

MINUTES BLACK AFFAIRS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

June 5, 2013

Chaired by: Priscilla Dames-Blake

Board Members Present: Edgar Wright; Ronald Mumford; Gerri Lazarre; Jihad Rashid, D.J. Fabien; Stephen Hunter Johnson

Excused Absences: Tracey Bowen-Bell

Unexcused Absences: None

Staff: Retha Boone-Fye

Guests: Antonio Crawford; Joe Hovancak ; Stephen Beatus and Robin Reiter (The Beacon Council); Miami-Dade Police Chief J. D. Patterson ; Sonless Martin

Quorum: Yes

The meeting was called to order at 10:10 a.m. with a meditation provided by Mr. Ronald Mumford. Following introductions, the chair recognized Ms. Robin Reiter, interim director of the Beacon Council, who gave an update and background on the purpose of the organization. She stated that the Beacon Council was created to facilitate businesses relocation to Miami-Dade County and unlike chamber of commerce related organizations or social service agencies, they are about the business of bringing economic development to Miami-Dade and jobs as a result. She then introduced two of the organization's staff members—Steve Beatus and Joe Havancak—who gave brief presentations on One Community One Goal, which has seven targeted industries. Ms. Dames questioned the lack of Black representation on the consulting end and welcomed their attendance at the BAAB meeting. She also reiterated the board's desire to hold Village Dialogues in conjunction with the Beacon Council and is planning one for the central area of the county with Chief Osorio July 21st or 24th.

Ms. Reiter announced that the Beacon Council will be holding three hurricane preparedness workshops for small businesses in the south, north and central areas. The rest of the presentation centered around identifying ways in which the board could participate in Beacon Council initiatives as well as connecting to the general community. Ms. Gerri Lazarre brought up the fact that the Beacon Council receives approximately 70% of its funding from Miami-Dade County's business taxes and is curious to know what portion of the budget fosters economic development—especially as it relates to small and minority businesses. Ms. Reiter answered that all the funding fosters economic development. Ms. Lazarre countered that it appears to be aimed more toward international businesses as opposed to local businesses. Ms. Reiter gave an example of a \$40 million business that was offered incentives to move their operation to South Carolina.

The bottom line is that Miami-Dade does not have a local incentive program to encourage businesses to remain in the area. This is a major hurdle. On the plus side, the Beacon Council acts as a relocation agent for those businesses that wish to do business in the Miami-Dade area. They are also very much interested in Targeted Urban Areas (such as Poinciana Park) and are working toward making these areas more attractive to prospective businesses looking to relocate. Ms. Dames then offered the BAAB's assistance in getting the word out about the Beacon Council and in making them better known in the Black community. Ms. Reiter then announced that a new executive director will hopefully be in place before the end of August and the search committee is concluding its work. Ms. Boone-Fye also requested that the BAAB be involved in the development of the Beacon Council's internship program especially when it relates to Black students. She reiterated the board's desire to have dual language programming available since traditionally it precludes Black students from becoming a part of the workforce and that we will be following up that issue with Miami-Dade Public Schools.

Following the Beacon Council's report, J. D. Patterson, Miami-Dade Police Director gave an update on his appointment and his vision for the department. He emphasized his commitment to the entire community. He wants to be a "game-changer" when it comes to police and community relations. Several BAAB members addressed the issue of the dearth of high ranking Black police officers and asked what the Director is doing to modify that including working with the Progressive Officer's organization. Director Parker indicated that he is looking into the issue and taking steps to balance it and determined to correct it. He is also concerned with developing more economic opportunities for our youth which is tied directly to reducing crime. He said that he is willing to work with the BAAB in any capacity and welcomes our input on issues affecting the community.

Ms. Boone-Fye gave Director Parker an update on the MD-CRT, it's origin and function. There was a brief discussion on sensitivity training for law enforcement agencies and on the state of police relations with the Black community—reference was made to the two brothers who were punched by the City of Miami detective. Mr. Rashid also commented on how law enforcement polices the Black community as opposed to other communities. Director Parker indicated that he is aware of these issues and will be working toward bettering the situation as it relates to Miami-Dade Police officers.

Ms. Dames gave a brief update on the meeting of the Council of Chairs meeting as well as encouraging members to participate in Wayne Rawlins' walking tours that bring services directly to communities. She then shared detailed stats on this year's Urban Beach Weekend and updated the board on her contact with Capt. Doce from the City of Miami Beach Police department. A discussion followed on the efficacy of the stats and whether or not Black beachgoers and Urban Beach Weekend attendees were given respect and whether proper protocol was followed.

Because the number of arrests were down, according to Mr. Hunter Johnson, does not reflect the fact that the City of Miami Beach welcomes Urban Beach Weekend attendees and in fact underlies the true cause which is that the number of law enforcement officials is significantly larger than provided for other events. Ms. Dames felt that based on last year's number of arrests (approximately 400 last year versus 212 this year) police presence made a difference. Mr. Mumford felt that the police presence was a real deterrent to those who wanted to get to the beach. Mr. Fabien reported that he was on the beach and witnessed firsthand several incidents after which most of the Goodwill Ambassadors left the beach. Mr. Wright requested a report on the economic impact of Urban Beach Weekend. Mr. Antonio Crawford, a guest, informed the board that the tax collector's office could provide those figures.

Following this, Ms. Dames requested the Program Officer's report.

Program Officer's Report: Ms. Boone-Fye informed the board that there are several administrative issues that need to be discussed and handled at our next meeting such as our by-laws, ethics and membership. Rene Gordon will be meeting with Commissioner Bovo within the next few weeks and we have a new appointee per Commissioner Monestime-Dr. Jonas Georges. Also, the MD-CRT is still pending as well as the MDEAT collaboration on the Black World Guide. There are several pointed community issues including the Urban Beach Weekend situation this year which included the arrest of a 14-year old as well as the report on the Memorial Weekend fatal shooting of Mr. Herrisse which is still pending a resolution.

Black Heritage Planning Committee: Ms. Boone-Fye gave the names of this year's Pillars honorees and that the A. Phillip Randolph Institute, Dr. Rozalyn Paschal and the ICMA Corporation will be donating for the Young Pillars Scholarship. We have six (6) recipients this year. Several board members pledged to provide support for the students this year. The event will be held at the Courtyard Marriott in Coconut Grove June 15th. We are also soliciting for the Silent Auction portion of the program.

Education: No report

Health Care: Ms. Boone-Fye will meet with Ms. Maria Hidalgo from VITAS to discuss holding a Village Dialogue in September at North Shore Hospital.

Housing: Mr. Mumford indicated that he is still working with NACA and other housing related community entities.

Economic Development: Mr. Hunter Johnson will be exploring future Village Dialogue opportunities. Mr. Rashid informed the board that he will be sitting on a panel for the CITT - Transportation Summit and invited the board to attend.

Budget and Finance: Ms. Lazarre submitted a written report. She will continue to monitor funding and expenditures for the County.

Social Media & Marketing: No report

Legislative: (vacant)

HAERC: Mr. Fabien announced that

New Business: Ms. Dames requested that the board DO more than it has been doing in the past.

Old Business: None

With all business being concluded, the meeting adjourned at 11: 50 a.m.

