



Religious Leaders Caucus  
June 16, 2021

**MINUTES**

**Attendance:** Rev Rod Frohman, Rev Tedd Pullano; Elder Nancy Brown, Elder Jonathan Nwagbaraocha, Sr Phylis Tierney SSJ, Deacon Duncan Harris, Deacon David Palma, Rabbi Peter Stein, Karen Costello, Dr Gayle Harrison, Asim Johnson, Kim Beyers, Dr Deni Mack and our guests, Malik Evans and Dr Cephas Archie, City of Rochester Chief Equity Officer.

**Sharing:** Religious Leaders spoke of our Caucus vision and challenges:

- we bring together our community's commonalities of shared values including racial justice. We lessen polarities and engage in dialogue to better know one another as neighbor.
- we work together and bring to our sometimes divided congregations a moral voice
- we observe and live moral values
- we have difficult conversations that move us forward embracing the transformative work of love and justice
- we join together for the common good empowering the voice of the voiceless
- we step out in faith to actively proclaim the universal value of life
- we collaborate
- we facilitate conversations that build authentic relationships with people one another and with people unlike us
- we help people in our congregations sit in uncomfortable places

**Reflection:** Jonathan gave testimony to his journey in faith

**Daniel's Law:** Attendees appreciate SURGE's points (attached to June 16 agenda) to consider in writing letters re this needed law. Several of us will write. See attached letter. To sign please email Deni [deni.mack412@gmail.com](mailto:deni.mack412@gmail.com) your assent and full name asap. Caucus recommends you also pass the attached letter among members of your congregation for them to sign or rewrite as they wish.

**RASE commission recommendations and accountability tracking implementation.**

**Dr. Cephas Archie** presented his intricate matrix naming the recommendations city gov't. is tackling. The spread sheet Cephas shared on our screens identified many vital components of the city's accountability process on each of 97 recommendations. City gov't is keeping tabs on each of their 97 recommendations as to the person responsible, start date, identified resources, internal and external partners, advocacy or action, and more. Each department has several recommendations to implement and they each itemized projected expenses for staff, operations, external and internal and direct services costs. Each department checked on evaluations from recent months of any existing programs carrying out



some aspects of some of the recommendations. The goal is sustainability; these recommendations will be embedded in gov't Rochester 2034 planning, reporting according to Cephas' spreadsheet and engaging in community partnerships, i.e. with Urban League and RMAPI. There are no silos: "we've become a conduit for collaboration." Dr. Archie's matrix provides a framework for accountability and he said "leaves nothing to chance." There will be an online platform where people beyond the city offices will notify Cephas' office of their work on any of the recommendations. Dr. Archie thanked **Malik Evans** for his extensive work.

**Malik Evans** has been working for years with City Council for the community. The RASE commission pages 57-66 describes major themes of each of the 9 working groups. The need to prioritize sequencing implementing RASE recommendations is great. Collaborating with existing groups including reaching out to the community for more voices will ensure the right things are being done in the right way. We'll need quarterly updates in a timely manner. The community will critique the process and want to name next steps, quarterly and yearly. The RASE commission interviewed community members in forums and individually and met with unions, i.e. teacher's union. All 9 working groups collected data in public forums and with surveys and in individual meetings with stakeholders. Malik Evans gladly announced \$1 million budget passed City Council June 15. He's worked for years on these matters and listens to people address these issues that divide our city and county. The county is responsible for implementing 200 recommendations; several recommendations must be attended to by both county and city requiring communication and collaboration. A hard copy of the RASE report is in every library and, as we know, we can access it online.

**Education Task Force:** Karen Costello reported the Education TF followed up with local superintendents of school districts on their promise made last June to commit to anti-racism. Superintendents agreed to 6 items re building relationships and addressing the graduation rate disparity between students of color and white students in our districts. Brighton H S has, after 7 yrs. of anti-racism commitment, succeeded in having the graduation rate of students of color exceed white students. For 7 yrs. Brighton has engaged with students of color in significant ways. Several districts are using anti-racism material in teaching true history. RocACTS Education task force sent letters to superintendents to look at Zinn project to address those states eliminating anti-racism curriculum. Members of our congregations will want to be made aware of this to act upon it. See the Zinn project attached.

**Leadership Assembly:** Of the following dates, Oct 5, 6, 7, 12, or 13 please let Deni know your availability. RocACTS board will select the date most religious leaders are available. If you are interested in working on the leadership assembly steering committee, please let Deni know.

**Membership:** Dr. Gayle Harrison, president of RocACTS noticed at some earlier Religious Leader's Caucus meetings there were several attendees who are not yet members of RocACTS. On the RocACTS website (rocacts.org) anyone interested in learning about membership can access info. Individual memberships as well as congregational and agency and other group memberships are available.



**Poverty/Jobs/Housing Task Force:** Asim Johnson updated us and asked us to film ourselves saying we are vaccinated and encouraging others to be vaccinated. Directions were emailed to Religious Leaders June 17. To have Asim film you email him at [asim.enoch-johnson@1199funds.org](mailto:asim.enoch-johnson@1199funds.org)

**Black Lives Matter silent vigils** are at noon to one pm Saturday June 26 at Rt 441 and Rt 250 Penfield all 4 corners and on Saturday, July 3 at East Ave and Winton Rd all 4 corners. For July BLM schedule email [ockhee@frontiernet.net](mailto:ockhee@frontiernet.net) or [trishdorland@gmail.com](mailto:trishdorland@gmail.com) or [bstaropolissj@gmail.com](mailto:bstaropolissj@gmail.com) Please bring a BLM sign to display. Homemade is fine!