

Mayor's Commission on Reentry Minutes  
October 21, 2019

*In attendance: Andrea Reese, Jeanette James, Keith W. Mitchell, Kristin Barker, Baki Muhammad and Cathy Robinson*

The meeting was held in the Elections and Registration office, Citizens Services Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor at 1:30 pm.

Keith Mitchell opened the meeting in prayer and asked if anyone had items to add to the agenda. The commission reviewed the minutes from our September 16, 2019 meeting, and a motion was made to accept the minutes with any needed corrections. That motion was seconded and the minutes were approved. It was also noted that Cathy Robinson should be added as a member of the commission and also serves on the Housing Subcommittee. Keith made a motion to accept Cathy as an official member. Jeanette seconded this motion and this motion was approved.

Rev. Juan Carlos Diaz is interested in having an alternate representative serve on the commission as he is unable to meet on Mondays. Keith has asked him to submit that contact, and we will invite them to attend a commission meeting to be considered. We would like someone to serve as a representative of the Hispanic community.

Keith shared information about the Criminal History Summit being held on November 21 from 10am-2pm. Registration for this event ends on October 21. This event is meant to educate about criminal history status, instruction on record restriction eligibility, and guidelines on how to properly proceed with record restriction when applicable.

Kristin shared that the Georgia Justice Project is having a kick-off on October 22 in Atlanta for the Second Chances Campaign to expand expungement in Georgia. The Georgia Center for Opportunity has a representative attending in support of the campaign.

Baki now gave an update on the status of a logo for the commission and explained that a designer he has worked with in the past has been asked to create a logo to consider. Baki will forward this option prior to our next meeting.

Andrea presented a report from the first Housing Subcommittee meeting. Andrea will serve as chair of the subcommittee and Cathy will serve as secretary. A summary from these meetings will be submitted to Kristin and incorporated into the commission minutes for the official records. The Housing Subcommittee will meet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of each month. The subcommittee met for the first time on October 14. The discussion included possibilities of HUD and RPH barriers. Andrea has identified someone who is willing to come and talk about the barriers he has faced as well as a representative from the state who can do an entire training on RPH.

The subcommittee will also be working on standard operating procedures that are likely to closely mirror the commission, and they discussed identifying an NPO who can serve as an initial point of contact for people who are not under supervision. Current members of the Housing Subcommittee

include Andrea Reese, Cathy Robinson, Baki Mohammad, and Dr. Nathaniel Dunlap. Carolina Rodriguez and Dr. Andrea Franklin are interested in serving as well.

An On the Table discussion sponsored for the Mayor's Commission on Reentry has been planned for October 22 at 9am. We have received 23 RSVP's for the event. Kristin and Keith are planning to host these tables. We will make sure members of the commission sit at separate tables.

Kristin distributed questions for this On the Table discussion on housing and reentry and requested feedback from the group. The final list of the revised questions is included as an addendum to these minutes.

Following this discussion, Keith shared an intention to begin looking at a commission plan for 2020. We should consider events we might support and generate ideas on areas of focus over the next two months. We would like to define three events for 2020. Andrea suggested we should look for one community focused event and one focused event to generate political engagement. Kristin recommended we consider an Expungement Summit to bring clarity on this topic. Baki also stated there is too much confusion over the topic of expungement. We will not lock ourselves in to supporting any specific organization.

November will be our planning month. Keith asked the commission to bring ideas that will create the most value and highest impact over the next two years to the table and come prepared to discuss them at the next meeting.

Baki asked the group to consider legitimation as an issue that is important to ex-offenders. Legitimation is a process that must be followed by the state of Georgia to insure fatherhood. Ex-offenders can leave with no parental rights due to legitimation. The commission should be knowledgeable on this. A man can be named as father on the birth certificate and still not be recognized as the father by the state of Georgia.

The meeting was dismissed at 2:33pm.

#### **Addendum: On the Table Questions for discussion**

- 1) Housing is one of the primary barriers to successfully reintegrating ex-offenders back into society as productive members. How do we identify organizations or individuals with the right resources and get them on board to make things happen? Where do we find them?
- 2) Housing solutions are needed to allow individuals to find and secure employment post incarceration. What are some scalable solutions for assisting large numbers of individuals reentering society?
- 3) Securing funding for reentry housing solutions can also be challenging. What connections with the private sector would be most important to address these challenges?

- 4) How do we get more people involved to provide transitional housing for ex-offenders? How do we generate more transitional housing options?
- 5) Poor credit is often an additional hurdle for those reentering society from prison. What are some solutions for addressing this?
- 6) What are some possible “out of the box” solutions to the heightened housing challenges faced specifically by sex offenders?