

SOUTH ORANGE/MAPLEWOOD COMMUNITY COALITION ON RACE
January 24, 2019 Meeting

Call to Order: Chair Robert A. Marchman called the meeting to order at 7:34 PM

Present:, Lee Boswell May, Colleen Breslin, Catherine Cronin, Tegan Culler, Dean Dafis, Nancy Gagnier, Leila Gonzalez Sullivan, David Harris, John Kerner, Kristen Mahoney, Robert A. Marchman, Rhea Mokund-Beck, Fred R. Profeta Jr., Kelly Quirk, Audrey Rowe, Ed Stuart, Reynaldo Tapia, Barbara Velazquez, and Meredith Sue Willis.

Absent: Nina Essel and Stephanie Lawson-Muhammad

Excused: Carol Barry-Austin, Walter Clarke, Abigail Cotler, Deborah Davis Ford, and Erin Scherzer

Chair Report:

- Police Forum co-sponsored by the Community Coalition on Race with SOMA Action and SOMA Justice was well received by the community and was an indication for future positive collaborations.
- The annual MLK, Jr. Observance was a major success. Thanks and Kudos to all involved. The fact that Lt. Gov. Oliver stayed for the entire program spoke for the program's quality.
- Chair Marchman presented the staff with gift cards on behalf of the Board, as a show of appreciation for a busy and successful year.
- A major financial gift from Trustee Fred Profeta was acknowledged as a true demonstration of support for the work of the Coalition.

Minutes Approval: A motion to approve December Minutes was made by Rhea Mokund-Beck with a second from Lee Boswell May, and the motion passed with 4 abstentions. Trustee Profeta inquired about the October Minutes change referenced in the November Minutes, and Program Director Rowe offered to send the corrected version to everyone for verification.

ED Report:

- ED Gagnier welcomed the new trustees to their first meeting and invited everyone to enjoy the birthday cake that she prepared in honor of Chair Marchman's birthday.
- Gagnier reported that the Financials for January – December 2018 were complete but would need minor adjustments as final bills are paid and 2018 receivables added.
- The Coalition ended 2018 with a surplus, even before receiving Trustee Profeta's gift.
- F&D is planning to leverage the Profeta gift and to attract additional major donors.
- F&D is also revamping the Coalition's sponsorship packet with additional options and will be reaching out earlier in the year to increase the yield.
- The annual Maplewood Township Budget Hearing will be Feb. 2nd at 9:30 am and trustees are welcome to come out as a show of support. The presentation is maximum 20 minutes.
- A trustee brunch/retreat will be held Saturday, March 2nd for 3 hours to include, food, fellowship and learning. An invitation to trustees will follow.
- The MLK event teams did an amazing job and the results get better each year. Luminary Project's two new co-chairs led the team to an expected total of \$12K of which \$6K has already been turned in. PR and community engagement was outstanding with businesses, community organizations and neighborhoods participating.
- The web site launch is very close, but still has a few glitches. There is an expected learning curve for staff to make posts and administer the new platform.

- Chair Marchman added that as we move toward increased effectiveness, we will tighten our focus on enforcing governance and meeting the expectation that every trustee will make some annual financial contribution.

Program Director's Report:

- Trustees were directed to the full Program Highlights in the packet distributed earlier.
- Integrated Play Group dates are Jan. 19, Feb. 23 and Mar. 16.
- MLK yielded several new volunteers who worked the MLK Volunteer Fair and plan to join the Schools, Marketing and other committees.
- Plans for Black History Month (BHM) include an author talk by Professor Hodges on his new book *BLACK new jersey*. Books will be available for signing and purchase.
- Also, for BHM the Coalition is collaborating with director, choreographer and Columbia High School alumnus Gregory Osborne on the play, *THE BUBBLY BLACK GIRL SHEDS HER CHAMELEON SKIN* by Kirsten Childs. The Coalition will moderate the Talk back following the Sunday, Feb. 17th 2PM performance. General admission tickets are \$20, students and seniors \$15 and an additional discount of \$10 tickets will be offered to Columbia High School students in the MAC program and Black United Students.
- Chair Erin Scherzer indicated that the Residential Committee will be co-chaired by Trustee Leila Gonzalez Sullivan and will be focusing on affordable housing options for SOMA.

Letter to Governor Murphy Supporting an Independent Prosecutor

Chair Marchman introduced Trustee Quirk to briefly provide background and an update on the bill in the NJ Legislature, and then the floor was open for discussion. A motion for approval was made by Trustee Profeta and it passed unanimously.

South Orange Master Plan Input

Trustee Rhea Mokund-Beck is representing the Community Coalition in the SO Master Plan process and she conducted a group session with the trustees to answer a detailed survey covering development and use of land; health, safety and general welfare and a blue print for future growth and conservation.

- There was active discussion and high engagement from the entire trustee body with comments and recommendations on
 - Why South Orange residents move and stay here
 - What other towns have that South Orange needs
 - Where South Orange residents plan to move in the next 5 years and why
 - What defines diversity
 - Thoughts on the downtown commercial area
 - Where traffic is most hazardous
- A major caution stated was to be aware of unintended consequences of various planning choices
- An overall vision for the plan should include a statement supporting racial inclusion and equity in leadership and in service delivery levels.
- The planned roll-out should promote the history of South Orange, especially to new in-movers, to increase broad-based engagement in support of inclusive core values.

Maplewood Liaison Report

- Dean Dafis reported that Maplewood Township has used and is investigating use of development to build community through such efforts as traffic and pedestrian safety

changes, aging in place options like co-housing and micro units for ages 55+ and attracting youth to stay in SOMA rather than re-locate.

- Special Tax is being considered to levy a penalty for property sitting vacate, as they already do in Jersey City.
- Community Forum on Policing led by Coalition Trustee Scherzer received positive press. The community must stay vigilant. There are two open seats on the Maplewood Community Policing Advisory Board that offer a unique way to serve the community. There is a special need for a youth representative 16 -21 years of age. The township is considering expanding the number of board members to increase diversity. This board could be a model for the nation - not just the state.
- Maplewood just settled its affordable housing obligation

NOTE: Unmet Need obligation for 2015-2025 is being compiled by Coalition Trustee Leila Gonzalez Sullivan

New Business/Announcements:

- SOMA Justice has invited the Coalition on Race to co-sponsor the Trayvon Martin Birthday Party on February 10th through a brand partnership. Kelly Quirk made a motion to co-sponsor and it passed unanimously.
- Trustee Velazquez invited the Coalition Board to attend an invitation-only event at Morrow Church from 2-4 PM on Sunday Jan 27th. where a North Brunswick, PhD Police officer will speak about Rights and “What They Don't Want You to Know”
- A presentation on Archetypal Messaging to increase communications effectiveness to different personality types will be given, Sunday February 3rd at the DeHart Community Center in Maplewood.
- The South Orange Village Township meeting on Monday, Jan. 28 will feature a presentation by Chief Kroll in response to the Force Report.
- On Feb. 5th, there will be a discussion in Maplewood on recycling plastics that could lead to a \$0.05 fee on plastic bags.
- As the Federal government shutdown continues, both South Orange and Maplewood governments are working to provide assistance funds for local residents

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 9:41 PM

Next Meeting: Thursday, February 28th, at 7:30 PM at Prospect Presbyterian Church, 646 Prospect St. Maplewood NJ.

Submitted By: Audrey Rowe

Secretary: Carol Barry-Austin