

BLACK AFFAIRS ADVISORY BOARD
Minutes for March 7, 2007
9:45 a.m.
Stephen P. Clark Center

Board Members present: D.J. Fabien; Dannie McMillon; Gerri Lazarre; Priscilla Dames; Brian Person..

Excused Absences: Ms. Marie-Jose Ledan

Unexcused absences: Mr. Juvais Harrington

Staff: Ms. Retha Boone, Program Officer; Yvans Morisseau (Community Relations Assistant)

Guests: Carolyn Nelson-Goedert; Horace Roberts (Belafonte Talcolcy Center) Ronald Mumford (CHARLEE) ; Shirley Ellison; Jeffrey Mellerson (community activist); Joseph Obadeyi (Nigerian American Association); Shirley Ellison (co-chair of the BHPC) and Mack Samuel (community activist).

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m. by Mr. D. J. Fabien. Following a meditation led by Ms. Nelson-Goedert, Mr. Fabien asked that the agenda be approved, which was done.

Introductions of Guest(s): Ms. Boone requested that the guests introduce themselves, which was done. Mr. Morisseau was formally introduced to the Board as the new Community Relations Assistant.

The minutes for February were reviewed and approved once a quorum was attained, they were approved. Mr. Person moved that the minutes be approved with changes if necessary, it was seconded by Ms. McMillon and unanimously approved.

Program Officers' Report:

Ms. Boone welcomed our guests and gave an update on what the BAAB is all about and the various activities which are carried out through the Board such as Black History Month, the Pillars Awards, Village Dialogues and other events. Additionally, she discussed the budget and the fact that BCC members are being asked to make a line item allocation to the BAAB Trust Fund in order to carry out some of the Board's committee initiatives.

She also reported on the *Active Strategy Enterprise (A.S.E.)* project, which is mandated by the County Manager. It is a systematic tracking system used by organizations to measure projects and update progress. Each department has to come up with a way to assess its activities and effectiveness. She requested the Board's assistance in helping to develop this process as it relates to our board. We have a deadline of March 23rd of getting this done. That, she explained is the purpose of the survey which is given each month. She suggested that we use the BAAB Matrix as a means of measurement.

Website update: Mr. Oscar Braynon is working on the website and will give an update on the progress being made on updating the BAAB website. Thus far elected officials have been updated on the website and BAAB minutes will be posted prior to the next meeting. He asked that other links be forwarded to him so that he can update them and also any activities will be included.

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Program Officers' Report (con'td)

Ms. Nelson-Goedert commented that our By-Laws need to be updated, and she would be willing to assist once she is formally appointed. She also said that are by-laws format is one that she is unfamiliar with and that she is only familiar with Roberts.

BAAB Matrix:

Ms. Boone said that our matrix needed to be updated and that we would be doing that at each meeting. She gave a brief overview of what the matrix is and its function.

Board Membership Status and Appointments:

Ms. Boone announced that she had received several responses from several members. Resignations were received from Ms. Suzan McDowell, but she has not heard back from Mr. Juvais Harrington. She has sent appointment letters to Commissioner Diaz to appoint Mr. Ronald Mumford. They will be going to Commissioner Diaz' office immediately following the meeting to request the appointment. A letter was also sent to Comm. Souto regarding the appointment of Mr. Edgar Wright, but no response has been given. Other appointment requests will be made in the very near future.

School Truancy Hotline:

A draft of a Memorandum of Understanding between the BAAB, Galata, Inc. and the Arbor Group has been developed and will be given to the entities in the near future. Mr. Roberts from the Talcolcy Center will be taking the information back to his board so that a Pilot Diversion Center can be set up on the North end, similar to the one being recommended be established with the one on the south end. We actually have a site and members were invited to visit the site when possible. The purpose of the Diversion Center is to deal with students' and the root causes of their truancy in a safe, neutral environment. Mr. Roberts then commented on the program at the Outdoor Suspension program located at the Talcolcy Center, caters to students and has most of the components that the BAAB has considered as part of its Diversion Center Pilot Program. Many of the principals and social workers are concerned with truancy at that level. He suggested that we schedule a Village Dialogue so that we can partner with them. He will be taking the information back to Ms. Alison Austin, who is the center's director. We have tentatively. scheduled a Village Dialogue on truancy or "Grandparents raising Grandchildren" or something along those lines for **May 2007**. Mr. Obadyi commented that about fifteen years ago he belonged to a Feeder Pattern group that was quite successful and he wondered if that process could be repeated. Ms. McMillon commented that that process was inactive, but that the parents are trying to bring that activity back. Mr. Samuels then commented that we should do some research as to how bad the truancy issue is and then have a dialogue to bring together entities to address the problem.

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Violence in the Black Community:

A Village Dialogue on Youth Violence will be held in the City of Miami Gardens on March 31st in City Hall. Ms. Nelson-Goedert and Ms. McMillon will be attending a meeting on Friday to discuss that issue. Mr. Mellerson also commented that we should include the Liberty Square area since there is a high rate of arrests/crime and services/programs are needed in that area. Mr. Holmes commented that the Belafonte-Talcolcy Center has worked with the Liberty Square area as well as Lincoln Fields and the Annie Coleman Gardens areas.

There was some discussion on “Parent Truancy” as defined by parents who keep children home to babysit because they are keeping their older children from receiving an education. The HIPPY Program was discussed, and Dr. Sherry Dean will be contacted to help with this area. Ms. McMillon said that the Urban League of Greater Miami is part of the Liberty City Partnership (?) program and that by June a project funded by The Children’s Trust will be completing its research. Ms. Ellison suggested that Ms. McMillon contact Ms. Barbara Pierre to help with this project. Mr. Mellerson commented that Liberty Square is having a crisis. He said that the residents are not able to meet in the community center and that it should be open for services and utilized as a community resource.

Mr. Person commented that he spent a week at schools in the area and he saw that lack of male involvement was a major issue. A Black Male Advisory Council through Big Brothers Big Sisters was begun and its sole purpose is to get Black males involved in the educational process. He is interested in making the male presence known in the schools and they have seen a major difference. He has agreed to keep the BAAB up to date on this issue.

Ms. Boone also said that Mr. Fabien would like for the BAAB to identify and then concentrate on two or three major issues instead of spreading ourselves so thin. Education is one issue that we are all concerned with and others must be identified. Anyone who needs to become involved in the school system must submit to a background check and Mr. Person says his agency will conduct that process if necessary.

Black Profile:

Ms. Boone has an appointment with Dr. Thomas Boswell to complete this project this month.

Toy Guns: No report

Committee Reports:

Education:

Ms. McMillon reported that she attended the Superintendent’s Town Hall meeting and the two regional meetings at the Doral and at Miami Edison. She would also like to invite the new president of the NAACP to one of our meetings. On March 19th, the NAACP wants to invite the Superintendent to the meeting which will be held at 7:30 p.m. at the New Birth Center in northeast Miami Dade.

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Black Heritage Planning Committee:

The BHPC is meeting regularly and is working on the Annual Pillars Awards which has been set for Friday, September 28, 2007 at the Biscayne Bay Marriott. There is also a fundraising event planned for April 13-15 with the 7th Annual Riviera Beach Jazz Festival. Information was passed out on this event. Black History Month went very well and turnout was good for most activities.

Health Care: *No report*

Housing: *No report, Mrs. Sumpter is not able to attend.*

Crisis Intervention/Respect Life

Ms. Dames announced that she would be conducting a “Gang Awareness Workshop” on March 16th in the South Dade area. She also shared her thoughts on the Galata site and how impressed she was with the new center and the area suggested for the Diversion Center partnership. She also indicated that the Regional Superintendent, Ms. Navarro is supportive of our efforts and will have our plan detailed in order to successfully implement the Diversion Center.

Economic Development: *No report.*

Budget and Finance:

Ms. Lazarre asked that the Board sponsor a seat or table at the Haitian Women’s Association banquet this upcoming weekend. She also informed the Board that she is still waiting on info from the Miami-Dade County Finance Department so she can complete her assessment of the Board’s financial status. Ms. Boone informed her that they are undergoing the budget process and that it would be forthcoming.

New Business

Mr. Mellerson announced that he conducted a tour during Black History Month for OTAC and representatives from the Housing Board which centered around some areas that were not covered by the Miami-Dade Transit tour. He announced that he is planning an activity for the 24th of this month.

Ms. Boone asked that Ethics training be conducted by May 9th and she is hopeful that all new members be appointed by that time. Also, jackets have been ordered and should be ready for the next meeting. She also asked that members bring their notebooks to the meeting so that we can place them in the designated OCR office space

With all business being concluded, the meeting adjourned at 11:58 a.m.

Recorded by: Retha S. Boone, Program Officer