b. Staff Liaison Stacy Patrianakos: Nothing to report
- c. Committee Member Christina Neitzke-Troiike:
 1. **Parade:** Was cancelled, potentially will be rescheduled for Labor Day.
 2. **Budget:** Member Neitzke-Troiike had a number of questions about the budget? Specifically,
 - a. Where is the AA budget line item?
 - i. VM Walsh stated that there is not a line item on budget for committee.
 - b. Where do the donations we receive go?
 - c. Next meeting, can we bring a breakdown of budget.
 - d. How do we handle donations?
 - e. VM Walsh commented that the Village is in the process of implementing an on-line registration portal that will also have the capability of accepting donation.
 3. **Donations Closet:** Discussion around where to store donations. Trustee LaHa would like to have a "resource closet" for all donations along with obtaining an inventory list with items that the Township has.
 4. **Ability Awareness Facebook Page:** Member Neitzke-Troiike asked if the committee can create their own Facebook page? Are there any legal implications with doing this? VM Walsh suggested that the committee utilize the Village page in order to drive traffic and have one central source of information for Village news.
 5. **Radio CJOL:** Member Neitzke-Troiike and Trustee LaHa were interviewed regarding the Pop tab challenge which has generated a lot of excitement and interest from other surrounding communities. Also, 2 churches have reached out if they can set up stations to collect the cans for future events. Next years event will require a focus on communication strategy.
 6. **Pop tab family selection process.** Member Neitzke-Troiike outlined the process for selecting the winning family for the pop tab challenge. Submission should start coming in on July 14th. Families will be only entered into drawing once, Trustee LaHa and Member Neitzke-Troiike and not eligible to participate in drawing. Residents can nominate more than one family. The

winner will be announced on August 25th. There is not a limit to family size of winning family however the total prize is \$5250.00 includes 6 days/5 nights stay at Disney and park hopper passes, airfare is not included. A Disney rep located in Lockport has volunteered to donate her services to assist with booking. The winning family will be randomly selected via an on-line live drawing.

7. **Family Information:** Member Neitzke-Troiike would like to have the ability to collect family information. It was suggested that this data can be compiled from the nominations received. VM Walsh also mentioned that there is a community wide mailer that will be sent later in the year which can include more detailed information about the ability awareness committee. Trustee LaHa reiterated that the community survey link should be included on the ability awareness page.
8. **Grant:** There was a discussion around researching available grants.
9. **Business Card:** Request was made that members of the committee get business cards as they are heavily involved with public and it would make more sense to provide a committee card as opposed to their personal business cards.
10. **Konow's Annual Donation:** Konow's donates \$5K annually to special events. Member Neitzke-Troiike would like team to start brainstorming for future events.

d. Karen Adamczyk:

1. **Market in the Glen:** Event went very well and there seemed to be a lot of interest from residents to volunteer. Member Adamczyk suggested that committee start a volunteer list.

e. Heather Bleck:

1. Curious about the schools that are interested in partnering with Ability Awareness Committee: Trustee LaHa noted that schools were Lockport H.S. and Shilling.
2. Member Bleck will provide update regarding what Lockport HS is interested in doing.

f. James Cronos:

1. **Outreach:** Member Cronos asked what kind of outreach do we have from a governmental perspective and from a federal perspective. Behavioral health is a big challenge in terms of access. Would like to engage the right departments in order to bring this down to the local level.
2. **Pre-party at Homer Fest:** the feedback was amazing. Other communities are interested in engaging with Homer Glen to speak at their events. Is there any interest in attending other community events?
3. **Parent Event:** Trustee LaHa recommended we have events specifically for parents. Some suggestions included, renting out a theater or information events with professional speakers.

g. Robert O'Connor:

1. **Homer Fest:** Member O'Connor received feedback that someone could not go on rides by herself because her sister was to big so he suggested that a ride buddy system be implemented for next year.
2. **ID's:** Might want to think about implementing an ID system for the safety of children to include information such as name, photo, expiration date, etc. Trustee LaHa recommended we could offer a sticker to put at home or car just in case of an emergency in the home that identifies that a person that requires special assistance in the event of an emergency.
3. **Resources:** Include resources on our website for families.
4. **Fall:** Trustee LaHa would like to add something on the agenda for the fall. She would like to focus on adults, seniors, vets with different abilities. How can we serve our adults? Local businesses involved in providing a work program for adults with different abilities.

12. Adjournment.

Respectfully Submitted:



Stacy Patrianakos
Human Resources Manager