

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY COMMISSION FOR WOMEN
111 N.W. 1st Street, Suite 1034, Miami, FL 33128
Minutes of Meeting of October 28, 2015

Present: Leah Blumenfeld, Odalys Dipp, Monica Interian, Viviana Jordan, Sharon Kendrick-Johnson, Tara Leighton, Noreen Lagault Mendoza, Beverly Nixon, Kit Rafferty, Linda Robinson, Maria Santamaria, Raisa Sequeira, Mara Zapata, and Dona Zemo

Excused: Clora Adkins, Darna Aybar-Guardia, Marie Eloi, Francesca Menes, Phyllis Sloan-Simpkins, and Marie Woodson

Guests: Commissioner Rebeca Sosa; Betty Aguirre, Chief of Staff for Commissioner Rebeca Sosa; Roslyn Buckner, Miami Springs Councilwoman; Alejandra Moreno, Chair of the Doral CFW; JoEllen Phillips from the Curtiss Mansion; Phoebe Zemo; Osvaldo Perez; Meagan Perez from Miami-Dade College; Ana from Miami-Dade College; Deborah Dion; Serena Perez; Dian Alarcon; Deborah Korge from the Women's Fund of Miami-Dade; and Ana Cruz

Staff: Laura Morilla

Chairwoman Mara Zapata commenced the meeting at 6:15 p.m. and welcomed everyone. The meeting was held at the Curtiss Mansion in Miami Springs.

Mara opened up the public forum for comments from the public.

County Commissioner Rebeca Sosa, who represents Miami Springs, made some remarks first. Commissioner Sosa thanked the CFW for having the meeting in Miami Springs in the beautiful and historic Curtiss Mansion. Sosa said that she needed help with the issue of domestic violence and that she planned to introduce legislation addressing various aspects of the problem. Sosa said that services are good but that we need to start at the root of the problem with educating our children. Sosa also said that she would continue to fight for equal pay. She thanked the CFW members for all their hard work and time and invited the CFW to come to her with ideas.

Then Mara recognized Councilwoman Roslyn Buckner from Miami Springs. Councilwoman Buckner is the only woman on the City Council, and she made some brief remarks.

Mara recognized Alejandra Moreno, the Chair of the Doral CFW, and Alejandra said a few words.

JoEllen Phillips, Executive Director of the Curtiss Mansion, talked about the history and restoration of the Mansion and also talked about some of the personal accomplishments of Miami Springs founder Glen Curtiss. Curiss taught the first U.S. woman pilot, the first licensed African American pilot, and the first Cuban Army pilot.

Then Mara introduced her sister, Ana Cruz, who is also an event planner.

At this point, Mara returned to the beginning of the agenda to get approval of the agenda and minutes. Leah moved to approve the meeting agenda and Sharon seconded the motion. The motion passed and the **agenda was approved.**

Viviana moved to approve the minutes of the meeting of 09/30/15 and Linda seconded the motion. The motion passed and the **minutes were approved.**

Now back to the Public Forum and general comments from the public.

Serena Perez, the Gender Justice Coordinator for Florida New Majority, spoke about CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women). Her group brings together women in the community to build a united front to fight for priorities, especially for African American and Latina women. Her group is supportive of CEDAW, the United Nations' human rights framework that has been implemented in several cities, including Miami-Dade County. Serena's group wants to make sure that CEDAW's implementation in Miami-Dade County has teeth. The next step is for Miami-Dade County to issue a report and she wants to provide information and data for the report; information from the trenches. And she also wants to help the CFW with the policy formulation.

Deborah Dion, from South Florida Voices for Working Families, talked about two proposed federal bills on paid sick leave and paid family leave. The federal Health Families Act would establish a national paid sick days standard for workers who work in businesses with 15 or more employees. The Family and Medical Insurance Leave (FAMILY) Act would insure that workers have some income during family or medical leave. Deborah gave some history about trying to make these changes at the local level but explained that the Florida Legislature passed a preemption law to prevent cities and counties from enacting these benefits. So now these changes have to be through national legislative or through a ballot initiative in Florida, which would cost a lot of money and may lead to litigation/court challenges.

Deborah stated that this was a health issue, especially with restaurant workers. Most of the people who would benefit are low wage workers, mostly women. She asked everyone to follow a script and call Senator Nelson to ask him to co-sponsor the bills. She also asked that everyone call Congressman Tim Murphy to ask him to co-sponsor. President Obama is supportive of the paid sick days concept. Kit stated that the U.S. is the only industrialized country that does not offer paid leave.

Meagan Perez, a student at Miami-Dade College who is taking a public speaker class, made some remarks and asked a question as part of an assignment for her class.

Ana, also a Miami-Dade student in that class, asked the CFW what steps the CFW is doing to improve inequality in jobs/workforce. Mara mentioned the CFW involvement in CEDAW, Linda mentioned human trafficking, and Viviana mentioned talking to girls in the community and the YWPA conference. Monica mentioned that the CFW was involved in addressing the problem of domestic violence. Noreen mentioned her Geeki Girls organization and the recent scholarships that the CFW gave to two graduating seniors at the YWPA. Odalys mentioned that there are several foundations that provide scholarships to girls.

Alejandra Moreno, Chair of the Doral CFW, said that they recently screened a film, "Pray the Devil Back to Hell," and that they would be happy to lend the film to the CFW for a screening.

A man in the audience stated that he was concerned about girls involved in violent relationships and that there should be a website where young women could check the backgrounds of potential dates; similar to what employers do.

Raisa mentioned that there is a new app called "Aspire News" that is an intervention/recording and contact for emergencies, but it is disguised.

The **Committee Reports** were then presented.

Nominating Committee. Mara quickly reviewed the Nominating Committee report. The recommended slate of officers is: Mara Zapata for Chair; Sharon Kendrick-Johnson for First Vice Chair; Viviana Jordan for Second Vice Chair; Leah Blumenfeld for Member at Large; and Monica Interian for Member at Large. The election of officers will be held at the November 18th meeting.

Legislative Committee. Leah referred everyone to the written report. Bills are in committee and Leah will make the presentation to the Miami-Dade Legislative Delegation. Kit offered a word of caution with regard to the alimony bill, SB 250, because it would require shared custody no matter what. Noreen raised the issue of the Obama administration's rule reclassifying workers and overtime.

Domestic Violence Committee. Monica reported that she and Laura recently visited The Lodge domestic violence shelter and met with the CEO. The shelter has 56 beds and half of the people there are children. The shelter is funded by the Domestic Violence Oversight Board and the food and beverage tax.

Old Business. The CFW discussed changing the date of the January 2016 meeting so that members can attend the Florida COSW Women's Hall of Fame ceremony and Women's Day at the Capitol on Jan. 27-28, 2016, in Tallahassee. Dona moved to change the meeting date from January 27, 2016, to January 20, 2016. Odalys seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

Mara reported that there were 63 nominations for the In the Company of Women 2016 awards. The Selection Committee is meeting on November 20th and the awards reception is March 3, 2016.

New Business/Attendance at Community Events. Linda said that she attended a meeting recently where she learned that the National Council of Jewish Women is going to be going into schools to talk to the PTAs and teachers about human trafficking. Linda attended a meeting with Commissioner Daniella Levine Cava and all her board appointees. Noreen also attended the meeting.

Raisa said that she would be attending a domestic violence educational event at the University of Miami on Friday. Raisa also explained that she is a sister of a sorority that is having the "Art of Surviving Gala" on November 20th at FIU. The event is a fundraiser for the Safespace Foundation. They need help with sponsorship and it is a good cause. There are different levels of sponsorship and Raisa would like for the CFW to co-sponsor the event. Noreen moved to sponsor the event in the amount of \$250. Odalys seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Laura Morilla
Recorder