

NAACP Howard County Branch
Executive Committee Meeting
Minutes

Date: May 11, 2020

Time: 6:30pm

Location: Zoom call due to Covid-19 Pandemic

Attendees:

Willie Flowers

Lynda Earle

Stephanie Wall

Laura Johnson

Charles Franklin

Becca Niburg

Mike Butera

Colleen Hughes

April Harrison

Jennifer Jones

Dr. Barbara Morton

Sarah Thorne

Althea Hanson

Gregory Lawrence

Cynthia Fikes

Amber Thrasher

Keisha Shepherd

Jerry Rescigno

Kori Jones

Tiffany Sion

Prayer:

Dr. Morton began the meeting with a prayer.

President's Report

- Traditionally we review the status of the Branch annually. We look at membership, money and the message put out through events and programs. We want to show-give –grow.
- President will share about the Environmental Justice Planning Grant and the Community Garden.

• **Secretary**

- February 10, 2020, minutes need to be adopted because we did not have a March meeting. April 6, 2020, minutes have been provided for review and adoption.

- **MOTION: Mike Butera made a motion to adopt the Executive Committee Minutes for February 10, 2020 and April 6, 2020. Becca Niburg seconded the motion.**

President

- We have to figure out how to nestle ourselves in terms of what we need to do to fit in to the community even more. Consider how the Howard County Branch of the NAACP is going to continue to engage.

- We have the elections and the aftermath of Covid-19 to deal with. How do we amplify membership and raise money to maximize what we do as an organization to benefit the community?
- Our numbers are sustained but we need to be aggressive and we are going to need to ask people for money.
- Sara Thorne is a rising senior at Howard who expressed interest in civil rights and politics and supporting NAACP. President Flowers advised her that she has to learn how to raise money and organize people.
- In every area of concern that we have, someone should be organizing. For example, Elder Empowerment, at all times we need to be engaging seniors. Same for every committee.
- On Friday May 8, 2020, people turned out for the important event of honoring the Georgia Jogger, Ahmaud Arbery who was murdered. In spite of the rain people showed up because of how we have engaged the community in the past and made inroads.
- Education Committee made a quick pivot to do the candidates forum on line. We are going to have to be flexible. Regarding Fundraising we have to figure out a way to raise money. Need all of the Executive Committee members to bring ideas.
- The Community Garden kept pushing on in spite of Covid. Each committee needs to keep organizing based on something relevant.
- We have to guide the community on what the issues are.
- For the Garden, we took an environmental justice grant and connected it around food justice.
- Everyone needs to get settled in his or her committee in the same way and build it up. And keep it moving.
- Althea shared that we should strategize and get younger groups to join the NAACP. It was noted that millennials use Instagram, Snap Chat and Tic Tok as opposed to Facebook.
- President noted that Sara Thorne would be helping to compile a list to put into a database in order to be more effective in reaching out.
- It was suggested that we set communications up in a manner where whatever is sent out can go to all of the relevant platforms at the same time.
- We use Wild Apricot platform and need to review its capabilities.
- Keisha inquired about what people need help with.
- Jerry asked about how to reach out to members and find out what is being done regarding food security and what do people need help with.
- The Health Committee is interested in food insecurities. Also, organizing to get more volunteers to make masks that are needed. Stephanie pointed out that there are organizations working together and partnering to get some of these things done. We may want to reach out to them instead of starting from scratch.
- President pointed out that the Branch has to be organized first. President gave the example of how the Dancel Y had extra grant money and being “Y”

Board Members enabled us to connect them to Ridgley Run and as a result successful food distribution was accomplished.

- Ms. Bessie is presently working on food distribution.
- We are a volunteer organization we don't do programming.
- Kori suggested meeting sometime in June to see what things look like for the branch now and having something similar to the January retreat. Maybe there are some things that overlap and we can identify if that's true.

- **Education**
- The candidate's Education Forum was rescheduled to May 20, 2020.
- Teacher Diversity, training on implicit bias and hate incidents and college and career readiness are among the important topics.
- All districts will be represented.
- 8 candidates are confirmed and we will take community questions.
- 12 candidates were prepared to participate on the 13th not sure yet about the total number of participants for the 20th.
- We are doing the Forum in partnership with the African American Roundtable, The Council of Elders and the PTSA.

- Schools are now physically closed for the rest of the year; but learning is still happening. Continuity of learning is still in play.
- There are 14 local sites for school food distribution. This occurs between 11:30-1:00pm.
- New notices will go out with the new date and time for the Education event.
- We will share with the community after the event takes place.

- **Environmental Justice**
- Cynthia Fikes is working on the garden.
- Garden is doing well but we need more hands for watering weeding etc. It is a 6-acre lot.
- Maybe we can partner with Health Committee on this project and keep people engaged Show people how to use grown food in a healthy way.
- Erika Jones presented at the last meeting and now the garden is off the ground. We could use teenagers and youth to help.
- We have an opportunity to expand to a larger space and produce more food.
- CSA is a model that allows you to participate or pay into it in order to create an alternative food source to fast food and grocery store food. We also have been invited to participate with a church.
- CSA is community-supported agriculture.
- Cynthia is raising chickens for the farm. They will lay eggs for the next 5 years.
- Community Ecology Institute is collaborating with Freetown Farm.
- Charles Franklin suggested that this plan should be formalized.
- President invited everyone to become members of CSA and to visit the farm.

- You can pay into it through contribution to NAACP or volunteer.
- **Freedom Fund**
- The event has been rescheduled to September 26, 2020.
- Need to have a conversation about whether we can have it at all.
- Our dynamic speaker can't make the new date.
- The President noted that we might need to consider looking at next year. Can we amplify the same level with an online virtual event and figure out how to frame what that looks like?
-
- **Public Safety**
- Concerned about what summer looks like for youth
- Plan to reach out to sheriff and police to talk about summer youth plans.
- Kori pointed out that everything is on hold with Parks and Recreation.
- Everything depends on CDC whether there can be gatherings of bigger groups.
- Whether school system will allow their buildings to be utilized.
- Laura pointed out that a Charlotte model partnered with linkedin to serve kids.
- Governor will be making an announcement this week about reopening in his Keep Maryland Strong initiative.
- **Technology**
- Mike Butera collaborated with the Education Committee for the candidate's forum.
- The Tech forum will not take place due to Covid.
- We are trying to get a zoom account into the NAACP toolbox.
- Attended a Facebook live presentation on YouTube to prepare for virtual opportunities.
- We have a technology survey to send out to the members after the Education Forum on the 20th is over.
- **MOTION: Mike Butera made a motion to authorize a zoom account for Branch business in the amount of between \$50-\$110. Stephanie Wall seconded the motion.**
- Tiffany noted that she would be doing a job fare. There are several restaurants that are hiring and she will be trying to get managers on board.
- Sara Thorne formally introduced herself. She is a rising senior at Howard University who is interested in going to Law School.
- We need to discuss virtual general membership meeting for the 28th of May.

- We have the Candidate's Education Forum on the 20th. There should be a presentation at the general membership meeting on the 28th.
- **Motion: Kori made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Becca Niburg seconded the motion.**

Mission: The Mission of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is to ensure the political, educational, social and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate race-based discrimination.