

SOUTH ORANGE/MAPLEWOOD COMMUNITY COALITION ON RACE
August 22, 2019 Meeting

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

Present: Lee Boswell May, Colleen Breslin, Abigail Cotler, Tegan Culler, Nancy Gagnier, Leila Gonzalez Sullivan, Robert A. Marchman, Fred R. Profeta Jr., Kelly Quirk (by phone), Erin Scherzer, Barbara Velazquez and Meredith Sue Willis

Absent: Nina Essel, Stephanie Lawson-Muhammad, Rhea Mokund-Beck, Reynaldo Tapia

Excused: Carol Barry-Austin, Catherine Cronin, Dean Dafis, David Harris, Summer Jones, John Kerner, Kristen Mahoney, Audrey Rowe and Ed Stuart

Minutes Approval:

- Motion to approve the June 2019 Trustee Minutes was made by Fred R. Profeta Jr. with a second by Lee Boswell May. Minutes were approved with four abstentions.

Chair Report:

- Chair Marchman reported that he, ED Gagnier and PD Rowe met with Village Trattoria owner Mary Vayas and managers from both locations to discuss ways to avoid and resolve future incidents perceived as racial slights. The Coalition offered to provide input to Village Trattoria's employee orientation and to their training materials and approaches. There may be an opportunity in the future to provide similar services to other SOMA businesses at a saving to them and as a revenue source for the Coalition.
- Robert and Nancy had a lengthy meeting with South Orange Police Chief Kroll and mentioned the upcoming Coffee House Discussion focusing on when to call the police. They will be meeting Chief Devaul soon.

ED Report:

Financials:

- The ED indicated that all financials have been reviewed and that we are in good shape. We now have less cash due to payouts for the upcoming annual dinner and because our fundraisers and half-yearly township payments accrue late in the fiscal year. The EC Treasurer has signed all the financial review and 990 paper work. Both our administrative assistant Lorry and our accountant Femi have done a great job.
- September marks the start of our 2020 Budget and Goals & Objectives process. Input will be submitted by Committee Chairs to the ED in October, returned to committees for any revisions needed and the budget will be voted on in November 2019.

Other

- There was discussion about how our organization might support cultural competence training for local businesses with mention of our earlier Speakers Bureau approach, branding of the Coalition as the "go-to" organization for training support, and issuing certification for businesses that participate.
- Tina Kelly, SOMA resident and former NYT's reporter, inquired about starting a local reading group based on the writings collected for the 1619 NYT Project. Nancy will meet with her and assess how this project might connect with our objectives. The Chair reminded the Board that action versus conversation only should be our focus.

Program Director Report

- Trustees were directed to the Program Highlight sent earlier in the Trustee Packet.

- Program Director mentioned that Trustee Colleen Breslin will assume leadership for the Residential Committee. Additional support is needed on this committee and Lee Boswell May volunteered.
- Discussion suggested that supporting neighborhoods with training for problem solving and with ways to be inclusive and welcoming of diverse ideas could be the Coalition's value add.

Annual Dinner Update: Lead by Trustee Kelly Quirk

- Trustees are asked to consider being a Table Host for the Annual Dinner by purchasing a table and then inviting their guests to spend what would have been their ticket amount to either donate to the Coalition or for Annual Dinner auction purchases.
- An email ask will be sent to those trustees who solicited journal ads previously.
- Music for the Annual Dinner will be provided by Trustee Rhea Mokund-Beck again this year.
- Trustees are asked to look for auction experiences, i.e. dinners, vacations, tickets, tours, etc., to offer at the auction. Paddles will also be used to bid on funding key Coalition projects
- Souvenirs will focus on environmental justice using reusable bags
- Trustees are needed this coming Monday August 26th at 11:00 AM to label invitations for the Annual Dinner that will be mailed next week. Lee Boswell May has already volunteered to help.
- A Coalition Facebook Event will be created for the Annual Dinner next week.
- A Sign-up Genius will be circulated for set-up and clean-up at the Annual Dinner. Trustees are all expected to participate.
- The tag line for this year's Celebrating Integration is *Community Building by Honoring Difference* and the honorees are Patricia Canning, George Robinson and SOMA Cross Cultural Works.
- Fred Profeta will look into recruiting a professional auctioneer with a great track record who charges a percent of the funds raised.

Nominating Committee:

- Trustees are asked to submit candidates for new 2020 trustees right away. The Coalition Board can have up to 30 members, and we need at least 5 to replace attrition. We welcome diversity in race, sexual orientation and point-of-view.
- Please email names and contact information to the office after speaking with the prospect to confirm their interest.
- Current trustees whose term expires will be contacted regarding their interest in continuing.

Marketing Presentation: Presented by Audrey Rowe, Nathalie Farfan and Jill Hammarberg

- Marketing Communications Committee roster reflected an impressive range of talent and experience.
- Jill Hammarberg, graphic designer on the committee, commented on the newly available promotional folder which is the first update in 20 years.
- Trustees used terms "excellent" in reacting to the folder and one comment was made that more of Springfield Avenue needed to be included.
- Nathalie Farfan, digital media producer on the committee, reviewed the podcast project. Comment by trustees on the podcast project emphasized the importance of using a variety of people to address the most pressing concerns for our Black Community including:
 - a) Treatment of Black students in the SOMA School District
 - b) Police treatment of Black residents
 - c) Equal engagement of POC in the community and
 - d) Access of Black residents to local political leaders and equal influence in the community.
- The stated goal of having a targeted marketing strategist by October 31st was challenged as ambitious with a caution to make certain that we get the right person. If we need more time, take it.
- Whoever is hired must have experience and a proven track record in multicultural marketing

- The Marketing Communications Committee members present agreed with all comments made and acknowledged that the target market strategist is not the sum of all skills that we may need to execute our strategy. However, he/she will recommend additional resources needed.
- Trustee Profeta re-stated the reality that SOMA is not the only integrated community experiencing a decline in Black population. So in addition to targeted marketing, we should pursue research through our MERT (Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, & Testing) Committee to better understand what may be influencing the trend. The Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers may be helpful.

Discussion: Racial Climate in the Nation

- Chair Marchman opened the floor by asking trustees to candidly share what they think that the Community Coalition on Race should be doing in this toxic (social and political) environment. Response highlights follow:
 - We should support our neighbors in Essex County on issues like lead in the water, detention centers, etc., while continuing to be intentional in addressing common issues affecting us and our neighbors, like affordable housing. “Weave” those issues into our initiatives.
 - Get progressive politicians like Booker and Sherrill to use our community as an example.
 - Adopt more of a pluralist focus to attract more allies. Look to organizations with the common goal of a socially just society
 - Promote collaboration within our Board for initiatives that trustees are engaged with.
 - Do more education for Whites by Whites on moving past privilege and ceding power
 - Model what we want to see from those in positions of power.
 - Recognize that change in access to power creates fear of loss for those with power.
 - Focus on education about where power resides to tackle unconscious privilege.
 - Review the facts clarifying terms like White Supremacy and White Nationalism.
 - Define and address differences in shifts generationally.
 - Actualize engagement by the so-called liberals.
 - Avoid centering the “White Experience” as our focus.
 - Our goal should be to build power.
 - Expand beyond our borders for allies, projects and resources (like Larry Hamm of Peoples’ Organization for Progress and NJISJ (New Jersey Institute for Social Justice) that share our primary mission and initiatives.

Liaison Reports: NONE

Adjournment:

Move to adjourn was made by Fred Profeta seconded by Lee Boswell May. Meeting adjourned at 9:37 PM

Next Meeting: Thurs. September 26, 7:30 PM, Prospect Church, 646 Prospect St. Maplewood NJ.

Submitted By: Audrey Rowe

Secretary: Carol Barry-Austin