

GUN VIOLENCE TASK FORCE

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, March 18, 2008

4:00 PM

Sweet Pilgrim Baptist Church, Albany, NY
(Clinton Avenue & Ten Broeck Street)

Task Force Members Present:

Allison Banks
Hon. Betty Barnette
Leslie Fisher
Hon. Gerard E. Maney
Michael P. McDermott, Esq.
Rev. John U Miller
Dr. Leonard I Morgenbesser
Robert L. Serenka, Esq.
Rev. Dr. Edward B. Smart
Hon. P. David Soares & Mark Harris, Esq.
Police Chief James Tuffey
Robert E. Worden

Task Force Members Absent:

Rev. Valerie Faust

Council Members Present:

4th Ward Council Member Barbara Smith (Vice Chair of Council's Public Safety Committee)

Members of the Public Present: 1

Task Force Chair Rev. John Miller called the Meeting to order at 4:00PM.

There will be a Community Forum on Tuesday, March 25, 2008 in order to give the community an opportunity to provide comment to the Task Force. The Community Forum will take place from 7:00PM – 9:00PM at the Livingston Middle School.

The next two Regular meetings will be on April 1st and April 15th. One possible site is the 100 Black Men Building, Clinton Avenue.

Reminder that a preliminary report is due to the Common Council on April 1st.

The following members will work on putting a draft report together:

Rev. John U Miller Dr. Robert E. Worden Robert L. Serenka, Esq. Ms. Allison Banks
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Tonight's meeting features a guest speaker, Lisa Good, Executive Director of the Homer Perkins Center.

Ms. Good spoke about an intervention program she coordinates, once a violent act has taken place. This program aims to work with those impacted (either directly or indirectly) by this violent act. The program looks at what impact did the violence have on the victim, their family, their friends, and the community at large?

There is a need to assess what services are available for the grief and loss that is felt.

She puts together an "urban grief team" of volunteers. Being at funerals, or being with a family marking the anniversary of the loss of a loved one as a result of a violent act.

People need a "safe place" to come back to after a tragic event.

If the needs are not addressed, there is a higher chance for more crime and substance abuse.

There is a need for healing, particularly among young people whose brains are not fully developed until age 25.

Ms. Good held a "healing conference" where she sought to accomplish the following:

1. Increase awareness of the mental impact of violence/gun violence
2. Break down the isolation that occurs---who is it "safe" to talk to?
3. Taught self-care skills

When a violent act occurs, a person at risk may not reach out. He/she may mistrust. There may not be adequate health care available. A pre-existing condition may only worsen.

A person may fall into "survival mode" and turn to drugs or alcohol.

There is a need for intervention.

At a recent funeral for a gunshot victim there were a large number of youth in attendance at the funeral. Some could be approached; others could not. There needs to be a coordinated response from the community. How to approach? Who to approach with?

At the scene of the crime, at what point do you try to gain access to people? What is the best point of intervention? Who do you intervene with? Who should be the lead agency, if one exists? The County and hospital should have a role. Mental health services are needed.

The longer you wait, the less chance that intervention will be successful.

Use "circles of impact." Try to attain the right group of people. Who can have the greatest impact?

Often closure comes when there is a level of "justice" achieved (positive justice).

Crisis intervention on the most basic scale can be helpful. Those who were closest to the crime, have the greatest need.

When there is a lack of a mediating system, post-traumatic stress is at its highest.

There may be “force silence” Traumatic stress may be high and the silence may create a pathway to recurrence.

We as a community must make a commitment to a multi-pronged response.

Earlier it was mentioned that a lead agency should take charge. Trinity Institution/Homer Perkins can be such a lead agency.
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Need for a funding proposal.

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR LISA GOOD:

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e-mail: l.good@homerperkinscenter.org

Michael McDermott will try to arrange a teleconference call with *The Chicago Project for Violence Prevention (-Ceasefire-)* at the April 15th meeting.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:20PM

Respectfully submitted:

John Marsolais
Acting Secretary
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