

**SOUTH ORANGE/MAPLEWOOD COMMUNITY COALITION ON RACE**  
**February 23, 2017 Trustee Meeting**

**Call to Order:** Chair Robert A. Marchman convened the meeting at 7:33. PM.

**Present:** Carol Barry-Austin, Lee Boswell May, Nina Essel, Nancy Gagnier, Leila Gonzalez Sullivan, Len Grossman, Amy Harris, David Harris, Robert A. Marchman, Frank McGehee, Fred R. Profeta Jr., George Robinson, Audrey Rowe, Erin Scherzer, Diane Thomson and Meredith Sue Willis.

**Excused:** Victoria Calle, Walter Clarke, Abigail Cotler, Dean Dafis, Deborah Davis Ford, Omari Frazier, Joel Herbert, Stephanie Lawson-Muhammad, Nora Locke, Indira Singh, Peri Smilow, Keli Tianga, and Barbara Velazquez

**Minutes Approval:** Len Grossman moved that February Minutes be accepted with a second by Fred Profeta. Minutes were approved unanimously

**Chair Report:**

- Chris Stetson resigned. We wish him well and will be mindful of his point of view in our organization's future discussions.
- A member of the Coalition Executive Committee is now assigned monthly to be available to meet with trustees for more detailed discussion and interaction on Coalition issues. March assignee is Indira Singh.
- The Chair continues to have discussions with members of the community regarding the Coalition.
- The Coalition was invited as a special guest and one of many gift recipients during Rev. Terry Richardson's well-deserved 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary recognition on February 19<sup>th</sup>.

**Executive Director's Report:**

- There is no Financial Report for February, because no resource is available to make Quickbooks entries until a new Administrative Assistant is hired. Interviews are underway.
- Coalition received \$2500 from First Baptist Church of South Orange as part of Rev. Richardson's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration.
- Trustee Conflict of Interest and Pledge Forms for 2017 need to be signed and returned to the ED.
- 2016 Annual Reports are ready for distribution and 3-5 trustees are needed to help fold and stamp them for mailing on Friday (tomorrow).
- March monthly e-newsletter will go out next week.
- Professionally printed Coalition Thank You cards are now available in the office for trustee use.
- Question: Coalition funds from the InterAct fundraiser? Answer: Still being tallied.
- Question: How do trustees access files sent/stored in Google Drive? Answer: ED will resend the link. Drive includes Coalition calendar for update, trustee contacts and flyers will be added.

**Program Director's Report**

- Trustees were directed to the February Program Highlights sent earlier as part of the Packet
- Per trustees, upcoming Coffee House Discussion needs to be added to the twotowns.org calendar.
- The Black/Jewish Seder on April 5<sup>th</sup> is receiving support and sponsorship from the Coalition. This event is Invitation Only. In the future, the Coalition will be seeking more active involvement.
- Program Highlights show conflicting dates for The Integrated Play Group. Program Director will confirm actual March date.

### **Fundamental Issue 1: Focus/Goals for 2017**

- Chair Framed discussion as follows:
  - Goals for 2017 have already been accepted by the Board.
  - Past two months discussions and events reflect Coalition's shift to focus locally.
  - Discussion with community members indicated that goals and commitments to the POC/AA community still have not been met from 20 years ago.
  - Pillars of Community Strength or Weakness Diagram showing the following 7 areas for focus was distributed:
    1. Education System
    2. Criminal Justice System
    3. Residential Housing Opportunity
    4. Diversity Demographics
    5. Social Interaction
    6. Economic Opportunity
    7. Government Structure and Representation
- Trustee discussion followed with overall positive response for viewing and conducting the Coalition's work using the "Pillars" framework. Highlights follow:
  - Add working across SOMA borders to the Pillars framework.
  - Assess current status and severity within each pillar
  - Prioritize the Pillars and begin work now.
  - Recognize that the biggest unfulfilled promise for SOMA POC is the Educational System pillar.
  - Conduct survey/focus groups with Black families to hear the real issues. NOTE: David Harris will investigate professional support for the research. We should also reach out to Seton Hall University.
  - Relate ALL committee work back to the Pillars.

### **Fundamental Issue 2: Policy Discussion on Coalition Trustees running for public office**

- Past practice has included Coalition trustees taking a leave of absence from time of announcement until elected to being fully active until elected.
- Taking a Leave of Absence creates gap on an already resource constrained board.
- Legally, there should be no economic interest in connection between the Coalition Board and the township governments.
- Having a Coalition liaison from both town governments ensures transparency to the towns
- Currently, Trustee Dean Dafis is slated to run for Maplewood Township Committee in 2017
- This discussion will be continued at the March meeting.

### **Motion for 2017 Organizational Goal:**

Original Motion:

"To establish a committee to focus on developing and implementing a strategy that attracts and retains Blacks, Asians and Hispanics and to include this strategy as the organizational goal for 2017 with oversight by the Coalition's Executive Committee."

- Fred Profeta moved that the motion be accepted with a second by Len Grossman.
- Question: Is the language inclusive enough? Response: Motion uses the terms used by demographers and reflected in our 2016 Demographic Report.
- Mixed race families are not clearly defined in the three categories. Make note for future studies. Typically mixed race is counted as being of color.

- Using term POC is general and difficult to track. Make our intent clear in the language. Response: this motion is for internal use and we understand the intention.
- Need to be clear about what success looks like. Cross reference with county, state and regional representation for the targeted groups.
- Suggestions to assign responsibility for implementation included 1) all committees, 2) a volunteer committee and 3) the newly formed Residential Mission Function Area.
- Friendly amendment made to replace the phrase “the organizational...” with “a priority...”

Revised Motion:

“To establish a committee to focus on developing and implementing a strategy that attracts and retains Blacks, Asians and Hispanics and to include this strategy as a priority goal for 2017 with oversight by the Coalition’s Executive Committee.”

Motion was approved with 8 “Yes”, 2 Abstentions and 2 “No”

**Liaisons’ Report: None**

**Announcement & New Business**

- Trustee Essel announced *SOMA: Addressing Race & Inequality* activities including the Feb. 26<sup>th</sup> Memorial Vigil for Trayvon Martin at Spiotta Park in South Orange.
- Finance & Development Meeting is March 16<sup>th</sup> in the Coalition office

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 PM. Next meeting is Thursday, March 23, Kol Rina Temple, 60 Valley St. (second level behind 7 Eleven) South Orange.

**Recorded by:** Audrey Rowe

**Secretary:** Meredith Sue Willis