

GUN VIOLENCE TASK FORCE

Meeting Minutes

Monday, August 05, 2008

4:00 PM

First Israel AME Albany, NY

Hamilton Ave.

Task Force Members Present:

Allison Banks

Leslie Fisher

Hon. Gerard E. Maney

Michael P. McDermott, Esq.

Rev. John U Miller

Dr. Leonard I Morgenbesser

Robert L. Serenka, Esq.

Ms. Denia Van Houter FOR Rev. Dr. Edward B. Smart

Mark Harris, Esq. FOR Hon. P. David Soares

Police Chief James Tuffey

Robert E. Worden

Hon. Betty Barnette

Rev. Valerie Faust

Task Force Members Absent:

Rev. John U. Miller

Council Members Present:

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

Dominick Casolaro

Members of the Public Present: 17

Dr. Morgenbesser distributed "Memo Re: Various Items".

Meeting called to order by **Rev. Valerie Faust** at 4:02.

<p>Rev. Valerie Faust will be acting as chair for the month of August while Rev. John Miller is on vacation and Ms. Denia Van Houter will be representing Rev. Dr. Smart for the month of August while he is on vacation.</p>

Approval of Minutes:

Mr. Fisher requests that “establishing regional collaborations on gun violence prevention and establishing some type of private foundation to supplement any monies we need to have from the city” be added to the minutes as well as “congratulating the mayor and the police department” for the work they have done.

Minutes approved with corrections.

The Task Force discusses the best way to go about addressing the 30 recommendations gathered at the last meeting. **Rev. Faust** suggested picking out the top ten most important ones. **Councilwoman Smith** said that the recommendations should be categorized instead of prioritized. **Mr. Serenka, Dr. Worden, Ms. Van Houter, and Dr. Morgenbesser** volunteered to work on categorizing the list.

Chief Tuffey said that Senator Malcolm Smith was in attendance four meetings ago. Senator Smith will be hosting a public forum on Friday in room 211 at the Legislative Office Building regarding his SNUG program.

The Task Force discusses whether there will be an anti-gang summit. **Dr. Morgenbesser** suggested that we wait until **Rev. Smart** returns since it was his idea. He went on to say that more information was needed on whether there would be amnesty for attendees, location, etc. **Mr. Serenka** agreed that more details were needed and suggested that **Rev. Smart** be asked to come back to the Task Force with a proposal on how the summit would work and that the summit could always be a recommendation. **Ms. Van Houter** said that **Rev. Smart** had wanted the summit to take place during this 11 month period.

Judge Maney said that the question remains as to whether the DA, **Chief Tuffey**, and judges with warrants would agree to amnesty. **Dr. Morgenbesser** said that amnesty would be a critical component of the summit. **Chief Tuffey** said that the purpose of the summit before he would make a decision on amnesty. A meeting between gangs would have to be outside of the media and in a small setting.

The Task Force agrees by consensus to ask **Rev. Smart** to provide more information about the purpose of the gang summit and other details before a subcommittee is formed. **Ms. Van Houter** said that she could get that information.

The Task Force discusses final details of the community forum for August 19, 2008.

Tehra Coles, intern, spoke about the plans for the next forum.

Councilwoman Smith said that the next flier should make it clear that the Task Force meeting and the forum will be at the same location.

Rev. Faust said that we should take some fliers to Senator Smith's event.

Task Force agrees by concnesus that **Mr. Fisher** will serve as moderator
[in a later email Mr. Fisher resigned as moderator and **Rev. Faust** agreed to serve in this
capacity]

Ms. Barnette said that we should distribute some of the group's recommendations at the forum. **Mr. Harris** agreed.

Mr. Fisher asked if copies of the interim report would be distributed.

Dr. Worden said that the Task Force should mainly be there to listen to the public and it would be a good idea to distribute some of the propositions from the last meeting. They should be characterized as ideas we are exploring and then ask for feedback.

Judge Maney volunteered to be on the committee with **Dr. Worden** and **Mr. Serenka** to work on this part of the forum.

BREAK

None of the subcommittee have any updates.

The Task Force discussed the meeting with Rochester. **Councilwoman Smith** said that the subcommittee needs to reconvene to decide if there are more steps that need to be taken. **Dr. Morgenbesser** said that the bottem line is that Albany Med can either implement the program with their own funding or the community in conjunction with Albany Med can implement it through grants and other funding.

Mr. Harris said that the quasi-public private foundation is a good idea. However, the issue is keeping somebody in the hospital overnight even if they may not need to be with the understanding that the hospital won't be paid for it. **Councilwoman Smith** said that the Rochester program had found that the prevention benefits made it cheaper to keep someone overnight since the patient was more likely to get shot again otherwise.

Mr. Fisher pointed out that we don't have a community base like Rochester that provides counseling or mentoring.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Name	Comment	Response
Carol Michelson	Is hoping that the community forum will be gone into with hope and focus. Wants the Task Force to make sure everyone is welcome to comment.	Rev. Faust said that the Task Force was on the same page.
John Cutro	In regards to the Albany Med project, if we wait for federal funding it may never happen. Perhaps we should start smaller. In regards to the summit, we would have to make sure there was no arresting, tagging, media, etc. The summit is not an event it is a process and can't be open to the public.	Rev. Faust said that it would be good for him to meet with Dr. Morgenbesser and Rev. Smart .
Marlon Anderson, West Hill	Doesn't think we should legitimize gangs by holding a summit. There is a culture in Albany that gun violence is ok. We don't need anymore politics or posturing. The recommendations are more of the same.	Rev. Faust it takes more than the people who are in the trenches to get this accomplished.
Terry O'Neil	We have almost 3 generations of young people with no positive make influence in their lives. A year ago we had an emotional meeting at the YMCA after a North Albany teenager was gunned down. I am completely against a gang summit.	
Ron Bailey 3 rd Ward leader	My area is the area that sees a lot of the gun violence and I am hoping that the recommendations don't just sit there. We have to be able to count on the police force to protect us because if we can't then what can we do?	Councilwoman Smith said that aslong as it is the council's decision then there is lots of commitement but when it goes beyond us we have no control. Rev. Faust that is why we have to engage the public. Mr. Fisher said that we need people to stand behind

		the recommendations to make sure they are implemented.
Allah Son Allah	I'm upset. The earlier half of the meeting I heard jokes and laughing and it's not a laughing matter. We have immediate needs. You're not really giving us nothing but if I bring my stick or bat out then I'm going to be the defendant. We need money put back in the community.	
Rev. Hartwell	There is a recommendation called Track Tackling Racism in Albany County. Our problem in West Hill is that we have no police on the street and there is no communication.	
Denise Rhodes, United Front	I commend Mr. Allah on what he has said and I understand his frustration. . We have a lot of abandoned buildings and we need to put the police in there or have them as centers and runaway homes. Put the money back in the community. These babies are not getting a chance.	Councilwoman Smith said we have 900 abandoned buildings.

Dr. Morgenbesser said that until the state of New York needs to commit to paying ex offenders to help address this issue it will not be solved. We have 5 people dead and 31 civilians hit by gunfire.

Thank you to the **Members of First Israel AME** that provided the food.

Minutes respectfully submitted by,

Tehra Coles
City of Albany Gun Violence Task Force Intern