

Mayor's Interfaith Council Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 23, 2017
10:00AM–12:00PM
John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Room 306

Present:

Dr. Keith Byrd, Sr. (Chair)
Dr. Sidney D. Fowler (Co-Chair)
Thomas Bowen (MORA Director)
Rabbi Gerry Serotta, Commissioner
Minister Darrell Smith-Bey, Commissioner
Imam Talib Shareef, Commissioner
Rev. Susan Taylor, Commissioner
Dr. Christine Wiley, Commissioner
Rev. Dwayne Johnson, Commissioner
Rev. James Coleman, Commissioner
Darren Sakai, LDS Church
Fazia Deen, Dar Al Hijrah
Pastor Gabriel Sobarzo, Create Church
Desmond MacNamara, Create Church
Wendy Pohlhaus, U.S. Attorney's Office of DC
Monica Veney, U.S. Attorney's Office of DC
Yilya Wilson, MOCA

- The meeting was called to order by Dr. Byrd and the opening prayer was offered by Dr. Fowler.
- Introductions were made.
- Director Bowen acknowledged the presence of Pastor Gabriel Sobarzo and Desmond MacNamara from the Create Church.
- Rev. Susan Taylor expressed an interest in attending the Committee on Government Operations Performance Oversight Hearing and encouraged other members of MIC to do so. Director Bowen said that he would send an email to the group with the information.

- Director Bowen spoke about and passed out flyers for the upcoming Budget Engagement Forums and strongly urged MIC Commissioners to attend and to help spread the word to their communities and congregations. Several members said that they would do so.
- Director Bowen gave a recap of the Faith-Based technical Assistance Workshop held on January 17, 2017 in conjunction with the Department of Housing and Community Development. Approximately 24 people attended.
- Director Bowen discussed recent and past incidents of hate directed at religious groups. He shared information about the outreach that has been done to the Jewish and Muslim communities as well as Calvary Baptist Church. Dr. Wiley indicated that her church, Covenant Baptist UCC had also been a target. Director Bowen stated that he had been charged by Mayor Bowser to organize the faith community and create a response team. Rabbi Serotta suggested we model a group in Montgomery County called FLRT, Faith Leaders Response Team, because it needed to include individuals of faith who are not clergy. It was also stated that places of worship should be equipped with a guide on how to handle protesters. Director Bowen said that he would follow through on the suggestion.
- Rev. Taylor and representatives from the U.S. Attorney's Office of DC gave a presentation on the opioids and heroin epidemic. Handouts were provided. The suggestion was made that area clergy should consider enrolling in their 6-month clergy ambassador program.
- Dr. Byrd closed the meeting and March 30, 2017 10:00 AM – 12 Noon was set as the date and time for the next meeting.
- Pastor Gabriel Sobarzo gave the closing prayer.