

Unity in the Community
General Membership Meeting
5:00 P.M., Sunday, April 15, 2012

George Mason University
Prince William Campus
Verizon Building
Manassas, VA 20110

Members Present: Bob Gaskill, Dexter Fox, Kathy Clark, Illana Naylor, Jim Amaral, Gregg Reynolds, Jean Reynolds, Wali Hassan, and Taalibah Haasan, and Jeanette Rishell.

Chair Kathy Clark called the meeting to order at 5:10 P.M. A quorum was present.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

1. Secretary's Report. Paper copies of the minutes for the March 18, 2012, meeting were distributed for review. The minutes were accepted as presented.

2. Treasurer's Report. Gregg Reynolds reported that Unity in the Community (UITC) has a balance of \$1623.50, \$878.53 of which is in the general fund, \$150 in the humanitarian fund, and \$594.97 in the study circles fund. The report was accepted as presented.

3. Vice Chair's Report. Lydia Gonzalez was not present to give a report this month.

4. Chair's Report. Kathy Clark stated that her activities on behalf of UITC will all be covered under other agenda items. Kathy reported that, as a member of Virginians Organized for Community Engagement (VOICE), she will be flying to Detroit, Michigan, next week to speak at the stockholder's meeting of General Electric. VOICE has identified GE for action because it has continued to demonstrate a lack of concern for Prince William County residents who have been negatively affected by subprime loans issued by GE's former subsidiary company, WMC Mortgage Corporation. When the value of houses plummeted several years ago, many homeowners in the Irongate, Westgate, and other local communities who were holders of subprime loans found themselves "underwater" in their mortgages. As a result, they were unable to refinance their homes when jobs became scarce. This ultimately led to foreclosures on many of their homes. VOICE has been asking businesses who made subprime loans to help homeowners who are still struggling to meet their mortgage requirements. Kathy will speak as a retired educator who witnessed the negative effects subprime lending practices had on the families of her students.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

5. Everyday Democracy Study Circles. There was no report for this agenda item. At the February UITC meeting, there was a discussion as to whether or not the funds set aside in UITC's budget for Study Circles should be merged with UITC's general fund or be reassigned for another cause. The consensus of the meeting was to make no changes at this time. Dexter Fox suggested that UITC remain sensitive to the needs of the Volunteers in Service to America

(VISTA) workers who are currently in the Georgetown South community to see if they have a project need for which some of the Study Circle funds could be used.

6. Forum on Compassion with Chinn Library. About fifty people attended the Forum on Compassion at Chinn Library on Saturday, March 31, from 2:00 to 4:00 PM. Taalibah Hassan and Kathy Clark moderated the questions for the panelists the following panelists. Carol Ahmed was the Chinn Park Librarian who did much work planning and organizing the event. Kathy Clark reported that the event was filmed and may be viewed on You Tube.

7. NAACP Response to Situation – Update. At the November 2011 meeting, it was reported that a worker and union shop steward of a local trash disposal services company have been targets of racial intimidation. Information about the situation has been reported to the Prince William County Chapter of the NAACP, local government officials, local Human Rights Commission, and U.S. Department of Justice. Bob Gaskill reported that there was no update on this situation this month. He will continue to monitor this issue and will keep UITC updated.

8. Spring 2012 Immigration & Human Rights Cinema (IHRC). Dexter Fox reported that he is still working on getting film screening rights for HONK!, a documentary about the American death penalty as seen through the eyes of the French. The feature is scheduled for May 13. If screening rights for the film are not obtained in time, another film will be featured. Dexter also reported that there is a chance that the date for May's film will be changed since May 13 is Mother's Day. For these two reasons, members of UITC should carefully read the film announcement when it is sent via email.

Due to low attendance at IHRC screenings this year, Dexter Fox and Charvis Campell, Dean of University Life for George Mason University (GMU) - Prince William Campus (PWC), discussed whether or not the film series should continue. Dexter stated that GMU would like to continue the series for at least one more term since the campus will be opening a graduate residence hall in the fall. Remarks were made stating that, though attendance at most screenings have been small, the IHRC has been an important part of UITC's continuing work in opening minds and promoting discussion on important issues in Prince William County, Manassas, and Manassas Park. In fact, UITC has been in the forefront of raising issues and concerns related to human and civil rights. Kathy thanked Dexter for his continued work coordinating and moderating the series.

9. Interfaith Earth Day Event. The "Celebrate Earth Day 2012" event will take place on the grounds of the Muslim Association of Virginia Community Center located at 5404 Hoadley Road (Manassas) from 11 AM to 3 PM on Sunday, April 22. Planned activities for the event include a tree planting, solar oven demonstration, outdoor activities for children and adults, and special appearances by Smokey Bear, Woodsy Owl, and Mrs. C. This event is sponsored by Unity in the Community in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service. Solar Cookers International and Solar Household Energy provide solar oven demonstrations. Taalibah asked that members of UITC help advertise the event.

NEW BUSINESS AND DISCUSSION

10. International Day of Prayer for Peace (IDPP). Illana Naylor stated that she will be having a meeting with the pastor of First AME Church in Manassas to discuss the possibility of

its hosting this year's event. At next month's UITC meeting, Illana hopes to provide further information about this event.

11. Sharing the Not-In-Our-Town Message. Kathy Clark forwarded an email newsletter from Not in Our Town (NIOT) earlier this month. She highlighted an article in that newsletter that highlighted a two-day NIOT forum that was recently held in New Mexico. The question was asked if anyone thought that UITC should plan, organize, and host a similar event. During the discussion, it was stated that an event like this would be pre-emptive in nature. It was also stated that such an event would need a person or committee to volunteer to organize such an event. Kathy asked that UITC members to give this idea more thought and be prepared to discuss the idea in more detail at a future meeting.

12. Dale City 4th of July Parade. UITC has been registered for the Dale City 4th of July Parade. Gregg Reynolds is the contact person for this event.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

13. The Celebrate Earth Day 2012 event will be held on Sunday, April 22, from 11 A.M. to 3 P.M. at the MAV Community Center at 5404 Hoadley Road, Manassas, VA. (See item 9 above for additional information.)

14. May's Immigration & Human Rights Cinema (IHRC) will feature the film HONK! on Sunday, May 13, in the Verizon Auditorium located on the Prince William Campus of George Mason University. Light refreshments will be available before the start of the film. (See item 8 above for additional information about the film series.)

15. The Prince William NAACP will be hosting a Family Picnic on Saturday, June 30, from 3:00 to 8:00 P.M. at Merchant Park in Dumfries, Virginia. (The park is next door to the Weems-Botts Museum at 3944 Cameron St.). The cost will be \$2.00 per family.

16. The next meeting of Unity in the Community will be at 6:30 P.M. on May 20 at the Buckhall United Methodist Church in Manassas, VA. Please note, if the IHRC film series feature is rescheduled for May 20, the UITC meeting location may be changed to George Mason University (Prince William Campus), and the meeting may begin immediately after discussion of the film.

The meeting adjourned at 6:34 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Amaral, Secretary