

Minutes

Black Affairs Advisory Board

April 2, 2014

10:00 a.m.

Stephen P. Clark Government Center

10th Floor Conference Room

Quorum:

Meeting called to order at 10:25 a.m. by the Mr. Edgar Wright in absence of the Chair. Dr. Jonas Georges provided the invocation. Since there was no quorum at the time, approval of the minutes were tabled.

Program Officer's Report

Ms. Boone-Fye requested that minutes be reviewed and members present submit any changes or revisions by email. She also announced that as an outcome of the Village Dialogue that was held at Florida Memorial University in October, we are looking at holding a second one in the South Dade area. We have tentatively identified two possible locations—the South Dade Government Center or a church in the area. We need to follow up on this issue once she locks down a location or cost.

Ms. Boone said has not received an update from Mr. Jorge Mursuli on the gun violence issue—once she hears from him she will inform the board. As for membership, Ms. Boone has received notification that a new member has been appointed but she is waiting on the background check to be completed by the Ethics Commission. Each member should also have received a financial disclosure form from the Election department and is urged to complete the form to avoid being fined. At that point Dr. Georges made the announcement that he would be regretfully be leaving the board since he has accepted an assignment in northwest Florida (Panama City).

(During this time, Mr. Johnson came into the meeting and quorum was achieved)

Next, Ms. Boone-Fye announced that the Village Dialogue on cultural diversity and inclusion—a civil discourse had been set for April 22nd in the BCC Chambers. We have partnered with the Hispanic Affairs Advisory Board and information is forthcoming.

Environmental Issues: Ms. Boone-Fye requested any updates and said that we should keep these issues as they relate to the African American communities in the forefront.

Disparity Study: The School Board has completed their study and there are some disagreements between their findings and those of the African American community.

Reference the “305 Initiative” she spoke to Deputy Mayor Benford about the lack of involvement of the BAAB in the Mayor's initiative. Ms. Boone-Fye also gave an update on the MDEAT collaboration—in view of the fact that we have similar goals. She attended their last meeting and let their board know that we would be working closer with them.

Action Items: Approval Minutes for February and March 2014. It was moved by Mr. Wright and seconded by Dr. Georges. The minutes were approved by all members present.

Chair's Report:

The chair brought several letters to the attention of the Board: Overtown Gateway (letter of support); there was some concern voiced by Ms. Lazarre in reference to the board offering letters of support during the RFP process. Mr. Larry Spring commented that he agreed in that the vetting process should not be interfered with. Mr. Wright commented that very often going after an RFP requires letters of support. Ms. Lazarre said she felt that letters of support versus being a part of the vetting process should be kept separate. After some discussion, it was concluded that the board should consider letters of support on an individual basis and not interfere with the vetting process.

Next, Mr. Charles Wellons who is working with the City of Miami to recruit African American police officers made a presentation to the board requesting their assistance. Mr. Fabien suggested that he contact local radio stations such as HOT 105 to do Public Service Announcements. There were also a few questions on the application process and whether or not prior involvement with law enforcement would prevent applicants from qualifying. Mr. Wellons stated that it depended on numerous factors but he did not want to discourage applicants. He has already been in touch with organizations such as the 5000 Role Models as well as 100 Black Men. The board promised to provide as much support as possible.

Ms. Lazarre then introduced her intern _____, who recently graduated from FIU.

Mr. Jihad Rashid then gave an overview of the economic policies as well as the disparity that exists in Miami-Dade County's African diaspora and the need for the BAAB to be not only actively involved in the process but act on behalf of the African diaspora as it relates to making sure that these disparities are overcome. He specifically referred to the West Grove and how that community as well as the access to capital is not targeted to that community. He also cited as an example, the General Obligation Bond and how those funds are obligated. We need to foster economic development among our constituents and make this a priority as it relates to making the Board of County Commissioners aware of this fact. Additionally, he suggested that we work more closely with TUAs. Following comments by Dr. Georges, Mr Rashid agreed that economic development is of utmost importance. He also cited the fact that development around transit should also be monitored. An example is the Coconut Grove Trolley garage that was built over the objections of the community. Ms. Lazarre suggested that we make a presentation before the MPO and the Regional Planning organization in order to make them aware of our concerns and have other members of the board in attendance for support. She expressed concern for the fact that there was a lack of participation by minority communities in these organizations. Ms. Boone-Fye also mentioned the Beacon Council as another organization that has been approached as well. Mr. Rashid indicated that he had inquired about working with the Beacon Council and linking them with the Targeted Urban Areas.

(more)

Committee Reports:

Black Heritage Planning: Mr. Wright reported that the Pillars Awards is on June 21st and we are seeking nominations for Community Pillars, Young Pillars Scholarship recipients and corporate sponsorships. The souvenir journal should also be included. He wants to have this wrapped up by the end of May. Mr. Johnson also suggested that we honor City of Miami Commissioner Keon Hardemon since he was a former Young Pillar Scholarship recipient and that we recognize someone outside of our community. Ms. Boone-Fye reported that she was contacting the Lyric Theatre to hold it there.

Education: Ms. McMillon reported that the current legislative session has many bills that will affect education and that she will be giving an update on the session once it ends. She also reiterated that we should hold the dialogue on race and make sure we had all views included. Dr. Georges spoke on child care and early learning, cultural diagnoses and assessment issues and the fact that the services provided are sometimes not adequate. There was also some discussion on English as a second language as well as cultural competence.

Health Care: No report

Housing: Mr. Mumford announced that he is working on a "First time homebuyers" program at his church and he is inviting the board to invite participate.

Crisis Intervention/Respect Life: Ms. Dames has an event this coming weekend and could not attend.

Economic Development: Mr. Rashid reported earlier during presentation.

Budget & Finance: Ms. Lazarre reported that she is working with Traci Bell on this committee and she has not received information. Ms. Boone-Fye reported that she is in the process of finalizing the Black History Month budget and that there is only one outstanding invoice. She will provide details at the next meeting. Ms. Lazarre then spoke on the 60th Anniversary of the Civil Rights Bill event scheduled for July 2nd and the involvement of the Office of Community Advocacy. An update will be given at the next meeting.

Social Media & Marketing: Mr. Fabien said that all of us are administrators on the Facebook page and that we can post events, etc. and we should get organized to make sure we're posting.

Legislative Affairs: Ms. Gordon gave an update on the meeting with the State Attorney's Office which concluded that the meeting was very productive. She would like to follow up by speaking with the

Public Defender's Office as well to receive a different view of the information on Direct Filing. She would like to sit with them; however Mr. Johnson indicated that he would like to have the State Attorney's Office commitments down on paper prior to that meeting. Ms. Gordon said that she understands that however, the implication she got was that we have to give them points so that we can work together for mutually beneficial relationship. Ms. Gordon said that May 6th or 8th are dates she is considering for meeting with the Public Defender. She also said that she would give an update on the current legislative session at the next meeting along with her recommendations on several bills affecting public schools and other issues. She said it appears that there is no standards/accountability in charter schools and we should be concerned with that aspect since private schools would not have set standards that are mandatory for public schools.

Ms. Boone-Fye also shared information on a meeting she attended with PACT, which is "People Acting for Community Together" composed of churches/religious organizations.

Mr. Johnson announced that he would be making a donation to Ms. Saliah Nelson's Urgent, Inc... project and donations can also be made by individual members.

HAERC Update (501c3) No report.

With all business being covered, the chair asked for a motion to adjourn which was provided and the meeting ended at 11:45 a.m.