

BLACK AFFAIRS ADVISORY BOARD
10:00 a.m.
6th Floor Conference Room

September 3, Meeting

Board Members Present: D. J. Fabien, Priscilla Dames; Dannie McMillon;
Excused Absences: Gerri Lazarre, Ketlyn Alexis, Carolyn Nelson-Goedert; Rev. Gay
Unexcused Absence(s): Edgar Wright
Staff: Retha Boone
Guest(s): Renita Holmes (The Makeba Project)

Meeting Summary

- I. Meeting was opened by the chair, Mr. Fabien at 10:35 a.m. Members present were requested to review the proposed agenda. Following the agenda approval, Ms. Dannie McMillan offered a brief meditation.
- II. Mr. Fabien gave an update of his activities over the past few weeks concerning the devastating hurricanes which have ravaged the Caribbean, in particular Haiti, which has been hit with four hurricanes within the past month. He reported that he has been appointed chair of the Haitian American Emergency Relief Committee (HAERC), which has been established as a permanent committee to address the ongoing humanitarian assistance which is needed by Haiti.

Program Officers' Report

Ms. Boone reported that today is the final deadline for the souvenir journal to be printed for the Pillars Awards which is Friday. The event is on schedule, with all honorees being contacted, reservations are coming in and all preparations are being made to make this a successful event. She reminded members that they should confirm their attendance this week.

BAAB By-Laws/Membership/Absences/ Vacancies: We are still working on this issue. Ms. Boone communicated with Commissioner Diaz's office in reference to having an appointee. Dr. Capp has requested that we increase membership to 26 members via board members appointing individuals to the body. This also calls for a change in the by-laws. Additional appointments are still needed to bring the board up to full status (13) members.

Ms. Boone is also working with Ms. Lazarre who sent in a preliminary report on the establishment of a 501c3 non profit organizations so that the board can tap into additional funding opportunities. A detailed report will be available at the next meeting.

The webpage is in the process of being updated and she invited all members to take a look at the site and make comments.

Ms. Boone also shared a copy of the Commissioner Auditors' Report with the Board.

Village Dialogues Update:

Ms. Renita Holmes requested that the BAAB partner with her to work on a Village Dialogue aimed at addressing Re-Entry for those who have been affected by the criminal justice system, i.e. ex-felons, etc. She would like to involve the churches since they are the entity which provides the most support to these individuals. Commissioner Sosa is at the forefront of the study which is anticipated to bring some \$3 million into the community to address this issue, based on the report issued by the Commissioner and authored by a committee. Ms. Holmes cites the exclusion of such programs as The Alternative Program which is headed by Ms. Georgia Ayres and other grassroots programs which have successfully addressed the issue of providing support, training and remediation of those who are involved in the criminal justice system. She and several community based organizations have compiled a list of approximately twenty recommendations which she would like to present to the Board and have our support. Ms. Dames expressed her frustration at the fact that we are “always talking” and the need for more action instead of dialogue. Ms. Holmes stated that we should be in a position to request funds instead of just talking and that she would email Ms. Boone the report to share with the BAAB.

Action Item: Plan for a Village Dialogue on “Re-Entry & Restoration” for those who are involved or know someone involved in the criminal justice system and those seeking social equity. A suggestion has been made to see if recurring funding could be secured in much the same way as the bed tax and other revenue generated on an on-going basis could be secured to provide training. Ms. Holmes will provide a copy of the report on the community meetings held in the past.

Committee Reports:

Black Heritage Planning: Mr. Didier Fabien reminded members that the Pillars Awards is scheduled for Friday, September 12, 2008.

Education: Ms. McMillon reported that as she attends the School Board meetings, there are several issues which she will continue to keep us updated including the status of the superintendent’s position.

Health Care: no report.

Housing: No report

Crisis Intervention/Respect Life:

Economic Development: Ms. Lazarre submitted a written report

Budget & Finance: Ms. Lazarre (written report)

Old Business: None

Announcements/Discussion/Adjournment:

Some discussion centered on attendance and how we can bolster membership. With all business being completed, the meeting adjourned at 11: 55 a.m.

