

**Poverty/Jobs/Housing Task Force (PJHTF) (Zoom Meeting)
December 10, 2020**

Attendance: Larry Knox, *Chair*; Asim Johnson, *new Co-Chair of PJHTF with Larry*; Anne Kriz, *Recording Secretary*; Ruth McNamara, *Health Aides representative*; Sr. Janet Korn RSM, *Kristie Rath, UR life skills advocate*; Karen Costello, *RocACTS member interested in healthcare issue*; Rev. Hans Irmer, *PJHTF member, Nursing home administration and church outreach*; MaryAnne Borelli, *Peace of Christ liaison with PJTF whose mother is in a nursing home*; Dr. Tiffiney Taylor, *new RocACTS Director/Organizer, ordained pastor, licensed Social Worker and jail chaplain*; Dorian Hall, *PJTF member and PLEX Neighborhood Association President interested in housing issues*. Larry's wife, Zahyia Rolle-Knox, *RocACTS member* was absent because of another meeting but is a new member of PJHTF interested in our issues.

Larry opened the meeting by introducing Asim Johnson, our new Co-Chair who will partner with Larry in leading our PJHTF going forward. Asim comes highly recommended. He is the new healthcare advocate for 1199 SEIU, our member organization of PJHTF. He comes to us from VOICE Buffalo and will start here in February 2021 building a stronger base in our community. Needless to say that we are delighted to have Asim with us as he is exactly the right person to assist Larry in leading our task force. We have long been searching for the right person to assist Larry, who has been needing assistance ever since he assumed Bruce Popper's role in leading the 1199 SEIU two years ago. Welcome Asim!!

Larry then referenced Bruce Popper's and Jerome Underwood's Zoom conference of December 2nd 2020 on "Racism and Wages: Moving Toward Equity Confirmation", which was available for viewing online. This was a milestone meeting because it involved University of Rochester (UR) for the first time. John Cullen of UR and Karen Vitale, UR Social Justice worker, moderated the meeting which dealt with our salient issues of redlining of housing, education and jobs, all issues PJTF has been addressing over the past 8 years. (I took extensive notes on this meeting if anyone is interested.)

Briefly, poverty is an issue that has become much closer to people because of the COVID-19 pandemic. We can now push policies that incorporate an understanding of the needed changes here in Rochester/Monroe County when we approach Albany and Washington D.C. This is the window of opportunity to effect change by RocACTS that we have been waiting and praying for, for so long.

Karen and Anne talked about Bruce and Jerome's presentation and Karen emphasized that our Core groups in our churches need to speak to their membership about getting new funding from Albany and Washington DC. RocACTS needs to hear feedback from our congregations on what we need to do to create jobs and get people out of poverty. Cuts shouldn't affect fragile populations. We must find other ways. We need to get ideas from congregations on how RocACTS can help achieve this.

Dorian Hall reported that positive actions are happening at PLEX (Plymouth Exchange Neighborhood Housing Association) since they reached out to Washington DC. They now have a community solar project that will save money on electric bill costs. They received a New York State Energy grant and now own a corner on Exchange and Flint Street which was donated by Food Link. PLEX held their first meeting with UR, building relationships in positive ways for the first time. These were great conversations as UR wants to help work with the community--perhaps the influence of their new president??

Conversations were held with students to support the community. From a political perspective, PLEX is experiencing more cooperation from Albany: a grant is hopefully forthcoming, so small wins are being achieved. The Brownfield land is okay for a solar grid whose ownership goes to the community so the neighborhood can prosper.

Housekeeping: Larry will contact previous PJHTF members regarding an optimum time for holding our PJHTF meetings on Zoom. RocACTS now has its own Zoom account. The meeting closed with a prayer by Sr. Janet Korn.

Our next Zoom PJTF meeting will be Tuesday, January 26, 2021 from 6-7:30 pm

Agenda:

1. Tax increases, "Millionaires Tax" to reduce budget cuts on housing and education and raise money for the State to eliminate these previous cuts.
2. Legislation for wage increases must come through faster so as to eliminate wage disparities for healthcare workers especially, among others.

Respectfully submitted by:

Anne Kriz,
Recording Secretary