

Champaign County Racial Justice Task Force (RJTF)
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, July 14, 2016
6:30 pm

I. Call to Order

Chair Byndom called the meeting to order.

II. Roll Call

Members Present:

S. Balgoyen, L. Branham, B. Butts, S. Byndom, R. Byrd, E. Dee, A. Evans, A. Felty, D. Harber, R. Hughes, E. Patt, C. Randolph, G. Walter.

Members Absent:

M. Ar-Raheem, A. James, H. Ross, K. Schneider, S. Silver, D. Turner.

III. Approval of Agenda

Esther Patt moved to approve the agenda. The motion carried.

IV. Approval of Minutes

Gerald Walter moved to approve the minutes. Esther Patt seconded the motion. The motion carried.

V. Public Participation

Albert Stabler – He works for Build Programs Not Jails and helped to create the Racial Justice Task Force. He asked that the focus on criminal justice remain important to the task force. He read the recommendation from the Community Justice Task Force which helped create the Racial Justice Task Force. He noted that one need in the county is transparent data with regards to race.

Bobby Trist – She is happy the group has begun finding its own way and not being directed by others. She is distressed by the events in the county jail including some of the procedures. She is also upset by the deaths in the past week in a half of two African American men. She said she realized that when a policeman comes to talk to her at a traffic stop, the police officer does not hold a gun. She said if they did not hold the gun, then there would not be a fear response for the gun to go off. She stated that Black men are human beings and should be treated with the same respect as others. She said the attitude of police officers is something that fuels racial disparities in our jails.

VI. Subcommittees

Sara asked if the task force would like to review the list of categories she put together. Lynn suggested doing a brainstorming session. David believed the task force should discuss the criteria of what the it is trying to do before we decide what we have to evaluate. Esther highlighted a few of the areas she thinks seem to be more critical based on input from the community. Sam asked David to discuss more the idea of criteria for the subcommittees. He explained that we should be asking questions about how the work we do can be performed, what is the likelihood of items being adopted, and what will the impacts of the action be. Gerry suggested that we do not need to limit the actions to items that we could accomplish. Subcommittees could explore issues and pass on recommendations to other groups. Sara did not think that each subcommittee would need to have the same amount of recommendations, and she feels the purpose of the subcommittees would be to research issues and solutions further. She emphasized she does not want to focus only on County Board issues. Amy noted that three individuals have already started working on employment and education as volunteers, and they have been pulling in community members for help. She also said that many different groups could work together with community members. Sam asked if they were focusing on all students who graduated from Champaign County high schools. She clarified that they are working with previous students they have had as teachers. The highlighted the 40 Assets program and the categories/aspects used. Sara noted she liked the ideas of pulling in people from the community.

A discussion regarding potential subcommittees occurred. Task force members suggested ideas for subcommittees.

Sara and Sam noted that informal groups working on areas may be best for preliminary research. They can later be turned into formal committees.

After discussion of the ideas, Sara suggested sharing the ideas of subcommittees with the task force before the next meeting. A discussion regarding how to reduce the areas of focus and decide on a structure for moving forward as a group followed.

VII. TF Budget

Sam asked about the status of volunteers who were going to look at budget items. Sara said that the task force is on the agenda for the County Board meeting on July 21st.

VIII. New Business

Sara discussed the presentation to the County Board meeting and asked for volunteers for help. Expectations include giving an update to the County Board on what has been done and where the task force is going. It is also important to plant the seed for budget items.

IX. Task Force Member Comments

There will be a showing of Racial Taboo on Friday, July 22nd at Stone Creek Church at 6:00pm.

Carolyn emphasized going out to other groups to work on connections.

Carolyn also emphasized the need to consider the needs of Black women in addition to Black men.

Alex noted that there will be a community protest and support event at Douglass Park at 7pm.

Someone approached Sara about cultural competency trainings and having a presentation to the RJTF.

Lynn asked what we will be doing next with regards to subcommittees. Sam said that the expectation is to allow everyone to review the list and come to the next meeting with ideas and suggestions about which group they could work with.

X. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:43pm.