

Minutes for Black Affairs Advisory Board

September 3, 2014

10:00 a.m.

Stephen P. Clark Government Center

10th Floor Conference Room

Quorum: Yes

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

Excused: Ms. Priscilla Dames; Francois Adrien

Guests: Lionel Lightbourne (Belafonte Tacolcy)

Meeting opened at 10:20 a.m. Mr. Johnson asked that members review the agenda and entertained a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Mumford moved and it was seconded by Mr. Rashid to approve the agenda. All members present voted to approve the agenda. He then asked that members review the minutes of July 9, 2014. Following a review, it was moved by Mr. Wright and seconded by Mr. Mumford that the minutes be approved. Ms. Lazarre had one correction: Ms. Boone-Fye had requested that Ms. Lazarre review the budget process and report back to the board and that was not included in the minutes. Following an amended motion by Ms. Lazarre, it was seconded by Mr. Wright and approved by the board.

Chair's report:

Mr. Johnson had one issue to report on and that was the "Black Affairs Advisory Board's Homeownership Initiative" that we are undertaking with Sabadell Bank. To summarize the BAAB discussed putting together a symposium for those in the Black community who are in the market to buy homes but were precluded based on their location. Sabadell Bank was among the banks approached to be part of this initiative and they have agreed to put aside \$2 million for a loan program, with a 10% down; 90% financing with a 10 year adjustable rate mortgage; no PMI at 3.58% with relaxed credit requirements. Mr. Rashid as part of the Economic Development committee was included in the negotiation process and we are moving ahead with the initiative. Ms. Boone-Fye will be putting together a reception for September 17th at Sabadell Bank's headquarters and will send invites to all members and several community involved members such as Mayor Oliver Gilbert; Congresswoman Frederica Wilson are among those who have been invited to learn more. As soon as most of the particulars are ironed out it will be provided to the general community as a means of increasing homeownership in the Black community. We hope to work with the Miami-Dade Chamber of Commerce as well as MDEAT and other entities encouraging homeownership. Mr. Lightbourne suggested that the loan type would not be in the best interest of the homeowner since it seems to be more structured for an investment type situation. Mr. Rashid commented that the program would be run in conjunction with homeownership assistance type programs in order to provide support.

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Ms. Lazarre also expressed some concern as to whether this was the best time loan. Mr. Fabien commented that this process should be looked at closer but that for those who the program is geared toward those who may not qualify for traditional loans. Although there are some concerns, as a whole the board wants to move ahead with the initiative since the primary goal is to increase homeownership. Mr. Johnson also spoke on the proposed Black History Museum that would go in front of the Board of County Commissioners. After some discussion, members of the board decided to compose a letter to the Board of County Commissioners calling for "One Museum for One Miami" with the idea that all segments of the community deserve their story to be told.

Program Officer's Report:

Ms Boone-Fye announced that Ms. Dames was still trying to coordinate the second Black World Symposium on the south end. This is part two of the symposium that we did at Florida Memorial University last year. An October date is being looked into.

We are waiting for Commissioner Heyman to make her appointment so that the board membership will be complete. Ms. Lazarre reported on the Sunshine meeting held between Commissioners Heyman and Bovo in regards to the Office of Community Advocacy's staffing. Chairwoman Sosa at the meeting provided an overview of the office's activities since they are under her purview. Ms. Boone-Fye indicated that the budget hearings are taking place shortly and she will keep the board updated.

Environmental Concerns: Mr. Rashid reported that he felt that the trolley station and the Coconut Grove incinerator were at the forefront and that the Coconut Grove Homeowner's/Tenants Association along with the University of Miami School of Law filed a suit with the Federal Transportation Administration and they came back to see that the placement of the trolley station was racially motivated and Coral Gables withdrew their plan to place the Trolley Station in a residential area. As a result, the trolley station which was already built will be repurposed. The group also discovered there were contaminants as a result of the incinerator's (Old Smokey) placement and that some residents' health suffered over a period of time. DERM has said that the level of contamination is acceptable; however, a health study is being conducted with long term residents to determine the effects. A second area is also being looked at near the Amtrak station in northwest Miami-Dade.

Next, the NAACP issued a statement on the City of Miami Policeman that was re-hired—the officer who was involved in the shooting of Travis McNeil. Ms. Boone-Fye will draft a letter of support to the officers. Also, the School Board General Obligation Bond issue will be discussed at an upcoming meeting at the Urban League of Greater Miami, BAC and the NAACP. According to Mr. Holsendorff, the superintendent agreed with 13 of the 15 issues, but no definitive actions have been taken.

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Mr. Cazeau commented that attended an event held by the Pirtle Construction Company held at Norland High School during which the contractor explained how to qualify for contracts. He indicated that they did a good job on certification, however since he is deeply involved in the certification process he has found that it is extremely difficult for minority companies to obtain certification. Unless something is done to clear up the backlog, it will be hard for these businesses to obtain contracts. **He feels that our board should weigh in on this process to see how it can be streamlined so that these businesses can be certified as quickly as possible.** Ms. Boone-Fye will find out the particulars and report back to the board. She will also try to find out the status of the Miami-Dade County Disparity study and report back.

Following this discussion, our guest, Mr. Lionel Lightbourne made a presentation on a public service campaign aimed at combatting the snitch mentality-- “#Wherewilltomorrowfindyou?” that targets young people through social media. He presented the campaign and has requested support from the BAAB. Mr. Wright gave some background on the public service arena and how the industry has changed and volunteered to assist Mr. Lightbourne in this effort and report back to the board.

Ms. Boone-Fye announced that Mr. Lightbourne would be receiving the Peacemaker Award during a ceremony on September 21st on Miami Beach during International Peace Day. Also, she nominated Ms. Lazarre for Legacy Magazine’s Professional Women Award and she will be receiving that award this month.

Ms. Boone-Fye requested permission from the board to expend funds to update our brochure and other handouts over the next two months. Mr. Fabien made the motion and it was seconded by Ms Lazarre. The board approved with the stipulation that the amount is under \$1,000.00. Financial disclosure forms are requested for all members and most have complied.

Committee Reports:

Black Heritage Planning: Mr. Wright read a note from Aliyah Brown, one of our recipients who received a Young Pillars scholarship who due to travelling to FSU for the summer term thanked the BAAB for the scholarship which enabled her to purchase books for the term. Another student, Andre Stroman sent a note as well. Ms. Lazarre requested that at next year’s Pillars Awards we incorporate “success stories” in our program. Ms. Boone-Fye mentioned one other student—a drama major—who is now headlining a show in Orlando/Disney.

Education: Ms. McMillon reported on the inconsistencies in providing updated technology to minority students—particularly those who need it the most and that a few schools are being closed because they are not technologically ready—however most of these schools serve African American students. She has met with several community groups as well as attended meetings that Superintendent Carvallho has attended and she is concerned with the lack of resources available to several schools. Mr. Wright also commented on the issue of overcrowding in schools which was addressed by Mr. Johnson and Ms. Bowen-Bell who gave a breakdown of how State funding affects classroom size and composition.

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Health Care: Ms. Bowen Bell updated the board on the fact that September is “National Suicide Prevention Month” and that she will be meeting with someone from Switchboard Miami on National Suicide Prevention Day which is September 10th and she will send Ms. Boone-Fye an update. She did a social media campaign on the issue of and in view of Robin Williams’ suicide she made it a point to get the word out on mental illness and other factors affecting this issue. She also shared that September 6th Jackson Memorial Hospital and other sponsors will be holding a free CPR instruction event from 9 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. October is both Domestic Violence and Breast Cancer Awareness month and she will be looking to see who is having events so that she can coordinate involvement on behalf of the board.

Housing: No report

Crisis Intervention/Respect Life: No report

Economic Development: Mr. Rashid reported that he is currently working on an economic alignment within Miami-Dade—especially as it relates to the TUAs (Target Urban Areas). He will be meeting with Ms. Sherry Gervais from the Beacon Council and will give an update at the next meeting. He strongly urged the BAAB members to stand behind the Commissioners as it relates to the economic development of our communities—especially those that utilize County funds. There was some question as to the status of the Miami-Dade County Disparity Study. There was a request to set up a meeting with Larry Williams (CEO) of the Beacon Council.

Budget & Finance: (No report)

Social Media & Marketing: Mr. Adrien has travelled—no report.

Legislative Affairs: Ms. Gordon had to attend court—no report.

HAERC Update (501c3) Mr. Fabien reported that he tried to attend a meeting with the American Red Cross but the meeting place had been sold and they were not given access. He also attended a workshop on the funds Miami-Dade County has for first-time homebuyers with MDEAT and learned about the resources available for those in the market for homes.

Budget: Ms. Lazarre distributed her report on the Mayor’s budget and gave an update on the process. She attended several meetings regarding the budget and questioned the rationale for attending these meetings as it relates to our constituency.

Announcements/Discussion/Adjournment: None

With all business being covered, the chair asked for a motion to adjourn which was provided and the meeting ended at 12:10 p.m.

