

**M I N U T E S**

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**MICHIGAN CITY  
COMMISSION ON THE SOCIAL STATUS OF  
AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES**

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**Wednesday, May 13, 2009**

**Commissioners Present:**

Albertine Allen  
Marty Corley  
Joan Ganschow  
Sherry Neal  
Lester Norvell  
Arthur Payne

**Commissioners Absent:**

Charles Dowdell  
Michael Lark, Sr.  
Willie Milsap  
James Stemmler  
Rodney Washington

**Others Present:**

Andy Steele	ALCo T.V. Cameraman
Ryan Fly	Corner to Cornerstone (Mentoring & Technical Training Program)
Robert Kiner	Corner to Cornerstone (Mentoring & Technical Training Program)

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairperson Payne called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

**ROLL CALL:**

Secretary Neal called the roll and it was noted for the record. All attendance is noted above.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Chairperson Payne asked for a motion of acceptance for the April 2009 meeting minutes. Commissioner Allen motioned to accept. Commissioner Norvell seconded the motion. The chairperson asked for a vote:

<b>Ayes: 06</b>	<b>Nays: 0</b>	<b>Absent: 05</b>	<b>Vacant: 01</b>
<b>Motioned carried.</b>			

**TREASURER'S REPORT:**

No subsequent report.

**Related Information:**

Representatives from the Social Status Commission are still attending the (LCC) LaPorte County Drug Free Partnership meetings in an effort to secure grant funding when the requirements have been met by the LCC to apply for grant monies. The representatives are Commissioner's Corley, Ganschow and Washington.

**COMMTTEE REPORTS:**

**Executive Committee:**

No report.

**Neighborhood and Social Factors:**

No report.

**Criminal Justice and Corrections:**

No report.

**Education:**

No report

**Employment and Workforce:**

No report.

**Health and Addiction:**

No report.

**Awareness and Public Policy:**

Commissioner Allen read a letter that was presented to the board of MCAS (Michigan City Area School) regarding the resignation and replacement of Terry Allen a former MCAS teacher that expressed her disapproval of the incident.

Commissioner Allen gave a brief update on the H1N1 virus in the LaPorte County area.

Chairperson Payne announced that an African American attorney, Tony Walker, has started a new practice in Michigan City to support the need for representation in the black community and encouraged the community to support him.

**Finance Committee:**

No report.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

The Commission is to make contact with the Justice System (Adult Probation Department) to seek a replacement for Curtis Jackson who is no longer with the commission.

Also, Joan Ganschow is to contact Jerri Jones of the H.O.P.E. Program for information regarding a replacement for Michael Lark, Sr. whose commission will expire July 22, 2009. Additionally, the Social Status Commission is to consider the continuation of a representative from H.O.P.E. as of today there is no clear direction as to the future of the program.

Chairperson Payne discussed changing the ordinance to reflect a community based organization as opposed to naming the H.O.P.E. Program specifically.

Commissioner Ganschow mentioned how instrumental H.O.P.E. has been in the formation of the Social Status Commission being established in Michigan City and should be allowed the opportunity to find a replacement for Michael Lark, Sr.

The discussion of replacing the H.O.P.E. commissioner and changing the ordinance was tabled until the next meeting on June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2009 to allow Commissioner Ganschow an opportunity to contact Jerri Jones to discuss continuing representation from the program.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

Chairperson Payne discussed the correct procedure when replacing a commissioner of the board as per the guidelines of the Council. According to the clerk's office the correct procedure for replacing a commissioner is as follows: First the Council is to be informed of the vacancy afterwards at the next monthly board meeting nominations are submitted and then the following board meeting a vote should take place. This will give the commission time to find someone to fill the vacancy and to complete the necessary forms or write a letter of interest.

Commissioner Ganschow reported that the Soni Springs Girl Scout Camp advised the public that they will be closed this year. The decision has not been made by administrators to close the camp permanently and the call to a proactive stance from the community to help keep the camp open is needed.

A brief discussion followed.

### **GUEST SPEAKER**

Ryan Fly-Executive Director/Founder and Robert Kiner – Program Director of Corner to Cornerstone Mentoring & Technical Training Program were present to outline the programs that are being offered by their organization.

Mr. Kiner stated the new G.E.D. program is up and running at the 1709 Michigan Blvd. site. The classes are currently Monday through Friday 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. The current class size is 12 and is filled to capacity.

Mr. Kiner also stated that they have recruited a representative from NIPSCO to teach program participants certification.

Mr. Fly announced that Corner to Cornerstone is currently working with Tom Anderson of Save the Dunes Council and the (DNR) Department of Natural Resources regarding 45 -50 potential summer jobs for residents from our area. Tom Anderson has planned to bring a representative from Gary to discuss the details of the hiring criteria.

The schedule for G.E.D. classes are Tuesdays 9A-12P, the computer classes are on Wednesdays 9A – 12, the afterschool program is weeknights from 3P – 6P.

There is also a food pantry which is open from 10A – 2P where food is distributed to those in need. The pantry is open to the public and assistance is provided with the requirements of a membership application with the request for food.

The minimum age requirement for the G.E.D. classes is 16 yrs -17 yrs of age and there is no maximum age requirement. One of the conditions is that the school status is checked and every effort is made to work to get the students back into high school to graduate.

The program works with children on behavioral and life skills. To help implement this part of the program staff at Corner to Cornerstone is working with the Marquette High School Tennis Coach in an effort to open up diverse skill training by introducing the students to non-traditional sports.

The program has sited a need for placement of young adults from the ages of 18 – 19 years old who are exiting residency from JDC (Juvenile Detention Center) and returning home as having been identified as individuals in need of housing. Also, the need is evident for reconnection to society.

In further discussion comments were made regarding Federal ex-offenders versus state ex-offenders and the programs that assist these residents with re-entry into society.

Mr. Kiner stated that they offer computer courses to ex-offenders on Monday and Fridays however the children are not present at the same time with the participants of the re-entry program so there is no contact between the two groups.

Additionally, Mr. Kiner discussed the YMCA building which is now vacant as being an excellent location to house all of the city's outreach programs and a building which would allow for the combining of community resource programs and would allow them to be centrally located for easy access. He discussed the building's potential to have all of the resources needed to help the community.

**FYI**

A special election will be held on May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2009 for residents to vote on the new Career Center referendum. Voting locations will be held at Countryside Church located on 450 N and at City Hall, 100 E. Michigan Blvd.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

N/A

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Chairperson Payne asked for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Norvell motioned to accept. Commissioner Corley seconded the motion.

**Ayes: 06**

**Nays: 0**

**Absent: 05**

**Vacant: 01**

**Motioned carried.**

Chairperson Payne called the meeting adjourned 1:00 p.m.

***\*\* The next Michigan City Commission on the Social Status of the African American Males is scheduled for Wednesday, June 10, 2009, 12:00 noon at City Hall in the Mayor's Conference room.***