

Minutes for Black Affairs Advisory Board

April 1, 2015

10:00 a.m.

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

Quorum: Yes

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

Excused: Dannie McMillon; Tracey Bowen –Bell; Rene Gordon; Edgar Wright; Ronald Mumford

Guests: Richard Nelson (United Senator Marco Rubio's Office)

Staff: Retha Boone-Fye

Meeting opened at 10:29 a.m. Mr. Francois Adrien provided the meditation and Mr. Cazeau moved to approve the agenda and Mr. Crawford seconded. The agenda was approved. Ms. Boone-Fye asked that the approval of minutes be tabled since they were not available.

Chair's Report: Ms. Johnson reported that he had spoken with Mr. Morris Copeland in reference to a program aimed at mentoring young males between the ages of 9-13. The plan would involve selecting 200 males who would be screened and referred through the Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC) and 20 organizations that would agree to mentor and monitor these young men. Mr. Copeland has available funding for the program and would like to have it begin in June. The South Florida 100 Black Men has committed to becoming the first to sign up for this initiative. It could possibly be tied in with the "My Brother's Keeper" Presidential initiative and act as a prototype/demonstrative program which would qualify for additional funding. Mr. Johnson also announced that he has a scheduled meeting with Mayor Gimenez to discuss a summer employment program for youth focusing on career possibilities. Mr. Nelson also recommended that we partner with university or college students. Ms. Boone-Fye mentioned the Black Male College Explorers program at Florida Memorial University that could possibly be incorporated. Also mentioned was the Job Corp as another available program for young people.

Program Officer's Report:

Ms. Boone-Fye reported on the status of the new BAAB ordinance/membership and training. She will be following up on the status of our members with Ms. Bofill at the Elections department. She will be meeting with Ms. Dames and Mr. Laroche to reschedule the South Dade symposium and bring the board up to date. She then discussed the Black World Guide and requested that members take a final look and provide changes to her by the end of the day. MDEAT is collaborating with us on this project and it will also go on our website as well as theirs. She shared the new brochure for the MDC-CRT and updated the status of the CRB collaboration for the Grief Counseling component. A letter from the BAAB was sent to the parents of the two young men who were slain along with a copy of the new MDC-CRT brochure. This will hopefully provide assistance to residents who experience losses. A community meeting has been scheduled for "My Brother's Keeper" in April in the BCC Chamber.

Ms. Boone said that the Pillars Awards will be held in June and she needs approval to expend funds for the event. It was moved by Ms. Lazarre and it was seconded by Mr. Adrien. It passed without opposition. She also discussed the settlement agreement for the 2015 Gospel fest which exceeded our budget. A report will be given at the next meeting. On another note, Ms. Boone-Fye would like for the board to consider holding a dialogue that would incorporate all the African Diaspora nationalities next year in the BCC Chamber. It would be in a “United Nations” type format where delegates would represent their various countries.

Committee Reports:

Social Media and Marketing: Mr. Adrien announced that he had created an Instagram and Twitter Account for the Board is willing to have each member post information. He gave instructions on how to post and will be sharing the board’s activities as well as protocol on what and when to share. There was some discussion on the BAAB Facebook page and how we need to maintain it. Mr. Nelson requested that we post our logo on the Instagram accounts of local and younger community members.

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. There is much concern that some schools are not technologically updated for testing purposes. Also, there is concern that since students are not 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: No report

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 and Mr. Johnson will be meeting on April 7th to work on the White Paper for Economic development as it relates to the Black community. Mr. Rashid feels that there is a need to “trap” the dollars that circulate within the Black community and they will discuss ways in which to do this. Ms. Lazarre announced that there are a few contracts that will be in the pipeline such as the school board bond issue as well as the Jackson Hospital bond issue.

Crisis Intervention/Respect Life!: Ms Dames spoke on the Black Code Miami summit that's being planned in Miami and she wants us to be involved. Commissioner Dottie Johnson is leading the charge and Ms. Dames will be attending on April 21st and she will be working on a support letter.

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 so that they can be posted on our Facebook page.

Legislative Affairs: Mr. Cazeau reported that he spent a few days in Tallahassee with the Chair and he is concerned with the MDX issue which he feels is important. There is a big push for mass transportation issue—there is going to be a link between Miami Beach and Miami as well as All Aboard Florida. In his talk with elected officials, he feels that our community was promised mass transit in the past and we must make sure that the promises made must be kept. The MDX issue is a board of 13 with the BCC appointing seven of the members. There is a movement to have Tallahassee in control of the process and he is concerned with the restructuring process. So we need to monitor this process and make sure that the tax dollars that we spend are redirected to our community as opposed to funding transportation systems that do not benefit our communities. He will provide a statement on the transportation issue and the annexation issue. Ms. Dames asked that he write a statement on both these issues so that we can send it to our various communities. There was some discussion on how we can be a part of the conversation since transportation is a major issue impacting our constituents. There was a discussion on how to collectively hold a community based activity aimed at uniting the African diaspora—for next year. Activities such as Goombay were brought up as an example. Mr. Rashid had a meeting with the Bahamian consulate and would like to see if the festival can be revived. Ms. Lazarre opined that this issue should be expanded to include all peoples of African descent instead. Future discussions will be held to see how we can make this work as an international type fair. The Black Affairs Advisory Board should look into a large event between April – October of 2016. This would be a "Black or African Diaspora Fair." Several members volunteered to work on this project. Ms. Lazarre Indicated that she would prefer that the BAAB be in charge of this major event instead of just having the Heritage Planning Committee be in charge.

HAERC (501C3): No report

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. She also asked that the board support an African American art gallery in Liberty City. The chair wants to make sure that Chief Oates from Miami Beach is invited to our next meeting so that we can discuss "Urban Beach Weekend." A further discussion followed on how we should try to capture the dollars that are being spent that weekend such as a concert or something that would have these tourists encouraged to attend. Mr. Rashid challenged the board to find ways in which we can utilize events such as this to keep the funds in our community. Mr. Johnson suggested following the Overtown Music Festival example.

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.

#