

**Date : 9/8/2017 3:33:05 PM**  
**From : "Lexus Walker"**  
**To : "Racial Justice Coalition"**  
**Subject : RJC Minutes 9/8/17**  
Dear RJC Members,Â

Below are minutes from our September meeting. Our next meeting will be Friday October 6, 2017, 12:30-2:30 in the YWCA Board Room, with special guest Kimberlee Archie, Asheville's new Equity and Inclusion Manager. Hope to see you there!

Best,Â  
Lexus

**Racial Justice Coalition Meeting**  
**September 8, 2017, 1 - 2:30 pm**

**YWCA of Asheville, Board Room**  
**Racial Justice Coalitionâ€™s Mission Statement**

The Racial Justice Coalition (RJC) includes representatives of organizations in Asheville-Buncombe County dedicated to racial justice. The RJC comes together in commitment to racial equity and to advocate for the rights of people of color.

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Racial Justice Coalition Values: We stand for racial justice and believe that implicit bias and issues around structural racism should be addressed in a number of ways:			
<b>Training</b> We believe that everyone in our law enforcement and community leadership needs ongoing training to address implicit bias and structural racism as an indispensable step to increasing justice.	<b>Community Policing</b> We believe that it is the responsibility of law enforcement to build authentic, supportive relationships with the community they serve.	<b>Transparency</b> We believe that the community has the right to timely and accurate information about arrest data and use of force incidents.	<b>Responsiveness</b> We believe it is the responsibility of law enforcement to make clear, accessible, open processes for addressing the complaints of the community members.
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<b>Balanced Law Enforcement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We believe that criminalization of alcohol and drug related incidents have resulted in excessive policing in communities of color and should be assessed.</li> <li>We uphold national proven practices, and believe that Asheville Police Department and the Buncombe County Sheriffâ€™s Office policies and procedures should be informed by research and with representative cross-community input.</li> </ul>			

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In Attendance: Kate Pett, Beth Mackza, Gerry Leonard, Allison Alcena, Deborah Miles, Peretz Cone, Cecelia Rawlings (Children Frst CIS), Carmen Ramos-Kennedy

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- Introductions & Updates:** 15 minutes
    - Sunday 17th - Poverty Simulation with Just Economics 3-5pm @ CBHT or Beth Israel- \$10 to attend. If interested email Peretz
    - CDE tabling @ Goombay Saturday 9/9 with UNCA CDE exhibits
    - UUCA - Dementia Connections Workshop 9/9/17 - for caretakers and 10-12:00
    - NAACP booth at Goombay 9/90 information about gerrymandering and rapid response to reimposed voter ID laws
    - September 14, Lepinsky Auditorium - David Blight talk about memory and itâ€™s relationship with Civil War, part of Reconsidering Vance
    - September 15th Reconsidering Vance
    - October 12th - 7:00 Humanities Lecture Hall - Whiteness in Multiracial spaces. Deborah will send follow-up information with more details.
    - Gerry interviewed Dr. Darin Waters - Asheville FM News Team Website! State ACLU will be hosting State Liberties Awards Dinner â€œJustice for Allâ€. Keynote Speaker Yusef Salam.
    - Building Bridges will start Tuesday September 12th! This is the 25th Session!
    - ACSF is leading a listening project at Asheville High- Goal to center voices of students of color to understand whatâ€™s working and whatâ€™s not in terms of equity at Asheville High/SILSA. Steering Committee will meet Friday 9/15â If you or your org are interested in being involved email Kate. Need at least 50 volunteers to interview students - must go through listening training.
      - Previous listening projects led to creation of IRL
    - Nikole Hannah Jones to speak at ACSF benefit event February 28, 2018 @ Lepinsky Hall. Looking for more organizational partners. Listening parties beforehand for Ms. Jonesâ€™s podcasts
    - YWCA involved in voter engagement program- various voter engagement activities, door-to-door registering.
      - Primary September 15th
      - Contact YWCA to register to vote
      - Voter Engagement Committee registering Erwin students next Friday. League of Women Voters. Please contact Cecelia to volunteer

- Americans Who Tell the Truth exhibit Sept. 30th-November 19th- opening with Bree Newsome September 30th 4:30-6:30 @YMI Fee of \$25 for adults and \$15 for students
  - Contributions split between NAACP and Cothinkk
  - Over 50 pieces to be rotated through different community groups
  - AB Tech Event with Bree Newsome September 29th
- **Reflecting on previous meetingâ€™s work â€“ what additions and changes would you make?** 15 minutes
  - **What's better?**
    - Revised use-of-force policies have been put in place. Officers have been trainedâ€™ with expectation that they are using the training.
    - There has been a level of clout & leverage with APD & City-ongoing communication with RJC & City officials.
    - APD officers have body cameras now.
    - All APD officers have been trained in deescalation.
    - Creation of Crisis Communications Lead Team â€“ headed up by Gerry that allows RJC to be more nimble & reactive to community needs & issues as they were to arise.
    - Diverse and valuable mixture of representatives in the RJC â€™ members bring wisdom where we each are able to share & learn, while leaning on the various resource & community connections we bring to the table.
    - Chief Hooper has shown a commitment to racial justice training & other policy revisions.
    - The work of the RJC is being modeled in other community efforts (see: YWCA & the NC Cohort Statewide Initiative)
    - From a community standpoint, there seems to be a greater willingness to talk about structural & systemic racism.
  - **Whats the same?**
    - Never were able to create a relationship with the Latinx Community. **Latinx community is doing their own GREAT work.**
      - **Invite to possible future forum for Sheriff – will have interpreters**
      - **Where can we fit into this movement without co-opting the movement/message?**
    - Mission-vision misalignment? Is the RJC's vision focused solely on police-community relations whereas our Mission reads a broader scope of racial justice. **Need to revisit mission and vision**
    - Culture of APD is & remains the same - within the manifestation of institutional racism in law enforcement. There have been ups-&-downs during the Chief's tenure.
    - **APD pays less than Buncombe and Henderson Co. – leads to trained officers leaving APD and brings us back to square one. RJC to advocate for better compensation.**
    - **What is RJC specifically? We need to be clear about who we are and what weâ€™re not**
      - Role clarity is very important. Why is this group closed? This should be clear to community.
        - Advocacy, Policy Change - maybe this should be made clear in the mission/description.
        - Add something about law enforcement. â€œAdvocating policy change for law enforcement with a racial Justice lenseâ€
        - There is room for education here. Educating greater public on whatâ€™s really going on. Trust building, networking, dialogues with community
  - **What's worse?**
    - There has been a decrease in trust within impacted communities & communities of color with law enforcement.
    - Decreased interaction with RJC & the Buncombe County's Sheriffâ€™s Office. **Upcoming primary this Spring as opportunity**
    - Rising deaths of people in Communities of Color through the national lens.
    - Uptick in drug usage in POC communities. What is the correlation with opiate-use in middle class white communities? **Carmen points out that this is true across the nation. Mental Health problem for white people, POCs criminalized and demonized. (Disparate racial impact)**
    - Community perception of Chief has seemingly gotten worse.
    - Barriers still exist & have gotten worse. From a local Asheville vantage point - we are seeing a culmination of unjust systems & inequities from housing, gun laws, gentrification, affordability & child care.
  - **Which of these issues could the RJC make an impact?**
    - Advocacy around policing â€“ especially with Buncombe County Sheriffâ€™s Office
    - How do follow-up with the implementation & accountability of officers? (when protocol is not followed by officers â€™ RJCâ€™s response, strategy & clarity to improve from that outcome)
    - RJC to help center the voices of people of directly impacted by these issues.
      - Some ideas of ways that could look, included: caucuses, RJC allyship, shared experience training, storytelling/narratives but being intentional that we are doing it in a way that isn't exploitative & we are not creating a space for white people to feel they can speak for/represent POCs.
    - **Primary this Spring for Sheriff. RJC to hold forum**
  - **Discussion - What We Heard â€“ The RJC sees a pressing need to amplify and center the voices of people of color to share their lived experiences of policing/law enforcement in our area.** 45 minutes
    - What could this look like? What tangible steps do we want to take?
      - Trust building, networking, dialogues with community
  - **Discussion - Clarifying the RJCâ€™s role and mission**
    - Advocacy, Policy Change - maybe this should be made clear in the mission/description.
    - Add something about law enforcement. â€œAdvocating policy change for law enforcement with a racial justice lenseâ€
      - Advocating for policy change in law enforcement is limiting and takes time
      - Chief seems to be open to dialogue about policy change
      - Complaint/grievance process- community should be informed and be able to share their experience about this process to help change the policy on this.
    - There is room for education here. Educating greater public on whatâ€™s really going on. Trust building, networking, dialogues with community
      - Caucuses, movie screenings
    - **Suggestion for mission statement amendment:** The Racial Justice Coalition (RJC) includes representatives of organizations in Asheville-Buncombe County dedicated to racial justice. â€œThe RJC comes together in commitment to racial equity and to advocate for the rights of POC with law enforcement through policy change, education, and relationship building.â€

- Relationship building and building trust with law enforcement were brought up on survey a lot.
- RJC values - Training, Community Policing, Transparency, Responsiveness - Gerry suggests a build out to align mission statement with values and actions
    - what is the optimal outcome?
    - Who takes it on?—subcommittees
    - Timeline
    - What level of work is this group good at doing together? Synergy in this group comes from conversation during meeting and organizational backing. We only meet once a month, but a lot of work is done separately in respective organizations.
      - We are great when we are focused.
  - When thinking about realigning the mission and vision we need to think about what specific tasks we want to take on
  - What are we educating folks on?
  - Are we in communication with State of Black Asheville and Dr. Mullen: room for collaboration?
    - Dr. Mullen is very busy, now may not be the time.

- Information Sharing – 15 minutes**

- Carmen and Beth attended update on deescalation training with Chief
    - Only 5 of 18 in attendance
    - Beth was impressed with presentation, it would be valuable for more RJC members to have that experience
    - Beth thinks that officers who led simulations were all on board and felt that the training was helpful. One even returned as a trainer. 10 APD officers have been trained as trainers.
    - Deescalation Training needs more coverage in media, not reaching many community members
    - How can we get more people involved in this deescalation training? Multiple sessions?
    - RJC should be more knowledgeable about deescalation training before Sheriff Primary/forum— Chief would be very open and thrilled to have more people attend this. RJC could invite other groups. Opportunity for community building- reach out to Latinx community
      - There should be a warning that there are videos that show violence and death - option for people to opt-out or leave the room when needed. Should we ask that these videos not be shown? How should we frame this invitation?
      - November would be better for Chief and to prepare
    - Goals: Educate us, build relationships, inform work with sheriffs dept., engage attendees in providing feedback.
    - Action Steps:**
      - Beth to follow up with chief-- we would like to do this Friday November 3rd**
        - 9:00am-1:00pm
      - Is it okay with the chief that we invite people?**
        - Who are we inviting? – new representatives from groups invited and attended previously
        - Would she be open to SURJ coming?
        - How many attendees? 20-25
        - We need POC to attend
        - ACS Superintendent
      - We need a nice invitation to other groups and community members**
        - Emailed workshop for guest list
        - Invitational language after we talk with chief
          - We understand that previous training was triggering and traumatizing, the training has gone through changes and is very different in a positive way. There are still shootings.**
    - Invitation to community - We want to do this together. We will be more effective if there are more of us there to learn, to talk with officers, and to take this to the sheriff.
    - Kimberlee Archie (Equity and Inclusion Officer) will have lunch at YWCA before next RJC meeting. She could possibly come to the October RJC meeting
      - Full meeting and lunch 12:30-2:30**, get to know Kimberlee and share what work is being done by each organization and RJC
        - Kate to bring lunch and doodle poll for who wants to come to lunch.
        - Gerry to reach out and invite members who have not attended the last few meetings
        - Kate to reach out to Kimberlee with this plan
- Parking lot:
    - Collecting feedback for mission statement via email
    - Planning for November deescalation training
    - Next meeting : October 6 12:30-2:30, includes lunch with Kimberlee Archie

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