

Coffee with the Mayor

Ser 14

First, let me say, or repeat, I am not a coffee snob. Normally at home I drink whatever brand Walmart has and usually the cheapest. I use a Keurig coffee maker at home so the selection is often limited and has changed over the years. My preference, however, has been Gevalia which has not been available at Walmart for several years. Decided I had to make a change so recently ordered three boxes of various Gevalia flavors which was delivered this week, from Walmart no less. Not sure why I waited so long! The enjoyment of a cup of coffee at home as returned!

Last semester I met with several students at Linton High School regarding a Youth Council I wanted to form. There were several 8th grade students, soon to be Freshman, that were interested. Then I met with several high school students as well. Having looked at other mayor's youth councils around the state I was able to get an idea of the issues involved with establishing and engaging a youth council. What I conveyed to the students was to have the opportunity to bring to city hall issues and concerns specific to their generation. Also, they would be able to gain an insight into issues and decisions specific to city government. They asked several good questions and seemed interested in the prospect of being involved. When the deadline for the application process came, there were three applicants. All three were highly recommended, above average academically and eager to serve. Grade level, there was 1 Senior and 2 Freshman.

The initial meeting of the Youth Council was held this week. A meeting date, time and location was selected. We will be meeting at 7 am, yes 7 am, on the first Wednesday of the month at a location within the school. The next meeting will be 14 Aug due to school start date. I provided my insight into what my expectations were and a few of the tasks I would like for them to get involved with. One discussion was specific to social media. I will admit I'm not a fan of social media but understand there is a valid need to use social media to communicate the city's message. Relying on their background, expect them to see how social media could be used to effectively convey the city's message. Next was the timely discussion regarding the Conservation Club. This subject was timely in that it was a main topic at the recent council meeting. My task from the council meeting was to establish a committee with the task of presenting options where the Conservation Club could be made available to the community. (Note, there will be information in a future coffee on the Conservation Club so stay tuned.) The committee would consist of 1 council member and 4 members from the community. Additionally, all three Youth Council members would be a significant part of this committee. In preparation of the first meeting, challenged them to research the history of the area, originally known as Lee Sherrard Park. They listened to a voicemail I had received from a local resident in which she referenced an article in the paper several years ago regarding the background. It is anticipated the first meeting of this

committee would be held before the start of school on 12 August so they needed to be prepared.

Another task mentioned was specific to streets. Many street intersections do not have street signs displaying street names. Two of the students do not have driver's licenses yet so I discussed how Linton was laid out, how streets were named, quadrants associated with the naming and ways to navigate around the community. The task was to document street locations where a street sign or signs were missing. Once this information was obtained, we would have an idea what the cost would be to replace the missing signs.

There is no doubt the three Youth Council members will be instrumental in representing their generation as the new school year begins, be a valuable asset to city hall and, learn at an early age, issues facing a community, an experience that will benefit them as they assume leadership positions.