

Minutes for Black Affairs Advisory Board

March 11, 2015

10:00 a.m.

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

Quorum: Yes

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

Rene Gordon; Ronald Mumford

Excused: Gerri Lazzarre, Edgar Wright

Guests: Richard Nelson (United Senator Marco Rubio's Office); David Maier & Janeen Jones (State Attorney's Office); Mr. Chalk (Sickle Cell)

Staff: Retha Boone-Fye

Meeting opened at 10:20 a.m. Mr. Richard Nelson offered the opening meditation. In the Chair's absence, Mr. Ronald Mumford requested that introductions be made. Following introductions, Mr. Mumford asked that our guests make their presentation. Mr. Richard Nelson, made a brief presentation on his role as a community organizer for Senator Rubio in the African American and Haitian American communities. He said that he is here to help as part of the Senator's Mobile Office and willing to provide assistance in any way possible. Mr. Zimbalist Chalk from the Sickle Cell Foundation gave an update on the first location in the state for sickle cell patients. Florida has about 40k patients with sickle cell with the concentration in Miami-Dade and Broward County residents. He is requesting our support for an event to be held on March 29th, a 5k "Tri-Sickle" fundraiser which will benefit the foundation and support a camp for sickle cell patients. The foundation has received Medicaid certification and they are willing to provide support to patients. Following Mr. Chalk's presentation, David Maier from the State Attorney's Office introduced Ms. Jones—also from the SAO, and asked that she be made aware of the activities and purpose of the board. Mr. Maier gave an update on the types of activities performed by the SAO such as seal and expunge workshops; child support enforcement and assistance as well as other related issues. Ms. Boone-Fye requested an update on the SAO's Diversion programs. Mr. Maeir indicated that he will contact Mr. Horne regarding this diversion program and report back. Ms. Dames would like to meet with him and work to streamline our efforts in this arena since it comes under her committee. Ms. Jones' specialty is child support enforcement and she will work with us on this area. Ms. McMillon requested info on a bill which would seek to reduce penalties for juveniles—part of a civil citation process which was pioneered by the Black Affairs Advisory Board. Mr. Maier agreed that we should seek to decriminalize youth and volunteered to help the board in this area. At this point Ms. Boone-Fye requested that members step out to take individual photos for the upcoming Black World Guide.

At that point, Mr. Johnson joined the meeting and assumed chairing the meeting. The agenda and minutes were reviewed and approved. Mr. Johnson then gave an update on the January 31st Village Dialogue on Afro-Cuban and African American relations. As a result, a follow up educational trip is planned to Cuba June 10-12. Mr. Johnson does plan to travel in order to have a clearer picture of what the normalization of relations with Cuba will have on both the United States and the African Diaspora. This trip will give members an opportunity to see first-hand Cuba and its people. He then addressed the issue of filling the new 13 members for the board.

Program Officer's Report:

Ms. Boone-Fye reported that the Black World Symposium scheduled for February had to be postponed. For the MD-CRT, we are still meeting with the CRB on the Grief-Counseling initiative aspect. Economic Development projects—she will present a detailed chart on the number of projects at a future meeting. The South Dade meeting needs to be rescheduled and she will meet with Ms. Dames on this issue. She then gave an update on “My Brother’s Keeper Presidential Task Force.” Ms. Boone-Fye has scheduled the BCC Chamber for April 9th and she will provide details at a later date. Ms. Dames will be updated on a regularly scheduled basis. Ms. Boone-Fye then congratulated Ms. Gordon for her participation in the Black History Month event at the Black Police Precinct.

A short presentation was made for the Black World Guide and Ms. Boone-Fye requested that members assist her by submitting listings for the guide. She then requested approval for this board to address action items. Mr. Mumford moved and Mr. Rashid seconded the motion to approve working with MDEAT on the Black World Guide as well as the expenditures for Black History Month. Both were approved.

Committee Reports:

Black Heritage Planning: the Pillars Awards is scheduled for June and she is looking for input.

Education: Ms. McMillon gave a brief report on the upcoming school budget and concern for the status of high stakes testing. She is working with a group that will visit legislators' offices here in Miami-Dade to address these and other educationally related issues. She will be attending a meeting tomorrow evening at Miami Jackson in reference to the testing issue that she will attend. There is much concern that some schools are not technologically updated for testing purposes. Also, there is concern that since students are accustomed to typing they may be at a disadvantage. Mr. Johnson requested that we still try to schedule a meeting with the superintendent. Ms. Boone-Fye also reiterated our commitment to making sure that we keep Bilingual education on the forefront.

Housing: Mr. Mumford announced that there will be a housing workshop at Antioch in order to assist potential homeownerships in getting their credit straight in May. Ms. Dames also mentioned that the Miami-Dade Chamber is putting together a month long workshop for that purpose as well. Ms. Maeir also added that the SAO would like to be involved as well.

Health Care: Ms. Bowen-Bell reported that she has been in contact with several community people in order to put together a Health and Wellness committee. She is concentrating on heart disease, sickle cell; diabetes, cancer, HIV, sexual diseases, domestic violence, etc. She would like to have people who are already involved in these issues. Ms. Boone-Fye suggested Dr. Cheryl Holder to be a part of the group. Mr. Johnson suggested that the 100 Black Men will be holding a medical summer camp for high school students and he will put her in touch with the coordinator of this event.

Economic Development: Mr. Rashid reported that the committee is involved in capturing the economic health of our community. From a social engineering standpoint, he is willing to work with the chair on putting together a White Paper on this issue. There is an array of economic programs throughout the county and we should find a way for them to work closer together to the benefit of our community.

Crisis Intervention/Respect Life!: Ms Dames announced that the Village Dialogue for the South is on her radar and that she is hopeful that we have it. She is also chairing the nominating committee and that we are looking for potential members by requesting that all members provide assistance by helping in this effort. The announcement should be standardized so that all the openings are publicized for all the boards according to the ordinance. Mr. Johnson asked that the board vacancies be completed by June 2015. He is suggesting that we go to selected organizations and request a representative as well. Mr. Nelson suggested that a youth component be added as well and he is willing to work with us on this process. Mr. Johnson suggested that Mr. Nelson submit his resume to become part of the board. Ms. Dames also brought to the attention of the board "Black Tech Week" which was recently held. She noted the importance of this event and that our board needs to align with them for the purpose of letting them know we support them and that we want to let them know that the BAAB is supportive of keeping young talent in the county. She has met with Commissioner Jordan and requested that they be recognized. She would like a letter to come from this board and she will provide the details.

Finance: no report

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: no report.

Social Media and Marketing: Mr. Adrien announced that we have reached 450 “Friends” on our Facebook page, which is half our goal. She will be sending photos to Mr. Adrien.

Legislative Affairs: Mr. Cazeau said that the chair will be travelling to Tallahassee for Dade Days in Tallahassee later this month. Two items of concern is annexation within the County and he will be following this issue. There are several communities that are trying to incorporate and there is a dispute between Opa-Locka and another incorporated city. Another issue is water rates between the City of North Miami and Miami Gardens. He will continue to monitor these issues. Ms. Dames suggested that we do a “white paper” for each of these issues.

HAERC (501C3): Mr. Fabien was in Haiti for the remembrance of the earthquake. The event was overshadowed by the politics but otherwise there was nothing serious to report.

New Business: Mr. Johnson announced that there is a movement to holding an annual HBCU picnic. He will provide details for the event which has suggested for some time in June.

Announcements: April 25-26 is the date for Ms. Dames’ “We’re Going Somewhere” women’s retreat in conjunction with the Miami-Dade Chamber and Wingspan Seminar at the Newport Beachside Resort and she would like to invite the board.

Mr. Chalk reiterated that he would like to have our support for the Sickle Cell organization and the fact that participants can be covered by Medicaid.

Mr. Johnson asked that the BAAB work with Mr. Morris Copeland with the JAC’s new Mentor Program to develop a coalition of organizations that would work with young men of color between the ages of 9-14. The suggestion was made that we utilize “My Brother’s Keeper” as an implementation tool for this effort.

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.

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