

Mayor's Commission on Reentry Minutes
May 18, 2020

In attendance: Keith Mitchell, Kristin Barker, Dr. Michael Forte, Cathy Robinson, John House, Baki Muhammad, Gamaliel Torrez, and Andrea Reese.

Keith Mitchell opened the meeting and Gamaliel opened the meeting in prayer. Minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed. Cathy moved to accept the minutes with any needed changes and Baki seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.

Keith asked the commission to allow him some additional time to get with Cathy to discuss planning for the Housing Subcommittee. Cathy shared that she spoke with Pat Frey at Home for Good and has information on housing vouchers that are available and will benefit the homeless population. Andrea requested additional information on this. Cathy will forward the packet of information to Andrea. We should reference Home for Good as the resource for this and included on our Facebook page.

Kristin reported that the Reentry Employment Subcommittee met on May 12th. Kristin was also able to meet with Mayor Henderson earlier in May and introduce the question of funding that might support community efforts related to support for returning citizens. The mayor is willing to discuss this further at a future meeting. She also applied for a LyftUp community grant for Hiring Well Doing Good to provide transportation via Lyft to interviews and to supplement transportation during the first 6 weeks of employment. Waleisah reported during the subcommittee meeting that she has been working on some virtual expungement related activities. These services would be available to returning citizens in Columbus.

Dr. Forte explained that the Faith Based Subcommittee has largely been working with Mount Calvary to date. There is an effort to develop a list and expand the subcommittee. Now that restrictions around the pandemic are beginning to ease up, he is hopeful about beginning to make progress on this.

An Expungement Summit is still being planned for fall of 2020. In the next meeting with the District Attorney, Solicitor General and Superior Court Clerk, we will need to discuss a virtual backup plan for the summit. Keith also shared that he will speak with Jeanette about how we might share information with the community through the commission in an effort to become the expert source related to resources for returning citizens.

Andrea explained that some budget cuts may be coming to the Department of Community Supervision. This may impact resources for returning citizens. If these cuts impact Andrea's position, she would still like to remain connected with the commission. John shared that the City Council is currently concerned with the city budget and won't know how the loss of sales taxes for April will impact the budget until the end of May. Fortunately, the city was well ahead in sales tax revenue before the virus hit.

Kristin shared that Hiring Well Doing Good will be posting a direct link to currently available jobs sometime in June to allow those in need of jobs to connect with an opportunity in an effort to gain stability before they engage to assess for training and continued development. The long-term goal of

Hiring Well Doing Good remains creating greater opportunity and helping clients become self-sufficient.

Keith asked for feedback on the vetting form that had been distributed via email. This would impact any long-term relationships between the commission and partner organizations. We may want to consider a standing annual agreement in such cases. For organizations we would like to partner with on single events, we may ask for a separate agreement to be signed per event. We can consider using this vetting document to support both situations.

Keith asked if Norman Quarles has continued interest in being active with the commission. John offered to reach out to Norman and ask this question.

Baki has family in Detroit. His uncle and grandmother have recently passed away from COVID-19. Three others in his family are sick as well. He encouraged the commission to continue to support and pray for everyone in our community and in other communities when possible. He also shared his work with the Fatherhood program sponsored by DPH and explained its value in bringing resources to the table for returning citizens. The incentives provided by the program would be valuable for the commission to share. Baki can share a flyer with the commission that outlines these resources.

Keith reminded everyone we need to firm up the key objectives and strategies of the commission and its subcommittees by the end of June. This is important to focus our efforts so that we are able to make progress and not spin our wheels. It will also allow us to develop a plan of action to be presented to the City Council. Subcommittees need to develop these key objectives and strategies to present to the commission.

Kristin clarified that the information needed by the end of June would be the key objectives and strategies from each subcommittee as well as a clear way of communicating information from the commission to the community online. She asked what support was needed by members of the commission to achieve the communication piece. Keith will talk with Jeanette about the communication platform and commission members will give feedback on the online component.

The meeting was dismissed at 2:20pm. Dr. Forte closed the meeting in prayer.

Our next meeting will be held on June 15 at 1:30pm. We will meet virtually again in June. We will consider meeting in person in July.