

Mayor's Commission on Reentry Minutes
February 15, 2021 at 1:00pm

In attendance: Keith Mitchell, Kristin Barker, Michael Forte, Pat Frey, Waleisah Wilson, Baki Muhammad, Jeanette James, John House, Cathy Robinson, and Rev. Monica Spencer

Keith Mitchell welcomed everyone and Baki opened the meeting in prayer.

There was no correspondence. The Commission will virtually review the minutes

The employment subcommittee is gathering and reviewing data monthly from the GDC and DCS to see how information correlates. We are also looking for recidivism numbers. This data will be sent to the Mayor's office monthly. We are working with the Urban league to fund the Ban the Box campaign and are pulling together an advisory team outside of our current network.

As protocol, Kristin will run this data by the Commission for feedback prior to submitting it to the Mayor's office.

Pat attended a webinar with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recently and discovered some funding that is available for reentering citizens and specifically for sex offenders. This could be a game changer for how we can support this population.

Home for Good is publishing monthly numbers on those who are seeking housing and where they were prior to their current situation. The Commission may be interested in looking at how many of those were incarcerated in their prior situation.

Dr. Forte needs to pivot his strategy to better connect with potential church partners. He is not receiving any response from the letter that was distributed via email. Joining arms with the EMI may be the solution that we need to forming meaningful faith based connections.

Jeanette requested that everyone review the Mayor's website and submit any updates that need to be made to her.

The Commission has established an action plan to the Mayor and City Council. We will be given opportunities to report on our progress throughout the year. Keith encouraged everyone to attend our Community of Practice (CoP) convening sessions on March 4, 9 and 10. This will allow us to continue developing our strategy.

Kristin will send a reminder email with information on our upcoming CoP sessions. We will meet the experts and other CoP teams during these sessions. Pat encouraged everyone to participate.

Rev. Monica Spencer shared information on the EMI project to end mass incarceration. Columbus has been identified as their pilot location. The goal is to engage the faith community and make an impact as it relates to incarceration. There is a lot of work to be done from elementary school students to post incarceration. The EMI meets the 3rd Thursday of each month at 6:30pm. Monica invited the

Commission to attend these meetings. There is strength in coalition. To date, Monica has contacted about 130 people to date with personal outreach.

Anyone on the Commission is invited to attend the Multifaith Initiative call on Friday at 12:00pm to discuss collaboration with the EMI and with the initiative as a whole. These calls are held every Friday at noon.

SafeHouse continues to operate as usual. They still have a fully functioning COVID operations unit.

Waleisah is working to in Muscogee and Fulton counties to connect those who are returning from prison to those communities and are LGBTQ, differently-abled or elderly to resources for successful reentry. One large barrier is individuals who do not primarily speak English. Baki may be able to help with this. The courts in Columbus may not understand their responsibility to this population.

She will submit a letter with specifics related to addressing this population's needs and provide some strategic direction for the Commission. She would also like to generate a connection between Mayor Bottoms in Atlanta and Mayor Henderson in Columbus.

We need to consider how leverage public/private relationships and specifically how to engage with the Chamber of Commerce. Keith asked the Commission to consider how we will interact with the private sector and submit recommendations.

We need to add our annual work plan to the Mayor's web page. Jeanette also asked everyone to submit a headshot to include on our web page. Include your title, email address and the community group you represent. The Commission will submit this information to Kristin and she will send this to Jeanette.

Our next meeting will be on March 15th. We will meet again virtually on zoom.