

NAACP Branch Meeting October 5, 2022
Berkshire County Branch

6:03 pm

Dennis Powell (Henceforth DP): I'm going to get started right at 5 after

6:05 pm

Dennis Powell: Well good evening everyone, the time being 6:05 pm, I really want to get this meeting started because we have a full agenda this evening. Really some exciting information to share with you. I'd like to take a moment of silence and let us keep in our thoughts and prayers- all our brothers and sisters that have been struck by climate violence.

Thank you very much. I'm going to also ask as protocol to make sure you're muted unless you're speaking.

6:06 pm

DP: Our first presentation is "Yes on 4" for safer roads. I'm going to turn it over to Helen Moon, our political action chair, to do the introduction.

6:06 pm

Helen Moon: I am going to hand it off to Javier who many of us know. He's working on this campaign in the Western Mass area. We are so lucky to have this presentation. If you're interested in getting the message out, there are currently organizing meetings happening and canvassing so please connect with him.

6:07 pm

Javier: Thanks for hosting us. I am the deputy full director for Yes on 4. My boss, Dalida Rocha, will be the speaker. *(He then read Dalida's short bio)*

6:09 pm

Dalida Rocha: Thanks to Helen for inviting me to be here. And Dennis. I'm going to share my screen but want to say that this struggle is close to me because I was formerly undocumented and know the struggle.

["Yes on 4 for Safer Roads" -presentation]

We are the 17th State to pass this legislation (we did in June 2022)

Opposition formed a committee (with 70,000 signatures) and therefore we have to vote again/ The ballot language asks if you want to uphold the law, so the answer is “yes.”

Links put in chat by Helen:

<https://saferroadsma.com>

To donate to the campaign: <https://secure.actblue.com/donate/yes-on-4-web>)

6:19 pm

Erica Mielke: I fully support this, I'm excited it made it this far and frustrating that there have been setbacks. A couple people brought this up to me when I was promoting this and I didn't know how to respond. How do you respond to someone who is worried about drivers licenses as proof to vote?

6:20 pm

Dalida Rocha: RMV already has the safeguards in place.

Helen: We do have time for questions. Wendy?

6:21 pm

Wendy Penner: Could you review the best ways for people to get involved and the most impactful things? We also do have an opportunity for a follow up meeting with Rep Bouvier on Tuesday for those who want to be involved.

6:23 pm

Javier

Rep Bouvier has been incredible. She went with a team of canvassers last Sunday. The main way we need help is canvassing, canvassing, canvassing. We need direct contact. The other is every Thursday from 5 to 7 pm we are doing phone banking. We meet over zoom and keep zoom open while people are phone banking. Helen has also shared a link for donation.

6:25 pm

Wendy: Do you have door hangers?

Javier: We are creating teams of canvassers. They are always gonna be in pairs.

Helen: Question in chat: Any strategies for improving voter turnout?

Dalida: Word of mouth. Informing people about the questions.

6:27 pm

Helen: what would you say to people who are concerned about undocumented immigrants' information being used by ICE after they've filled out paperwork for licenses?

Dalida: A great question. This happened in Vermont. So we've been able to learn from it. Unless it was something that was federal or serious, ICE cannot have access to that information. There needs to be a reason and a warrant. We worked with undocumented immigrants every step and many said they are willing to risk it to show that I'm a member of this community.

Helen: One more question in chat: what are some of the benefits in other states that we can use to convince voters?

6:30 pm

Dalida: Hit and run decreased significantly. Meaning immigrants don't fear authority.

Helen: Thank you so much. I want to plug the website one more time. Please sign up to volunteer. This is truly a grassroots campaign. I want to also quickly give a plug for next month. We are organizing to offer rides to the polls for the NAACP so if you are interested in providing rides there will be a form going out with the next newsletter or if you need a ride please let us know.

6:33 pm

DP: I'm really grateful to everyone for coming on and bringing this important message to us. . . . Our next presentation has to do with Choice Mentoring Initiative. I'm going to ask Shirley Edgerton to give this introduction.

6:34 pm

Shirley: Good evening everyone. I count it a pleasure to present our next speakers. As you know I'm involved in the rights of passage and empowerment program for individuals who identify as female who are of color. Now we have the Choice Mentoring Initiative which will focus on young men. I am very excited about this organization. The two leaders and founders are very passionate and committed to our community.

The founders are Dr. Emmanuel Bile and Jerome Edgerton Jr.

6:36 pm

Dr. Bile: Thank you for the introduction. I graduated from BCC and Elms and Masters from Springfield and doctorate from ____ (did not hear).

Jerome is now going to talk about some of the things we have done so far.

6:38 pm

Jerome: We are very happy and excited for "Choice" to be launched serving our young men in our community. May was our first initial session. On Tuesday at the Lab at 6 pm. Every Tuesday we do a 10 week session and hit on various topics. We started off with 4 solid young men. Now we have 7 with 2 or 3 in waiting. We provide food. We talk about their goals. And if they're doing well, we praise them. Our focus is to help the young men connect with their knowledge, experience, and understanding who they are. It's so good to hear young Black men talking about success and their love for their mothers and the young warriors that they are.

6:43 pm

Dr. Bile: (discussed their curriculum) We need help and hope to incorporate this into a non-profit. Please see our website and facebook page. I will paste my email in the chat. dremmanueltbile@gmail.com

6:46 pm How are you recruiting and spreading the word to young men?

Dr. Bile: we are in contact with the school system and guidance counselors.

Jerome: There is a referral process for acceptance. The age range is 10 - 17.

A member named Ramelle Pulitzer mentioned Kripalu and some programs they have and is happy to help out in any way she can. (she provided- Ramelle1@mac.com - the program that continues is positive psychology - she is involved thru the LWV - Central Berkshires)

6:51 pm

DP: Thank you Emmanuel and Jerome. This is really exciting. Any initiative that reaches out to our young people is very important and has the full support of the NAACP and especially our young men. Because we know the dangers they face every single day that they walk out of their house. We have our elections coming up so I am going to ask that Kathie speak to that.

Kathie: I am speaking on behalf of Kamaar. I am here representing the 2022 nomination committee. Which also includes: Kamaar, Al Blake, Mario Kelsey and Jeff Turner. Every 2 years we hold branch elections for officers and just a side note that the committee chairs are appointed by the president and appointed by the Executive Committee so this is just for President, VP, Treasurer, and Secretary. Darcie added a page to our website which explains the process. Nominations are due by **October 26th**. The elections will be held the first or second week of November. We will ask those running to speak and share about themselves. Did I leave anything out? Does anyone have any questions?

Please see the website for forms:

<https://www.naacpberkshires.org/2022-naacp-berkshire-county-branch-elections/>

6:57 pm

AI:

All of this is happening electronically. The forms will go out through the national org and come back to us and we will convene. The nominees will be able to speak at next month's meeting.

Kathie: Reminder the deadline is October 26th to apply to run

6:59 pm

DP:

Ok thank you, we will move on.

My report- I really want to talk about what's coming up this weekend which is Indigenous People's Day. I really encourage everyone to share and to come out and to really celebrate this recognition. It begins on Saturday at the Mahaiwe at 7:30 pm. I will be presenting the award to Larry Spotted Crowman.

Press release for all of these events:

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5bb18a597a1fbd2336251cc9/t/6317b9bf700b2b482774583b/1662499263143/Press+Release+-+Indigenous+Peoples%27+Day+Berkshires+2022.pdf>

7:05 pm

Wendy: Will there be voter registration?

DP:

I'm not sure I can check with the organizers

Ramelle: We would be glad to try to be there as the league of women voters.

DP: We will be tabling so if anyone would like to join me at the event, I would love to have the company.

Committee Reports:

7:06 pm

Shirley: Unfortunately the race relations and redress committee have been very busy. There have been complaints of discrimination within the county. In the workplace in particular. There's an intense need for DEI training in our business community and human services and I'll leave it at that.

Vicky: How much is the DEI person for the city involved?

Shirley: We had a meeting today with the chief of DEI and the mayor and they seem to be doing an excellent job with beginning to make a system to address the issues to help them receive the training that's needed.

[Shirley commented on Vicky's comment on racism. As an org we need to continue to do things that we're doing.]

Vicky- comment on SRO (school resource officers)
Any advice?

DP: Well the advice is to continue to identify the data that shows that is a bad choice. What about the community?

Shirley mentioned how you can't invite community members who don't feel safe

DP: I was also impressed with the meeting with the mayor
It's about building relationships and trust.

7:22 pm

Linda: Education committee- we are working on a survey. We are hoping that we can get out. We just need the executive committee to ok it. Also launching a tutoring initiative that begins tomorrow. Starting with 2 students but I have a feeling it will grow.

Shirley- Where does the tutoring take place?

Linda- The library

Darcie- who is the survey going out to ? To the general public? The communications committee can help

7:29 pm

AJ

Economic Development and Justice:

We have our workshop tomorrow at BEC's office - at 33 Dunham mall in pittsfield

Our reparations committee has been tabled. Grant deadline October 14th for BIPOC businesses located in Pittsfield see our link. October 22 our speed networking expo, 1-5 pm to celebrate Black businesses at Bosquet.

Helen: Political Action. We've had a pretty busy couple of months. We look to next year's municipal elections. Also it's domestic violence awareness month.

Rebecca: Website. I don't have anything new or special to report other than the election's page. For the white learning circle, we had our first session this past Sunday and the partners program is about to start on the 16th and we have 19 people registered for that. And we have a high school student.

DP: New Business?

Anyone have anything to share?

Trish Goreman: I have a stand out this Saturday in support of women's reproductive rights. 12- 2 pm at north adams city hall

7:39 pm

Linda

There is no referral process for tutoring.

Thursdays - its a drop in process

DP: Thasia we have some time so why don't you speak about the project with the urban bush women

7:40 pm

Thasia: Urban Bush women company based out of brooklyn who has a long history of engagement and performance work across the berkshires going back decades in

various capacities (williams college, mass moca, rope,) they have been engaged in approaching a year long project work in creation of a project called: Paint Lou Excavation and highlight stories of people of color in the Berkshires, New Orleans, Florida, Martha's vineyard. It will premier in April of 2023 and the company is currently in North Adams and at Williams. They are doing workshops and will be leading a class this weekend. And they're coming back in January.

DP: We can invite them to our January meeting?

Thasia: The invitation has been issued

DP: Well, I'll entertain a motion

7:44 pm

Rebecca: I motion to adjourn

Shirley: seconded

All in favor, unanimous.

DP: Goodnight All. Thank you for your work and your attendance.

*As recorded by Marisa Massery