

MINUTES BLACK AFFAIRS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

April 3, 2013

Chaired by: Priscilla Dames-Blake

Board Members Present: Priscilla Dames-Blake; D. J. Fabien; Stephen Hunter Johnson; Gerri Lazarre; Edgar Wright; Jihad Rashid. (via Telephone- Tracy Bowen-Bell)

Excused Absences: Ronald Mumford; Dannie McMillon

Unexcused Absences:

Staff: Retha Boone-Fye

Guests: Mr. Ronald Fulton

Quorum: Yes

The meeting was called to order at 10:20 a.m. with Mr. J. Rashid providing the inspirational message.

Chair's Report: Ms. Dames—Blake passed out her report. She also recounted the meeting with the Executive Director of the Office of Community Advocacy (Mr. Rene Diaz), and Ms. Boone -Fye in reference to her concern for the BAAB membership and her feeling that the board needs to become more involved in the process. She is deeply disappointed in the board's involvement both on the board and community level. Following that, she asked our newest member to introduce himself. Mr. Jihad Rashid who is the CEO of the Coconut Grove Collaborative which focuses on economic development in the Coconut Grove area including affordable housing. He was appointed by Commissioner Xavier Suarez. Mr. Ronald Fulton also introduced himself and gave a brief overview of his desire to be more involved in matters impacting the Black World Community through this board.

Ms. Dames-Blake also requested that Mr. Diaz be invited at this time. Mr. Diaz introduced himself again, gave an overview of the department and thanked the board for inviting him to the meeting.

Next, Ms. Bowen-Bell was conferenced in and was given an update on the status of her meeting with Mr. Diaz and Ms. Boone-Fye. Our newest member Mr. Rashid volunteered to serve on the Economic Development committee with Mr. Hunter Johnson. Also discussed was the Disparity Studies being conducted by Miami-Dade County and Dade County Public Schools. Ms. Dames-Blake also expressed the desire to have the BAAB become more involved in both studies. Ms. Lazarre is also involved and has been attending the public meetings. The recommendation is that we provide the names and contact information of businesses or individuals to be interviewed by the entities conducting the Disparity Studies. Mr. Hunter Johnson and Mr. Rashid made some comments on past studies as well as recommendations for the current ones. Ms. Boone-Fye also mentioned that she had received a visit from a representative from the U. S. Small Business Administration-Ms. Althea Harris and requested that she collaborate with Mr. Hunter Johnson on the status of loans made to the African American community. Ms. Dames specifically requested that BAAB members participate by collecting names for the studies and provide to the local contractors to further emphasize the state of Black Miami-Dade County's economic situation.

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At this point, Ms. Bowen-Bell suggested that the BAAB do a follow-up symposium focusing on youth since she saw a need to do so after the CRB's Youth Forum. She made several suggestions on what she thought would be an effective track and that it should be held at Miami-Dade College's Wolfson campus. Ms. Dames Blake agreed and indicated that it tied in with Ms. Boone-Fye's suggestion that we hold a symposium aimed at discussing the prevalence of violence in the community while tying it in with the MD-CRT. Mr. Diaz added that the symposium should focus on all youth and that through the Council of Chairs we can spread the word as well as use technology to channel concerns for youth through social media. Ms. Dames recommended that we convene a subcommittee to plan for this symposium along with Ms. Bowen-Bell and anyone who would like to volunteer.

Mr. Hunter Johnson requested that he present because he has to excuse himself. The "Keeping it Real-Keeping it Professional" event that was scheduled for Florida Memorial University April 4th has been rescheduled. He does not have a date yet. The April 20th event in coordination with the Wilkie D. Ferguson and Caribbean Bar Associations, the NAACP and hopefully the National Action Network whereby the groups will provide a free legal clinic is still on at the Liberty City Health and Wellness Clinic from 9 am-2 pm. He also mentioned that he would be moderating a forum at the Ola Condominium HOA later this month since they contacted the BAAB regarding their ongoing issues with squatters and crimes. Ms. Boone gave the backstory on this situation. She said that the HOA contacted her earlier this year and she was able to get the Miami-Dade Police Department and Commissioner Monestime's office involved. Mr. Hunter Johnson also noted that that Miami-Dade County is exploring the possibility of inviting unincorporated areas to become cities. He said that we should keep this issue on our radar especially since it will affect primarily African American communities. He will keep us abreast on the issue. Ms. Dames requested we should include that in our symposium agenda planning. She also requested members to make suggestions for new members and reiterated the need for the board to tighten up when it comes to attendance and community involvement. Mr. Wright reported that the Black Heritage Planning Committee is interested in moving the 2013 Pillars Awards ceremony to June 15th and they are moving in that direction. Also, we are exploring another fundraiser on April 17th to gather funds for the event. He also thanked Ms. Dames for attending the Gospel Concert at the South Dade Cultural Arts Center during Black History Month. Ms. Lazarre requested a solicitation package for our events.

Program Officer's Report: Ms. Boone-Fye reported that we have a possible appointee, Mr. Kevin Chambliss who is on Congressman Joe Garcia's staff. She also gave an update on the Ms. Emma Anderson, the 82-year old woman who was thrown off the Metrorail and the Hospitality Training Initiative which has been introduced to the Black Hospitality Initiative and the status of the Black World Guide project in collaboration with the Miami-Dade Economic Advocacy Trust (MDEAT). Ms. Boone-Fye also requested that Ms. Dames provide a letter to *The Miami Herald* on several issues as well as begin to formulate our annual report to the Board of Commissioners.

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Mr. Rashid shared that he worked on the *Black Business Book* earlier and he is willing to work with the Board on this project.

At this point, Mr. Ronald Fulton made a few observations and stated that after the Youth Forum his group concluded that a key target audience had not been addressed and he is concerned with that scenario. He also commented that the symposium we discussed might address that concern. Mr. Fulton also mentioned that there were some issues with Corrections and that he was working with a group of concerned citizens to gather information and address them. Similar concerns have been festering in regards to small and minority businesses having problems with doing business with large governmental entities like the County and School Board. The Disparity Studies being conducted by both are somewhat unlikely to uncover the deep rooted problems and a simple way of dealing with these issues is to just make sure that these businesses are included in each contract.

Ms. Dames invited Mr. Diaz to make any additional comments. He indicated that he would forward them to Ms. Boone. He emphasized the importance of the MD-CRT and that the board should make sure that this process is followed up on since the Resolution has been passed. He also invited members of the BAAB to appear on the Hispanic radio show and he will act as a translator when necessary.

Ms. Lazarre reported that she has been attending the Miami-Dade budget and Disparity Study meetings as well as the Land, Air and Sea Expo. She learned that there will be jobs available through Miami -Dade Transit and we should work to distribute that info to our community. Budget and Finance report—she will meet with Ms. Boone-Fye to work on the report.

Mr. Fabien reported that he has been traveling periodically to Haiti and that this month is Haitian Diaspora conference April 17-21st in Haiti.

Ms. Boone also mentioned that she is working on a Health Village Dialogue with Ms. Hidalgo and she will let the board know the date once they meet. Also, she wanted to see if the board wanted to see “Memphis” as a group since we are trying to maintain our relationship with the Arsht Center. Also there are brownfield issues in Brownsville, Broadmoor; Coconut Grove, etc. that we need to keep in mind.

Mr. Diaz requested that the resolution be changed to allow the Clerk of the Board to record our meetings.

Old Business: None

Announcements:

Meeting adjourned at 11:46 a.m.

