

**JACKSONVILLE CITY COUNCIL**

**RESEARCH DIVISION**

**Task Force on Safety and Crime Reduction**

**Family Engagement Subcommittee Meeting Minutes**

**May 16, 2019**

**10:30 am**

**Don Davis Room**

**First Floor, City Hall**

**117 W. Duval Street**

Chair: Ellen Glasser

Tom Geismar

Phyllis Hall-Excused

Timothy Sloan

Alicia Sitren

Shamika Wright

Mia Allen, Subject matter expert-Absent

**Topic:** Task Force on Safety and Crime Reduction –Family Engagement Subcommittee

**Attendance:** Colleen Hampsey- Council Research; Crystal Shemwell- Legislative Services

For all other attendees please see the sign in sheet

**Meeting Convened:** 10:34 am

Chairperson Glasser convened the meeting and welcomed the members. This was the sixth meeting for the Family Engagement Subcommittee. There were four representatives from the Families of Slain Children Inc. (FOSCI) - founder Beverly McClain, Pastor Ruth Taylor, Andrea Williams and Dr. Garrett - in attendance to speak about the work their organization does in the city. FOSCI provides grief support and referral management services for families of homicide victims and other families in need. FOSCI has been in operation since 2006, when Ms. Beverly experienced the tragic loss of her son through homicide. FOSCI promotes healthy healing with grief therapy support groups and counseling sessions. When a family first encounters the loss of a loved one, FOSCI is often times referred to victims’ families by the Sheriff’s Office to employ strategic initiatives for financial support, personal development and long term recovery. Ms. Beverly goes into the family home to assess what the family needs and she tries to provide it to them. According to Ms. Beverly, each child and family needs to feel loved and valued and all neighborhoods need a safe space where people can gather and talk. At the FOSCI facility, there is a seven-panel memorial wall commemorates almost 3,000 homicide and crime victims which is open to the public and offers a space for remembering those who were killed and for mourning.

In 2018, FOSCI began the Teens on Trac program (teens racing against violent crimes). Teens on Trac is a 12 week leadership training for 13-18 year olds who have been exposed to violent crimes, which focuses on peer to peer prevention, conflict resolution, and community service. FOSCI also advocates for legislative change, exposes youth to new experiences/places, distributes snacks to children daily through their after school snack and chat program, offers job training assistance, pregnancy testing, HIV testing, and hygiene kits. Last year, FOSCI moved to a new facility provided by the Michael J. Ward Foundation.

Ms. Beverly said that the high level of violent crime in the city currently can be attributed to a mindset of retaliation, a lack of trust in institutions, and a sense of being devalued. Additionally, the pressures of poverty and parenting create a constant level of stress, aside from the trauma inflicted from violent crime. FOSCI is seeking to change the retaliatory mindset to one of creation and self-empowerment. FOSCI operates almost exclusively through private donations and their primary service area is the 32209 zip code. The FOSCI staff has recognized an urgent community need for trauma services, grocery stores, grief counselors, neighborhood activities (sports, chess), and systemic changes to correct school inequities.

Last year, FOSCI was awarded $10,000 from the KHA “stop the violence” grants, which they stretched to cover supplies and staff costs. They are getting by but they need more and consistent funding to continue to provide the much needed services to the community. While FOSCI tracks data about the services it provides, many small nonprofits struggle with meeting grant criteria which can thwart such funding. The group discussed the possibilities of changing grant guidelines or offering help to small organizations with the grant process. The subcommittee members also talked about requesting that the Mayor increase the City’s budget allocation for public service grants. Councilmen Freeman and Ferraro have been involved with FOSCI and expressed interest in helping them continue to help those in the community who are in need.

For the next meeting, JSO Chief Waters will be invited to speak about the Hammer and Hope program and Chiquita Moore from the Mayor’s Office will be invited to speak about KHA grant guideline assistance. The members approved the minutes from the previous meeting. With no further business, Chairperson Glasser adjourned the meeting. The next subcommittee meeting has yet to be scheduled.

**Meeting Adjourned:** 12:00 pm

Minutes: Colleen Hampsey, Council Research

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Tape: Task Force on Safety and Crime Reduction Family Engagement Subcommittee -Legislative Services Division 5.16.19