

## Minutes for Black Affairs Advisory Board

January 7, 2015

10:00 a.m.

Stephen P. Clark Government Center/10th Floor Conference Room

Quorum:

Present: Stephen Hunter Johnson; Priscilla Dames-Blake; Tracey Bowen –Bell; Gerri Lazarre; Jeff Cazeau; Antonio Crawford; D.J. Fabien; Dannie McMillon; Francois Adrien; Jihad Rashid.

Excused: Rene Gordon; Ronald Mumford; Edgar Wright

Guests: Temidayo Aginbeh; David Maer and Brian Acevedo (State Attorney's Office);

Staff: Retha Boone-Fye

Meeting opened at 10:20 a.m. Ms. Tracey Bowen Bell offered inspirational prayer. Mr. Johnson opened the meeting and since we did not have quorum, he tabled approval of the agenda until a quorum was present. He moved directly to the Chair's report. Since we had several guests, he decided to introduce our guests. The guests are Brian Acevedo and David Maer from the State Attorney's Office. Mr. Maer gave a brief overview of his job and how his office is really interested in community relations and economic opportunity. Mr. Johnson thanked them for coming and touched on election fraud and also mentioned the fact that the Black community is concerned with the violence happening in our community. He asked what the BAAB could do to support the efforts to curb crime and violence. Mr. Maer indicated that the State Attorney's Office is having difficulty in gaining the trust of law enforcement and turning the tide of tolerating unlawful activities. He gave samples of how detectives often have difficulty identifying suspects due to the "no snitching" culture which seems to permeate the community. He is understanding of the fact that fear may be a factor but the State Attorney's Office is stymied by this factor. Mr. Johnson questioned the gang culture but Mr. Maer said that the gang culture has not been that much of a factor in Miami. The predominant factor now is dealing with identity theft as opposed to drugs. Ms. Dames commented that our board has worked with the SAO as well as the City of Miami Beach and is willing to work with law enforcement in dealing with these issues through her committee, which is Respect Life/Intervention. Mr. Maer indicated that he would be more than willing to work with our board and is anxious to team with our board and will attend monthly meetings if necessary. Temidayo Aginbeh introduced herself and gave her background as well as her efforts to educate the community as to their rights. Mr. Johnson welcomed input from all visitors and invited them to help the BAAB with our efforts to better the community.

Next, Assistant Chief Loretta Hill, who was recruited by City of Miami Beach Police Chief Oates, addressed the BAAB. She has been in Miami for five months, originally from Arlington, Texas and has spent most of her career in Texas. She retired from that department before being recruited by City Manager Jimmy Morales. She is excited about the opportunity to serve here in South Florida. Mr. Johnson said that he understands there have been some changes in the Miami Beach Police Department and they are welcome. The BAAB stands ready to provide assistance when needed. He noted the disparity of how Black tourists are treated as opposed to other tourists and he would like to address that issue. He also indicated that we would be more than happy to work with the police department for Urban Beach Weekend.

Mr. Johnson then returned to his report with two pressing issues. One is the January 31<sup>st</sup> Village Dialogue on Afro-Cuban and African American relations at HistoryMiami—especially in view of President Obama’s decision to resume relations between the United States and Cuba. He invited members to attend. Ms. Boone-Fye then gave an overview of the panel and the intended agenda. The next issue is the CRB’s call for action regarding the violence that is plaguing our community. He asked that a representative from the BAAB attend the CRB planning meeting this afternoon at 1:00 p.m.

*Program Officer’s Report:*

Ms. Boone-Fye reported that we have a new ordinance which reconstructs our board composition. Also, she will be attending the Sunshine Meeting being called by the new Chair-Commissioner Monestime. She is requesting a nominating committee to add new members to the BAAB as part of the new ordinance. Mr. Johnson reminded the board that Ms. Dames is chairing the nominating committee—other members include Ms. Bowen-Bell; Mr. Cazeau; and Mr. Johnson. We need to have the recommendations submitted by this month. She also shared the NAACP and Urban League recommendation for the School Board’s disparity report. Ms. Boone-Fye also gave an update on the MDC-CRT’s update and our collaboration with the CRB’s “Grief Counseling” initiative. There is a similar model being developed and we will work with the CRB and utilize Catalyst Miami’s input in expanding the concept. She then gave a brief overview of the MDC-CRT brochure and its suggested usage.

Next, Economic Development issues were also discussed by passing out a sample of the construction, infrastructure and other projects currently underway in Miami. By estimates, there are over \$75 Billion in projects or more and the BAAB must press for inclusion of the Black World community in these developments. Next, an update was given on the “My Brother’s Keeper Task Force” which is part of President Obama’s initiative to understand the opportunities and challenges in the lives of boys and youth men of color and other youth. Ms. Boone-Fye was part of the conference call and the BAAB will be part of the Office of Community Advocacy’s effort to hold a local Village Dialogue on the ‘MBK’ initiative hopefully in April. Administrative issues include the Clerk’s Office and how members must provide their updated Financial Report or risk being removed from the board. Ms. Boone-Fye then gave an update on the 2015-2016 Black World Guide. She requested assistance from MDEAT and then requested Board approval for the printing and paying a dedicated researcher for the Black World Guide as well as updating our collateral materials. There was some discussion on the approximate cost. Based on the cost from the last one, we are looking at approximately \$7,000 for the printing and \$1,500 for research. Mr. Johnson also asked that the website be reviewed and brought up to date. Following that discussion, a motion was made by Ms. McMillon and seconded by Mr. Cazeau. A vote followed and the request was granted to pursue both projects based on providing anticipated costs. Ms. Dames also moved and Ms. McMillon seconded that we request additional staff from the Chair’s office. It passed without opposition. Ms. Boone-Fye suggested that as opposed to requesting new staff, OCAD request an administrative staff person be loaned from another department.

(more)

Since we now had a quorum, Mr. Johnson asked for approval of the minutes, which passed with two amendments: Ms. Dames' designation as the chair of the nominating committee and Ms. Lazarre's appointment to the Jackson Bond Advisory instead of "Finance" committee. The minutes were approved. Next, the board discussed updating the BAAB's collateral materials. Mr. Wright moved in favor of and Ms. McMillon seconded. The motion carried without dissent. Ms Boone-Fye will follow through.

*Committee Reports:*

**Black Heritage Planning:** Ms. Boone-Fye requested that anyone who has events for Black History Month send the info to her ASAP. She has Feb. 8<sup>th</sup> Gospel fest event with Commissioner Moss. A grant application was submitted and approved for a reimbursable grant. There was some question on the entertainment for gospel fest, and Le'Andria Johnson has been selected and a contract is pending. On February 7<sup>th</sup>, Commissioner Jordan's event will be held at Betty Ferguson Recreational Center. So far, the display in the Lobby has been confirmed. Ms. Wright's mother-in-law passed and a card will be delivered to his family.

**Education:** Ms. McMillon gave an update on the Stop the Violence in Arcola Park rally held by Chairman Monestime. She mentioned that economic development was at the forefront of the discussion. She had copies of the disparity report and noted that recommendations were made by the Urban League and the NAACP. The Superintendent attended a meeting with both parties at the Urban League, and according to Mr. Fair, the community has the responsibility to make sure these recommendations are followed through. On January 12<sup>th</sup> there will be a community forum on the "School to Jailhouse Pipeline" to talk about what we can do to limit the number of suspensions, etc. There are two other events scheduled for January sponsored by Power U that she will keep us up to date. Ms. Boone-Fye also reiterated our commitment to making sure that we keep Bilingual education on the forefront.

**Housing:** Ms. Boone-Fye announced that she has contacted the representatives of Sabadell Bank to work on becoming a certified lender with the Housing Finance Authority.

**Health:** Ms. Bowen-Bell reported that she has been in contact with the Ms. Veronica Brown for the Stem Cell/Life Chord project and that she will keep us posted. Mr. Johnson suggested that a group is doing a health fair in May that this board may want to work with.

**Crisis Intervention/Respect Life!:** Ms Dames told the board that we will be having a Village Dialogue on the South Dade area for an action planning session in conjunction with UCOMB. The recommendation will be for a February 19<sup>th</sup> dialogue which will feature a way to provide answers and suggestions as opposed to just "talk." The committee wants involvement from a panel representative of the South end and following the dialogue we have break out groups which will make feasible and doable action steps. She is also requesting that we hold one of our meetings on the South end as well and invite the police department to attend the meeting.

(more)

Mr. Johnson requested that we look into the April meeting being held in the South Dade area. Mr. Rashid also asked that we consider the Frankie Rolle Center. The consensus was for the South Dade area.

*Economic Development:* Mr. Rashid reported that the committee has been tasked with the mission of understanding the role and operating procedures of government and private organizations that deal with economic development such as transportation, TUAs; labor pools; housing and construction. Toward that goal he has been meeting with organizations such as the Miami-Dade Chamber, MDEAT and others that deal with making sure that opportunities that become available to the community are available to all members of our community. He is strategizing working of a "White Paper" that will give us a better understanding of how to refocus and circulate funds within our community. Ms. Dames requested that once the White Paper is developed, we publish it in *The Miami Herald* and other community newspapers.

*Finance:* A report will be provided at the next meeting.

*Social Media and Marketing:* Mr. Adrien asked that everyone make sure to request that their friends "follow" the BAAB Facebook page. Mr. Fabien has already placed today's meeting on our page. Mr. Johnson requested that photos be taken of our members at the next meeting.

*Legislative Affairs:* Mr. Cazeau indicated that he is Chairman Monestime's appointee and that we have a unique opportunity to accomplish great things. Also, he has not had the opportunity to meet with Ms. Gordon but he will do so ASAP.

*HAERC (501C3):* Mr. Fabien reported that he will be travelling to Haiti next week in anticipation of the observation of the 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the earthquake.

*Announcements:* Ms. Boone-Fye let members know that the Greater Miami Job Corp is recruiting young people between the ages of 18-24. She also shared the CRB's outreach effort to encourage conversations between the community and police. Mr. Johnson reiterated his desire that our committees meet on a monthly basis.

With all business being covered, the chair asked for a motion to adjourn which was provided and the meeting ended at 12:15 p.m.