

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY COMMISSION FOR WOMEN
111 N.W. 1st Street, Suite 1034, Miami, FL 33128
Minutes of Meeting of November 18, 2015

Present: Darna Aybar-Guardia, Leah Blumenfeld, Marie Eloi, Sharon Kendrick-Johnson, Noreen Lagault Mendoza, Kit Rafferty, Linda Robinson, Marie Woodson, and Mara Zapata

Excused: Clora Adkins, Odalys Dipp, Monica Interian, Viviana Jordan, Tara Leighton, Beverly Nixon, Maria Santamaria, Raissa Sequeira, Phyllis Sloan-Simpkins, and Dona Zemo

Absent: Francesca Menes

Guests: Maribel Balbin and three students from Miami-Dade College - Angelica Tabraue, William Abboud,
and Donwal Macko

Staff: Laura Morilla and Sussy Toyos

Chair Mara Zapata commenced the meeting at 5:45 p.m. and welcomed everyone. Mara introduced a new CFW member, Darna Aybar-Guardia. She also welcomed the students from Miami-Dade College.

First there was a **presentation** by Maribel Balbin regarding the proposed Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to the U.S. Constitution. Maribel explained that she had been on an ERA panel at the University of Miami a couple of months ago, along with CFW member Leah Blumenfeld. Also on the panel was State Representative Lori Berman, who has regularly filed an ERA ratification bill in the Florida legislature for the past few years. Three states still need to ratify the ERA and Florida is one of them. The ERA bill gets filed in Florida but nothing ever happens.

Maribel stated that she has been talking to different groups about what can be done; she has been Facebooking the issue. Maribel mentioned the ERA Coalition out of New York, a group of young women who have been very active on this issue. Various CFW members made several suggestions- a Change.org petition; getting women legislators to support the ERA; a social media campaign; joining forces with other women's commissions in the state; a 1970s still rally; and getting the support of sororities. Maribel requested that the CFW join the League of Women Voters in issuing a joint statement in support of the ERA bill now in the Florida legislature. Maribel wants to keep this issue alive and create more awareness.

Maribel mentioned that she also wants to update the 2007 Women's Fund Report about the Economic Status of Women in Miami-Dade County. She is focusing specifically on the issue of affordable childcare and will be bringing this up at the January meeting of the Chairman's Council for Economic Prosperity. The CFW then also had a discussion about the services provided by the Children's Trust and the Early Learning Coalition and funding priorities, especially as to the need for childcare funding.

The **Committee Reports** were then presented.

Legislative Committee. Leah gave an update. A new human trafficking bill was filed in the Florida legislature that would require certain training for physicians. The bills about increasing the penalty for violation of domestic violence injunctions have passed the first committees in the House and Senate. As for the Senate alimony revision bill, the companion bill in the House has been filed so the CFW will monitor the progress. The bills to replace Florida's statue in National Statuary Hall have passed the first committees in the House and Senate. Commissioner Sosa's resolution in support of the equal pay bills passed and Commissioner Heyman's

resolution about changing Florida's statue is coming up for consideration. Leah also made the CFW's presentation at the Miami-Dade Legislative Delegation's public hearing on November 12th.

Human Trafficking Committee. Linda reviewed the written report. Linda explained that the CFW members can go through their County Commissioners to set up meetings in each of their districts. Linda reported that Commissioner Daniella Levine Cava has recommended that a presentation on human trafficking can be made at a BCC meeting in January and that a proclamation can be presented. It would be a five minute presentation and Linda is waiting for a date so that she can ask Victor Williams to attend.

Linda stated that there is a tour of the Camillus House shelter with Kathy Fernandez Rundle on December 9th and that the National Council of Jewish Women is doing outreach to the PTAs. Maria Santamaria also works with human trafficking victims through her church.

Mara stated that the CFW needs to bring about awareness to the community. She said that the Committee needs to specifically design an outreach plan and target groups. Mara would like to have the CFW members do the community presentations.

At this point the visiting Miami-Dade College students asked their questions as part of their class assignments.

Old Business. The CFW discussed the request for sponsorship of the 2016 In the Company of Women awards reception. In past years the CFW has generally sponsored at the level of \$1000. Mara reported that at the Executive Committee meeting prior to this meeting, the Executive Committee voted to again sponsor this year in the amount of \$1000.

For the CEDAW update, Laura reported that she was advised by the Commission Auditor that they would have the report on women's economic issues by the end of January 2016. This issue will be back on the January agenda to discuss because the CFW really needs to focus on the recommendations in 2016. The CEDAW Committee should meet and invite experts. Laura said that there is a very informative Facebook page for "Cities for CEDAW." That Facebook page has a link to a website with more information from the San Francisco Commission on the Status of Women about implementing CEDAW locally. Mara appointed Marie Woodson as the Chair of the CFW's CEDAW Committee.

Mara reminded everyone of the Florida COSW event in Tallahassee in January 27-28, 2016, and that the CFW meeting had been changed to January 20, 2016.

New Business. The CFW's 45th anniversary is in 2016 so the CFW needs to think about what events, if any, it wants to have to commemorate the anniversary. The CFW also needs to do fundraising for the various projects and events so fundraising ideas are welcomed. CFW members should also approach their appointing Commissioners for donations.

The CFW will also send a letter to the Executive Director of the Curtiss Mansion in Miami Springs thanking her for hosting the CFW's on the road meeting last month. The Miami Springs Mayor and City Council will be copied.

Attendance at Community Events. Linda recently attended an event by the National Council of Jewish Women. Noreen is organizing her Geekiwood STEAM event for middle school girls at FIU on December 5th. Marie Woodson was a guest speaker at North Miami Beach Senior High for Miami-Dade County's Ethical Governance Day.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Page 3

Laura Morilla
Recorder