



Criminal Justice Task Force / Criminal Justice Ministries

Joint Meeting

1/13/20

Ellen Stubbs Apartments Community Room

396 Hudson Ave, Rochester NY

Present: Barbara, Shanique, Shawn, Cheryl, Karen, Shirley, Jo, Betty, Michael, Tyneisha, Kathleen

1. Welcome and Introductions (5 min)
2. Urgent updates: (10 min)
 - a. H.A.L.T. legislative lobbying day, Jan. 21, 2020: We do not have information about the transportation and will work on that offline. We are urged by CAIC to get in touch with our county representatives. The Association of New York Counties is reportedly pushing back on H.A.L.T. stating that it is a safety measure. In Buffalo, the county is in support. Adam Bello is another person to approach, along with Willie Lightfoot, to help connect with the county legislature. Roberta expects we could get a meeting with Todd Baxter (Bello transition team) to discuss the issue. Cheryl will check on her church parking lot availability for the bus. We have to leave between 6:00 and 6:30 am. Betty has other ideas, too. The bus itself needs to be arranged. We have 32 people signed up and that will be one bus. We might be able to pick up people in Syracuse. Markeisha might have some information. Jo and Cheryl are willing to make phone calls, if needed. There is information available on email about T shirts, etc. Training will be provided on the bus. The plan is for a rally rather than legislative office visits. Material will be delivered to the members. There will also be a march involved, and an inside-only option for people who don't want to march. There is a variety of activities available, and we expect there will be an agenda for the day. The next call is on Friday at 10am. This is not so much a lobbying effort but a rally to show grassroots support.
 - b. Volunteers to answer letters from incarcerated people that are sent to Tocsin Magazine; is there a way to assist people with their cases. Paralegals? RIT, MCC, Brockport students – Innocence Project. SWAA, HALT. Black Lawyer group. Shani Mitchell. Shanique notes that many letters come from all over the country asking for resources, finding out about groups in their community. She has some information available but can't answer all the letters promptly herself. Jason Willis has sorted some of the letters by topic and need. These are people who are still incarcerated. Please get in touch with Shanique if you are interested in helping. We can use her PO Box and keep personal information to a minimum. This can be a recurring item. Shanique notes that she is currently looking through these and we will arrange an alternate meeting, preferably at a black-owned business, to work on these, which will be announced.

- c. Plush Dozier update – get your button from Shonda or Kathleen! Next hearing is January 22, no time yet. Shonda has connected with Jerome’s attorney and there will be a need to do some fundraising to help support Shonda. We will send out an announcement with details.
- 3. Speakers: Betty shares about the collaboration amongst local organizers to develop a community calendar to prevent overlapping events and to connect our efforts. For example, RocACTS community forum had a poor turnout partly because there were two other community events on the same night. Working on the same issues, such as Juma’s efforts on Project Exile, and some of the other organizers had information on the county prosecutor’s position Sandra Doorley on the matter. There is also concern about negative activities affecting the Jewish community. Transportation is often an issue. One of the groups has offered to let us use their Voter Activation Network (VAN), which stores phone calls and other methods of voter contact, free of charge. This is part of collaborating, sharing resources and supporting one another. The organizers are mostly women who want to get things done. The plan is to meet monthly, it started in November and missed December. We will send out information from the Albany trip tomorrow regarding the next meeting. We have Stanley Martin lined up to speak at our February meeting about CORE and her work, but we may adjust this based on planning for the event. In general, we need to plan ahead for speakers to make sure there is enough lead time to get people.
- 4. Visioning our work for 2020:
 - a. Project Exile: assisting Juma, along with NYCLU, EiE and others; together we can be more effective.
 - b. Michael mentions Less is More, an effort to reform parole tactics that are used to reincarcerate people, that affected Jerome, rather than to support people to do well in the community, with a clearer pathway to exiting parole. Michael has more information to share on this. He’s in touch with another organizer who worked on Raise the Age. Senator Benjamin has drafted the legislation.
 - c. Forums: we were talking about getting politicians out where the community can come out to ask questions and share opinions. Wherever we can get people to show up and focused on the issues.
 - d. Black owned restaurants as places for our meetings, such as People’s Choice where there was an incident on Christmas Eve, to support and encourage. This would also help engage the community more.
 - e. RocACTS T shirts could be worn at these events.
 - f. Betty would like the task forces to meet together at least once a quarter to support each other and know about each other’s issues.
 - g. We need to get some attorneys on board who are interested in these issues.
 - h. Fundraising activities to support activities. Karen knows about a company that comes for donations and will give us some information. Regifting idea.
 - i. Next meeting to focus on Black History for February, hopefully at People’s Choice. Shanique will check with the restaurant and we will meet again on this



idea to plan – Shanique, Kathleen, Betty and Roberta. [please note: we have since decided to meet at Ellen Stubbs Apartments, as usual]

- j. Bail reform: changes in the offing need to be monitored. Ashley and Iman appeared on Connections on this.
- k. Restorative Justice is an area where various groups are working, we could bring these together.

5. Concluding thoughts: we need to meet to plan the February event, ASAP.

We meet the second Monday of each month. Next meeting: February 10, 6:00 pm, Ellen Stubbs Apartments, 396 Hudson Ave. (enter the parking lot from Marrimack, which is one way).

Respectfully submitted,
Shanique Byrd and Kathleen FitzPatrick, Co-Chairs
With Penny Townsend-Quill, Roberta Buckle, John Keevert
Criminal Justice Ministry, First Unitarian Church