

Minutes for Black Affairs Advisory Board

July 9, 2014

10:00 a.m.

Stephen P. Clark Government Center

10th Floor Conference Room

Quorum: Yes

Present: Stephen Hunter Johnson; Priscilla Dames; Gerri Lazarre; Ronald Mumford; D.J. Fabien; Tracey Bowen-Bell; Jihad Rashid; Jeff Cazeau; Francois Adrien. Excused: Edgar Wright, Dannie McMillon

Guests: Ronald Fulton (CRB); Renita Holmes (W.A.A.I.V.E.)

Meeting opened at 10:25 a.m. with a prayer, after which Mr. Johnson gave his report.

Chair's report:

Mr. Johnson gave an update on the meeting he had with Mr. Romero Ortiz and the plan to develop a program aimed at providing low cost loans to African American and Hispanic business partners who co-team on projects. He is very excited about the program and is also exploring a project with Sabadell Bank aimed at increasing homeownership in the African American community. He invited anyone from the board to attend a meeting with Sabadell in his office next Tuesday. Mr. Johnson is confident that we will be able to pull this off since Sabadell has CRS obligations and they are definitely interested in such a project. Mr. Rashid will be working closely with Mr. Johnson to make this happen. Ms. Bowen-Bell offered her church as a possible venue once the project is approved and a date selected. Ms. Dames offered a motion that we hold a forum to encourage homeownership. It was seconded by Ms. Bowen-Bell. The board approved the motion without dissent. Further discussion centered on how to provide support to potential homebuyers by holding either a forum or meeting to help bridge the divide between the community and banks. Ms. Lazarre questioned the wisdom of having the banks meet with the community without educating the community. It was suggested by Ms. Bone-Fye that we partner with the Miami-Dade Economic Advocacy Trust and their housing committee in order to combine our resources. Mr. Mumford said that there would be a homeownership forum at his church and if anyone would like to attend to view the set up, they would be welcome. Mr. Johnson requested that Mr. Mumford be part of the planning committee once the agreement is reached.

Following the discussion on the Sabadell project, the Lyric Theater and its importance to the Black community as a means of preserving our history. The board concluded that the Lyric is an important asset and that we need to take a strong stand on keeping the Lyric solvent and viable. If public funds are destined to be utilized in the preservation of historical sites, then the Lyric should definitely be part of that conversation. The chair (for Sunshine purposes) indicated that he sits on the board and would recuse himself if necessary. Ms. Dames would like the board to take a strong stand on supporting the Lyric. It was decided to write a letter of support to the Board of County Commissioners, with Ms. Dames and Mr. Rashid taking the lead on this matter as it relates to equitable funding to be considered for the Lyric since it's being considered for the PAMM.

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The chair asked that items requiring approval for expenditure of BAAB Trust funds be moved up on the agenda. Ms. Boone-Fye requested approval to have the BAAB brochure updated as well as final expenditures for the Pillars Awards. It was moved by Ms. Bowen Bell, seconded by Mr. Mumford and put up for vote. It passed without dissent. The Chair then requested that members introduce themselves, particularly since we have two new members in attendance. New members Jeff Cazeau and Francois Adrien introduced themselves as well as our guests, Ronald Fulton and Renita Samuels.

Program Officer's Report:

Ms Boone-Fye gave an update on the results of the May 5th Village Dialogue reporting that Mr. Ortiz is working on a project involving several local banks. Mr. Rashid gave an update on the West Grove Trolley Station saying that negotiations are still underway as to the repurposing of the station to suit the needs of the surrounding community. On the 50th Anniversary of the Civil Rights observance, Ms. Boone-Fye provided commentary on Mr. Johnson's speech at the event which was not as well attended as the organizers hoped it would be. In any case, Mr. Johnson represented the BAAB well. The School Board will be meeting on the GOB issue on July 18th and members are encouraged to attend. There is still no update Miami-Dade County Disparity study; however Ms. Boone-Fye will follow through and request information which will be shared with the board. The Miami-Dade 2014-2015 budget hearings are forthcoming and members are urged to pay strict attention to how the budget will impact programs or public services that serve our constituents. The last item is on the violence happening in the Liberty City and surrounding communities. Mr. Lionel Lighbourne has requested to address the board at our next meeting which is in September.

The chair then requested that our newest members introduce and tell those in attendance a little about themselves, which was done. The new members are Attorney Jeff Cazeau who was appointed by Commissioner Jean Monestime (District 2) and and Mr. Francois Adrien who was appointed by Commissioner Dennis Moss (District 9).

Committee Reports:

Black Heritage Planning: Mr. Mumford reported that we had a successful year and that planning would begin early for 2015 Black Heritage activities.

Education: Ms. McMillon phoned earlier to say that she would like to appear in front of the School Board in September to address several issues impacting minority students including poor school performance in predominantly inner schools as well as mental health—particularly for those students impacted by violence.

Health Care: Ms. Bowen-Bell gave a brief update on the Urgent Inc. project and her work with several community based organizations on behalf of the BAAB.

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Housing: Mr. Mumford announced that he would be working with his church Antioch of Carol City on a housing workshop later this month and in August. He will also work with Mr. Johnson and Mr. Rashid on a project aimed at increasing access to funds for people who are looking into homeownership. Mr. Fabien also volunteered to work with all three on this project since he has experience in the real estate arena.

Crisis Intervention/Respect Life: Ms. Dames reported that she would be working on the part two of the forum held at Florida Memorial University along with Mr. Jacques Laroche either the end of September or October to be held in the South Dade area.

Economic Development: Mr. Rashid will be working to finalize several projects, including the one in the West Grove area where the Coconut Grove Collaborative CDC is currently building a housing project. He will also be working to increase the availability of homeownership funding.

Budget & Finance: (No report)

Social Media & Marketing: Mr. Fabien has requested that our newest member Mr. Francois Adrien be requested to head this committee. Mr. Adrien said that he would consider it after receiving an update on responsibilities, etc.

Legislative Affairs: (no report)

HAERC Update (501c3) Mr. Fabien reported that he is still working with community based organizations on hurricane preparedness.

Ms. Renita Holmes and Mr. Fulton reiterated their concerns for the conditions affecting the Black community and their commitment to work with the board to help.

Announcements/Discussion/Adjournment: Ms. Boone reminded members that there would be no meeting in August.

With all business being covered, the chair asked for a motion to adjourn which was provided and the meeting ended at 12:40 p.m.