

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY COMMISSION FOR WOMEN
111 N.W. 1st Street, Suite 1034, Miami, FL 33128
Minutes of Meeting of February 25, 2015

Present: Clora Adkins, Leah Blumenfeld, Marie Eloi, Monica Interian, Viviana Jordan, Beverly Nixon, Kit Rafferty, Linda Robinson, Raisa Sequeira, Phyllis Sloan-Simpkins, Marie Woodson, and Mara Zapata

Excused: Nordis Alvarez, Sharon Kendrick-Johnson, Michelle Dunaj Lucking, Francesca Menes, Eveline Pierre, and Dona Zemo

Staff: Laura Morilla

Chair Mara Zapata commenced the meeting at 5:45 p.m. and welcomed everyone.

First there was a **presentation**, by Victor Williams, Special Agent for ICE, Dept. of Homeland Security, in the Human Trafficking Group, about human trafficking in South Florida. Per Victor, human trafficking is arguably the second most common crime in the world and is a \$9.5 billion industry in the U.S. Approximately 300,000 children are at risk of being commercially sexually exploited children and the average age of entry into prostitution for a child victim in the U.S. A big issue nationwide is the lack of shelter/home beds from underage victims. Safe Harbor laws give police officers the ability to not arrest the child; the child is the victim. But the problem is lack of programs and safe houses.

“Force, fraud and coercion” are the key words for victims 18 and older. Smuggling and trafficking are not the same thing. Smuggling is a crime against the border, while trafficking is a crime against the person/exploiting a vulnerability.

Victor believes that trafficking can be curtailed with education and awareness, similar to what has happened with the issue of domestic violence over the years. He also stated that the laws have to be enforced against the johns so that the johns get arrested too; no more discretion when it comes to not arresting the johns. He also said that there is a new law in Florida that states that all medical students must have human trafficking training.

Labor trafficking (domestic servitude, sweatshops, agriculture, etc.) is also a big problem, more so than sex trafficking. Street beggars can also be victims of human trafficking. The Polaris Project is a national human trafficking resource center that Victor recommends for information and assistance to victims. The next meeting of the South Florida Human Trafficking Task Force is on March 27 at the Nova University Miramar campus.

Linda asked Victor what could the CFW do to help. Victor said education and housing; there is a need for real estate to place people. Victor also praised the State Attorney Office’s for its work in this area.

At this point there was a quorum.

Leah moved to approve the agenda and Viviana seconded the motion. The motion passed and **the agenda was approved.**

Leah moved to approve the minutes of the CFW meeting of 02/25/15 and Marie Woodson seconded the motion. The motion passed and **the minutes were approved.**

Next, the **Committee Reports** were presented.

Legislative Committee. Leah reviewed the written report of the committee meeting of 02/03/15 and gave an update. Since the committee met, one of the abortion bills in the Legislature now has a companion bill, SB 920. Leah recommended that the CFW oppose the bill and include this bill in the letter to the legislators. The Florida Kidcare bill also has a companion bill now.

At this point Mara took two items out of order for a vote, while there was still quorum, because one CFW member had to leave the meeting. Phyllis moved to approve payment of the NACW annual dues of \$275. Linda seconded the motion, and **the motion passed.** Phyllis moved that the CFW co-sponsor the Young Women's Leadership Symposium of April 11 in the amount of \$1000. Kit seconded the motion, and **the motion passed.**

Going back to the Legislative Committee report, Leah explained that HB 443, the domestic violence bill that would enhance penalties for a third violation of a DV injunction, now has a companion bill, SB 804. Leah recommended that the CFW support the bill.

Laura reported that she and Mara attended the Good Government Initiative's Legislative Priorities seminar yesterday.

Events and Fundraising Committee. Laura briefly reviewed the written committee report. Laura will set up the lobby display for Women's History Month on Monday, March 2, at 10:30 a.m.

Laura reported that she and Raisa met with staff from the Young Women's Preparatory Academy on February 12 to discuss the scholarship and get their input. Details of the meeting are in the written committee report.

Communications Committee. Viviana reviewed the written committee report. Regarding the issue of promoting the CFW and Women's History Month on TV, the idea is to be proactive and reach out to the TV stations to offer stories. Viviana explained that she has been working with a friend at the Public School's media office who has a good relationship with TV producers and who will help Viviana. Viviana specifically mentioned the In the Company of Women awards and the Julia Tuttle statue. Viviana will do the write up and send it to her friend.

Mara mentioned that Miami-Dade College has a lot of events in March for Women's History Month and asked CFW members to consider speaking at some of the events. Mara will email Laura with more information.

Old Business. Mara reminded everyone to attend the In the Company of Women awards reception on March 5. The CFW is a co-sponsor of the event.

Laura gave a quick update on "The Envelope Please" Initiative that the CFW is supporting. The Doral CFW is supporting the Initiative and will bring this to the attention of the Doral City Council and will also reach out to the Trump Doral Resort to try to get the Resort to provide the envelopes in the rooms.

The CFW meeting in March was changed from March 25 to March 26 to accommodate those members who may be attending the Florida COSW Women's Day at the Capitol event in Tallahassee.

Regarding the proposal to adopt a "local CEDAW" for Miami-Dade County, a meeting has been scheduled with Commissioner Daniella Levine Cava on March 11 at noon. All CFW members are encouraged to attend.

Attendance at Community Events. Leah attended the FIU Vagina Monologues event. Raisa attended the One Billion Rising event, the human trafficking conference at UM, and the School Board presentation for Women's History Month. Monica attended the UM human trafficking conference as did Clara. Kit attended Senator Dwight Bullard's legislative issues meeting and the United Teachers of Dade (UTD) meeting on school testing. Noreen did a presentation about Geeki Girls at the Miami Children's Museum. Mara attended the swearing in ceremony for new School Board Member Lubby Navarro. Mara and Laura attended the Gloria Steinheim event at UM.

Noreen suggested that the CFW host a panel discussion with film makers about how women are portrayed/presented in the movies.

Announcements. Phyllis announced that her new grandson was born last month.

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Laura Morilla
Recorder