

Champaign County Racial Justice Task Force (RJTF)
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, October 13, 2016
6:30 pm

I. Call to Order

Facilitator Byndom called the meeting to order at 6:30pm. Twelve members were present at this time.

II. Roll Call

Members Present:

S. Balgoyen, L. Branham, S. Byndom, E. Dee, A. Felty, D. Harber, R. Hughes, A. James, S. Lerner, E. Patt, C. Randolph, K. Schneider, S. Silver, G. Walter,

Members Absent:

M. Ar-Raheem, R. Byrd, A. Evans, H. Ross, A. Shelten, D. Turner.

III. Approval of Agenda

Sara moved to approve the agenda with a revision to exclude Restorative Justice subcommittee from the meeting. Kevin seconded the motion. The motion carried.

IV. Approval of Minutes

Kevin Schenider moved to approve the minutes. Carolyn seconded. The motion carried.

V. Public Participation

There were no public comments at the time of this agenda item.

VI. Presentations

Dr. Bev Wilson – University of Illinois

Dr. Wilson was presenting a status update to the class project. They would like feedback on where to place effort for the remaining weeks in the semester. They have been working on technical skills up to this point. They have also worked on drafts of FOIA requests. The data requests ask for data from January 1st, 2010 to present. Two components of data exist in the project: longitudinal data analysis and a real-time visual data presentation.

The group is also collecting examples of how other organizations have managed this type of data and visualization. The City of Louisville, KY has an online system incorporating many data tools similar to what the class is looking at. The class is also considering what they can do if there are issues collecting data from FOIA requests. The class will consider the management of the data system afterward the class is over.

Kevin asked what the time frame for a response from the FOIA requests will be. It is expected to be 1-2 weeks to receive a response.

Police Practice Working Group Presentation (UI Class)

Mary Ann spoke about the data their group is collecting. They have been identifying the data they would like to collect and ways to visualize the data. She discussed the gaps in data in the area or between the localities. This group is using the Urbana data portal as an example. They are looking for information on arrests, crimes, and incidents.

Kevin asked which departments were being used for data collection and brought up the concern of missing data.

Sara introduced the idea of using the Urbana data portal as an example for building a database so that if data is not available, the system would be there for when data can be collected. Lynn raised the issue of discussing the data by referring to arrested people not as criminals. Ryan asked the group to consider mapping data other than just crime or incident maps. Kevin stated that something to consider would be patrol maps of police departments.

Correctional Facility Group

John spoke about the data related to jails. The group is working on extracting data from PDFs because none of the data is in an organized data format. They are focusing on disparity issues at each decision point in the jail: entry point, pretrial stay in jail, and bond payment. They are looking at the Champaign County Sheriff's Daily Jail Log, Arraignment/bond court list, and an Inmate Lookup System. A FOIA request is being used to collect longitudinal data dating back farther than a year. John shared an example of a data output for people who did not post bond which came from a different locality.

Pam asked is there any cross referencing being done between the daily jail log and the circuit court's criminal record. The group responded no, but there is a second group doing that. Lynn noted that the ILPP group collected a year's worth of data that the class could use to add to the database. Lynn mentioned a grant that the Sheriff's department received relating to mental health data. Sara asked if the group is looking at juvenile justice. They responded that they are but there is not a significant amount of data available. Sara requested specific space within the database for presenting this data and noted that the 2015 report would be released soon.

Legal Process Group

Jordan shared that this group has had challenges because of the availability of data and being able to collect the data. Race and gender data do not exist in the circuit clerk data. The goal is to compare this data with the Correctional Facility Group's data. A group member went to the circuit clerk's office to ask for data but determined that a FOIA request would be necessary. Data would not be given in a PDF or spreadsheet format. Date of birth is used in the circuit clerk's system while age is used in the jail and police data. The group shared examples of visualization that they would like to include if data is available.

Jordan asked the RJTF how the group should proceed if no data becomes available before the end of the class. Kevin mentioned that maybe a script could be written to search through all of the codes for cases.

Lynn mentioned that the Legal Process Subcommittee can work to come up with a list of the small amount of data they need the most. She also said that it is important that the task force identify and highlight the areas where data does not exist or is too difficult to track is important for encouraging transparency at the County level.

The U of I class will have their final presentation on Tuesday, December 6th at 2:00 pm, and RJTF members will be invited to come.

James Kilgore recommended not using FOIA requests unless they are absolutely needed. He also seconded the point that data gaps should be documented.

Lynn suggested passing resolutions to formally request the data needed.

Lynn moved to approve a resolution as stated below. Kevin seconded the motion. David posed the procedural issue with approving a resolution. The resolution was tabled until the next meeting. Lynn will draft the resolution.

A discussion ensued regarding how best to request this data. Lynn will contact the Sheriff's Department. Kevin will contact Katie Blakeman's office. Artice and Ryan will work together to contact the police departments. It was decided to contact the groups Monday by email and with a phone call follow up. If no response occurs by Thursday, the task force will formally submit FOIA requests.

VII. Subcommittee Meetings

The subcommittees met very briefly to discuss the memos and presentations put forth by the U of I class.

VIII. New Business

There was no new business to report.

IX. Task Force Member Comments

There were no member comments to report.

X. Adjournment

Kevin moved to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 8:45pm.