



Fairfax County Community Action Advisory Board

Fairfax County Community Action Advisory Board (CAAB) Meeting Minutes – Tuesday, February 6, 2024, 7:30pm Virtual on Zoom

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 pm by Vice Chair Heather Thomas.

Members in Attendance: Nermin AbdelWahab, Fairfax; Sandra Barksdale, Reston; April Hall, Reston; Alicia Doe, Lorton; Hawa Hassan, Fairfax; Kevin Hickerson, Centreville; Michele “Cookie” Hymer Blitz, Winter Park, Fl; Morgan Jameson, Fairfax; Maria Isabel Leiva, Falls Church; Elizabeth Benson, Falls Church; Michael Mahrer, Merrifield; Marcia McDevitt, Reston; Michele Menapace, Fairfax; Phil Rosenthal, Fairfax Station; Benjamin Zuhl, Fairfax; Ken McMillon, Falls Church; Felicia Webster, Fairfax; Heather Thomas, Centreville; Shari Zamarra, Fairfax, Alex Rodriguez, Herndon; Alice Yam, Herndon

Absent: Michelle Jefferson, Matthew Bell, Mary Ann Floto, Ann Macpherson, Whitney Richardson, Hari Kurup, Caroline Hockenberry

Guests: Soraya Borja, Kimberlyn Pena, Ivett Diaz

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The motion to approve the meeting minutes was made by Michele Menapace, seconded by Phil Rosenthal.

Program Presentation

Kimberlyn Pena and Ivett Diaz from Second Story presented on the Culmore Youth Outreach Program in Falls Church, VA. CAAB members had opportunities to ask questions and offer volunteer time.

Membership and Election Committee Report

Shari Zamara reminded the CAAB members who are up for renewal to contact their supervisors. Shari presented the slate of CAAB officers for 2024. Michele Menapace moved to adopt the slate as presented, seconded by Alex Rodriguez. Michelle Jefferson, Chairperson, Heather Thomas, Vice Chair, and Morgan Jameson, Secretary were reelected.

CCFAC Update:

Documents were approved for the Board of Supervisors to review and receive comment on during a public hearing. The Working Advisory Group (WAG) submitted FY25 documents and proposals for review and consideration.

CAAB Member Sharing

Michael Mahrer stated that the English Empowerment Center just completed registration. They are on target to register over 2,000 adults this year for English classes.

Ken McMillon attended a town hall meeting regarding a discussion around a proposed Casino for Fairfax County. The bill has been put aside until next year.

Michele “Cookie” Hymer Blitz mentioned that there is a study being requested from Richmond on the impact of a casino. There is a strong will against this casino in the county. There are several bills in Richmond impacting the low-income community, housing, and utilities. House bill 906 was introduced to



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ensure utilities could not be cut off during periods of extreme weather. So far it has passed the house with bipartisan support.

Shari Zamarra requested an update on testimony to the General Assembly delegation.

Nermin Abdelwahab gave an update on the General Assembly delegation and said it went well and was proud of getting their points across within the time limit.

Shari Zamarra requested that the State of the Poor brochures be placed in libraries.

Michele Menapace mentioned that the brochures could also go to the supervisors' offices and police stations. The bookmark must be approved at the Central Library. In terms of housing, a public hearing was conducted, and a public building is being considered for utilization as affordable housing. Supervisor Lusk is holding a meeting to discuss this. The Health Department has recognized the CAAB for the work done during the time of COVID. The Human Services council will be hearing a presentation from their CFO on the budget. On March 2nd, the council is holding a summit with affiliated Boards, Authorities and Commissions (BACs) and members of non-profit organizations to build a sustainable and collaborative relationship. The Human Services Council will also be sharing the Strategic Allocation of Resources (STAR) plan. It will be an interactive online resource to see the needs in the community, and where the county is going next with human services.

Ben Zuhl stated that he brought 62 pounds of food to Food for Others from Fairfax Public Access. He mentioned that everyone can donate.

Phil Rosenthal mentioned the MGM Casino generates substantial funds from Virginia.

Marcia McDevitt provided updated information regarding the casino bill.

Morgan Jameson mentioned that the casino bill has been tabled for a study. Regarding gambling and crime, studies have shown the existence of casinos does not bring more crime, but it will be up to voters at the end of the day.

Heather Thomas mentioned the Fairfax County Housing Symposium is coming up and she will be a panelist. The event is currently at capacity. The coat drive went well, and donations are still being distributed. Heather stated that there has been a big push for affordable childcare for all Virginians by 2030 and has been working at the state level with the Virginia Promise partner and local family councils. Heather stated to please continue to advocate for affordable childcare and will send some information on advocacy.

Phil Rosenthal motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ben Zuhl.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35pm.