

Berkshire County NAACP Social Justice Action Committee Report February 2020

Businesses Against Bigotry Campaign

In early February we met with John Lewis and Chad Robertson to learn about their efforts to start a Black Business Coalition in Pittsfield and to share with them our Open to All? Initiative work. As a result of that discussion we prepared an Open to All? Initiative Progress Report. They expect to use information from that report to inform an Idea Jam they are planning for their membership.

Shortly after our January 8th community conversation, Billy Keane and Waterfall Perry of Jan Perry Realty contacted us about their interest in and willingness to support some cultural competency training. We worked out a tentative plan for an evening event at which Shirley Edgerton would provide an introduction to cultural competency with regard to the community of color and Drew Herzig would provide the same in the context of the LGBT community. Billy and Waterfall offered to host, providing space at Frameworks and refreshments. This initiative is now on hold.

Because we ran out of time at our January 8th community conversation, we were unable to wrap up with our planned "Next steps" segment. Therefore, we decided to hold a "going forward" brainstorming session and invite all the members of the business community who had helped plan and participated in the January conversation, as well as members of the audience who had spoken who were known to us. This comprises a group of about 25 individuals. We scheduled the meeting for March 18th and arranged to hold this meeting at Greylock's Community Together Room at their Kellogg branch. We sent out the invitations to that meeting on February 12th.

In response to our e-mail invitation, we received a reply from Cheryl Mirer, Executive director of Downtown Pittsfield, Inc. (DPI) and a guest business person on January 8th, saying she would attend our meeting and informing us that DPI was planning an all day event, *Navigating Bias in Business and Culture*. She did not tell us the date. We also got an e-mail from Billy Keane asking if the DPI event and our meeting were connected as the DPI event was on March 20th - just 2 days later. We e-mailed Billy and explained that we knew nothing about the DPI event when we planned our meeting and had just learned about it ourselves. As a result, on February 18, we sent an e-mail to our invitees canceling our "Going Forward" meeting. We also requested a meeting with Cheryl Mirer of DPI to talk about what to us is a serious communication failure. That meeting has been set up for March 2, 2020.

Police Profiling in Adams

Nothing new to report.

Social Justice Action Committee

Drew Herzig, co-chair

Rebecca Thompson, co-chair

Arlene Kirsch

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