

Minutes for Black Affairs Advisory Board

May 6, 2015

10:00 a.m.

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

Quorum: No

Present: Priscilla Dames, Edgar Wright, D.J. Fabien; Jihad Rashid; Jeff Cazeau; Antonio Crawford

Excused/Absent: Stephen Hunter Johnson; Gerri Lazarre; Ronald Mumford; Dannie McMillon; Tracey Bowen –Bell; Rene Gordon; Francois Adrien; Ronald Mumford

Guests: Saliha Nelson (Urgent Inc.); Assistant Chief Laretta Hill, Capt. Henry Doce, Officer Chris Mitchell (Miami Beach Police Department) David Maer (State Attorney's Office).

Staff: Retha Boone-Fye

Chair's Report:

Meeting opened at 10:05 a.m. with meditation provided by Mr. Edgar Wright. Since we did not have quorum, approval of the minutes were tabled until the next meeting. In lieu of the Chair's report, Assistant Chief Laretta Hill from the Miami Beach Police department gave an update on the city's plan for the upcoming Urban Beach Weekend for Memorial Day. The police department is trying to have a positive impact this weekend with an emphasis on safety and making the event an evolving environment as opposed to a negative experience. Capt. Doce mentioned that officers have been instructed that the message is positive and fun. He said that the police officers on the force are more diverse and that is key to the atmosphere. He outlined the "entertainment district" which is where the bulk of the activities will be centered. Assistant Chief Hill commented on the works of the Goodwill Ambassadors and the "God Squad" which have served to tame tensions as well as create a more harmonious atmosphere. The police officers mentioned that arrests and incidents have decreased over the past few years and that this constitutes a major accomplishment. At that point, Mr. Rene Diaz joined the meeting briefly and thanked the police department for attending. Officer Mitchell also reiterated that they have an agreement with WEDR radio which has been very effective in quelling some of the tensions and making the event safer. Yvans Morisseau, who coordinates the Goodwill Ambassadors also briefly attended and made some remarks on the preparation work being done by the Goodwill Ambassadors. Mr. Cazeau asked what the Black Affairs Advisory Board can do to make this event safe for all concerned. The group suggested that the BAAB send out email reminders about the event. Mr. Morisseau commented that members of the BAAB often come out to assist the Goodwill Ambassadors each year. Assistant Chief Hill also mentioned that our board could help by spreading the word that the police are there to help, not hurt. There was some discussion on the businesses and how they are now being more receptive to the visitors. Ms. Boone-Fye mentioned that according to the GMCVB, hotel occupancy is close to 85-90%, so hoteliers are not complaining. The Board is also suggesting looking at other activities for next year that would draw some of the crowd away from Miami Beach. The officers also gave an overview of all the precautions they are taking as well as handling parking issues by introducing a free trolley that will take visitors around.

Following their presentation, Ms. Saliha Nelson gave an update on their second annual youth development conference/expo, July 30-31<sup>st</sup> for youth ages 16-24. This past year they partnered with Miami-Dade College and other community based organizations. Tracey Bowen from our board participated this past year and they are requesting assistance from the BAAB once again and gave instructions on how we can become involved from a sponsorship standpoint. Mr. Cazeau said that he sits on the board of the Bayside Foundation and that he will try to help steer funding to Urgent, Inc.

David Maer from the State Attorney's Office (SAO) announced that there are several Seal and Expunge events being held throughout the community, and that he had to leave but that he is more than willing to work with the BAAB in any capacity.

#### **Program Officer's Report:**

Ms. Boone-Fye requested that members keep Mr. Mumford's father in prayer since he is ill. Since we did not have quorum, Ms. Boone-Fye requested that we table the Black World Festival 2016. She announced that for the June meeting we will have a presentation from Chas Scurr, who is the executive director for the Citizen's Independent Transportation Trust at the June meeting. We will have Ethics training at the start of the meeting. She is in contact with Miami Dade College's Homestead campus in regards to the South Dade Symposium once she speaks with Ms. Dames she will give an update. The Black World Guide collaboration with MDEAT is completed. The MDC-CRT is currently on hold but she will be working with the CRB on this issue. She attended the Chair's Council for Prosperity Initiatives on April 27<sup>th</sup> and provided an update on the two major initiatives which include a study being conducted by FIU's Dr. Ned Murray "Indicators of Income Inequality" as well as the "Ban the Box" on applications which generally precludes many minorities from obtaining meaningful employment based on discriminatory practices by some employers who ask if they have ever been arrested/convicted of any crime. Regarding "My Brother's Keeper," Chairman Monestime went to Washington and found that the Office of Community Advocacy had been involved with this Presidential Initiative, but that he was unaware of our involvement. We also found that there was a large meeting of community organizations that had been held surrounding this issue a few weeks before. Consequently, the April 27<sup>th</sup> event was postponed and we will be joining with Commissioner Edmonson's community meetings so as to avoid duplication of efforts. The Sabadell Bank Mortgage project is not going as well as could be expected. They have decided to modify the program and we should be receiving the updated application process shortly. Since we do not have quorum, approval for expenditures was tabled.

#### **Committee Reports:**

**Black Heritage Planning:** the Pillars Awards is scheduled for June 20<sup>th</sup> at the Miami Shores Country Club. We have several applicants for the scholarship and we have received notification that ICMA, the A. Phillip Institute Miami-Dade Chapter and Dr. Rosalyn Fletcher will be donating scholarships for our selected students. We have reviewed applicants and the students and this year's community pillars will be notified as soon as possible and if any board member has someone they would like to recommend, please do so ASAP.

**Education:** No report

**Housing:** No report

**Health Care:** No report

**Economic Development:** Mr. Rashid and Mr. Johnson met as a committee with Ms. Boone-Fye and they have developed a concept called "Support B.O.B." which stands for "Black Owned Businesses. A website will be developed and a marketing campaign will be developed centered round this theme. The intent is to identify and support Black Owned Businesses. We have secured two website domains for this purpose and we are looking at a kickoff during the month of August.

**Crisis Intervention/Respect Life:** No report

**Finance:** no report

**Social Media and Marketing:** Mr. Adrien has travelled, but he is constantly updating our Facebook page as well as looking at ways to upgrade our social media presence.

**Legislative Affairs:** No report

**HAERC (501C3):** No report

Unfinished Business: Ms. Boone-Fye announced that since Mr. Ramiro Ortiz left, the project he was spearheading surrounding a partnership project with an African American and Hispanic business that was to be a follow up as a result of the Village Dialogue between the Hispanic Affairs Advisory Board and the BAAB was on hold. Also, there is a follow up trip being planned to Cuba as a result of the January 31<sup>st</sup> "Village Dialogue" held on the topic of African American and Afro Cuban relations June 9<sup>th</sup>. The close out grant for the South Dade Gospel fest has to be done.

With all business being covered, the meeting ended at 11:15 a.m.

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