

**BLACK AFFAIRS ADVISORY BOARD'S
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE MIAMI-DADE COUNTY BOARD OF
COMMISSIONERS**

"CONTINUING THE DIALOGUE ON THE STATE OF BLACK MIAMI: THE WAKANDA EFFECT"

On April 7th of 2016, Commissioner Jean Monestime convened the first ever *"One Heritage: State of Black Miami."* This community conversation's purpose was to assess Black Miami's state of economic prosperity; community development; youth, and quality of life. This conversation spurred deep commitment by Commissioner Monestime and his colleagues on the Miami Dade Board of County Commissioners. It also led to the Miami-Dade Board of Commissioners spearheading a number of initiatives and legislation to address community wide concerns.

With that in mind, on October 10, 2018 the Black Affairs Advisory Board, added to the "State of Black Miami" conversation by holding A "Village Dialogue" entitled: *"Continuing the Dialogue on the State of Black Miami-The Wakanda Effect."* Following are the findings and subsequent recommendations developed as a result of that Village Dialogue.

EDUCATION: Dannie McMillon & Pierre Rutledge, Moderators

Findings and Recommendations:

- Safety in our schools and educational settings is paramount and should be strongly considered. Recommend that all public safety entities provide a comprehensive approach aimed at keeping schools, student and educational personnel safe.
- Referendum regarding Dade County Public Schools teacher salaries must be passed. *(The issue passed during the last election cycle)*
- Achievement gap-historically we must demand a system of accountability so that our students are able to compete on a national as well as international level.
- Bilingualism: Should be taught in all schools—particularly in schools with a predominantly Black student presence.
- Adopt the "Village Concept" that worked well in the past. A blueprint was submitted by the Urban League of Greater Miami, Inc., which advocates for the entire community to create a community-based program which is tied to attendance and grades which translates to good jobs or educational opportunities.

HEALTH & WELFARE: Cliff Thomas & Sandy Sears, Moderators

Findings and Recommendations:

- We must advocate for and support Medicaid expansion as a way of expanding access to healthcare for the uninsured, and we must continue emphasis on and support of primary care/prevention, including increased funding, education and research. .
- Address environmental issues which impact health, e.g. climate change, air and water quality/pollution; sanitation and overcrowding. Explore the connection between poverty and lack of health care.
- Advance mental health as a priority with increased funding and resources/better integration with physical health. Mental health is often a ‘taboo’ topic in the Black community-this must be addressed.
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- Promote understanding and support the role of youth in the healthcare industry through education; understanding of the ‘digitization’ of the medical field and expanding opportunities for careers in the health field and system. Recommend that the Board of Commissioners work with Dade County Public Schools; universities, public and private educational entities to ensure equality in health care opportunities.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & HOUSING: Jihad Rashid & Ronald Mumford, Moderators

- Affordable Housing Trust Fund has been continually diverted to other projects. The Dade Delegation must be persuaded to support the Sadowsky Trust to achieve accountability for funds sent from the State to Miami-Dade County.
- Affordable housing is at a crisis level in Miami-Dade County. The recommendation is that programs proposed by the Board of County Commissioners be made a priority—especially as it relates to Workforce Housing as well as HUD Section 3. The provision of housing with supportive social services is a possible key to failure.
- The Miami-Dade Economic Advocacy Trust (MDEAT) exists to serve as an advocate for the betterment of our community. We must strategize and prioritize how to better deliver services so that the Black community becomes better engaged. Significant resources are being deployed in regards to the 79th Street Corridor; Foreign Trade Zone and Commercial HB 2767-2.
- The lack of data as a result of a current “Disparity Study” which can provide rationale for Miami Dade County to implement a serious requirement for Black participation in County contracts. *(The recommendation is that the BCC request an updated Disparity study to further explore Set-Asides specifically for Black businesses)*

- Addressing affordable transportation and the extension of the elevated rail system to the northern end of the county is also a pressing issue. (*The SMART plan addresses this issue as well.*)

SOCIAL JUSTICE: Dr. Tisa McGhee and Attorney David McGill, Moderators

- The over-representation of Black Miami-Dade County residents being arrested has been well documented in a number of recent studies. The recommendation is that local law enforcement agencies employ a more even-handed approach when it comes to policing Black residents. Additionally, a deeper look of who polices Black neighborhoods should be examined and officers receiving complaints of bias should be removed from patrolling these areas.
- The implementation of the **Civil Citation** program as recommended by the Black Affairs Advisory Board to the Miami-Dade Juvenile Division and Dade County Public Schools has had a positive impact, however, Black students continue to be the subject of more stringent policing. The MDEAT Teen Court program is addressing this issue and it is recommended that adequate resources be directed to continue this program.
- Social Determinants are a major factor such as where people live and play, which becomes a significant factor when it comes to public safety, access to services, etc.
- Arrests for people of color correspond to the ‘cash bond program’, which translates to subjects being forced to spend longer times incarcerated or becoming unemployed as a result of work absences. The recommendation is that the courts issue more NTA (*Notice to Appear*) in lieu of arrest for qualifying offenses.
- The Restoration of Felons’ rights (*Amendment 4*) would increase the pool of eligible ex-felons who have served their time and made any necessary victim/court reparations. (*This item passed during the last election cycle.*)
- **The need for more “Community Based Policing” and involvement of residents in needed areas, while addressing the issue of gun violence both internal and external.**

HERITAGE & CULTURE: Edgar Wright & J. D. Craigman, Moderators

- The cultural scene is alive and well however the Black community, despite being ‘rich’ in culture must become more entrenched in economically strong circles.
- The Art Basel impact must be spread throughout the entire community and art collections should encompass the entire community. The “Wynwood Effect” should be spread to the Black community as well since there are many talented young people who need both incentives and opportunities.
- Film incentives must be increased in order to incubate the local Black film community. Additionally, investments in education should be encouraged.
- Black Tourism must be recognized for the significant contributions made to local tax dollars. The Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau has established its

Multicultural Tourism Department, which has increased exposure as well as made inroads within the Black community. The recommendation is that more dollars be spent promoting Black businesses and tourism oriented activities.