



**CHAMPAIGN COUNTY BOARD
COMMUNITY VIOLENCE PREVENTION TASK FORCE
County of Champaign, Urbana, Illinois**

MINUTES – Approved as Distributed on June 21, 2022

DATE: Tuesday, May 17, 2022
TIME: 6:00 p.m.
PLACE: Shields-Carter Meeting Room
Brookens Administrative Center
1776 E. Washington St., Urbana, IL 61802

Committee Members:

Present	Absent
Samantha Carter	Aaron Esry
Stephanie Fortado	Diane Michaels
Jenny Lokshin	
Jim McGuire	
Kyle Patterson	

County Staff: Megan Robison (Recording Secretary)

MINUTES

I. Call to Order

Committee Chair Patterson called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

II. Roll Call

A verbal roll call was taken, and a quorum was declared present

III. Approval of Agenda/Addendum

MOTION by Ms. Lokshin to approve the agenda; seconded by Ms. Fortado. Upon vote, the **MOTION CARRIED** unanimously.

IV. Public Participation

Tim Bartlett, Executive Director of the Urbana Park District, requested for the County Board to partner with the Park District for their Health and Wellness center and explained the goals for this center.

Vincent Andujo, employee at the Housing Authority of Champaign County, spoke about the Youth Build program, their success and their collaboration with First Followers and other community programs.

William Kyles, Champaign County Black Chamber of Commerce, expressed how a lack of resources and trauma can distort the way someone thinks. He explained how giving people skills will help them to pay the bills. He also spoke in support of the H3 Coalition and gave some ideas on how to improve plight of African American owned businesses.

James Corbin, Urbana resident, expressed his support for the H3 Coalition and their economic development plans. He quoted some key points from the article “Black Entrepreneurs Are the Key to Reducing Wealth Inequality” by Connie Evans. He explained that a lack of microbusinesses, as is the case in Champaign, is creating an economic disparity. He asked the Committee to consider the H3 Coalition to create more opportunities for everyone in the community.

V. Communications

A. HV Neighborhood Transformation

Ms. Fortado stated that it is International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia. There have been 12 transgender people murdered in this country already this year. As this Committee thinks about community violence, she stressed that specificity matters. She echoed what William Kyles said about dismantling the structures of anti-blackness in our community and James Corbin’s statements on the importance of black-owned businesses.

Mr. McGuire shared his frustration regarding the lack of say his caucus has had on the spending of ARPA funds, the importance of using these funds to protect the community and the needs in law enforcement.

Ms. Carter explained this Committee is here to address all of the violence issues in the community and the County Board has already taken steps to address the issues with the jail.

Ms. Lokshin is hopeful that this Committee can find some ways to prevent violence instead of just punishing people for violence.

VI. Presentations/Discussion

A. Rachel Joy, City of Champaign

Rachel Joy, Director of Equity and Engagement, introduced herself and Mr. Elvir and the work they do for the City of Champaign to implement the City’s Community Violence Reduction Blueprint. Jorge Elvir, Community Relations Manager, described the root causes of violence and how those drive the implementation of the Blueprint. He listed the goals of the Blueprint: prevent/reduce gun violence, promote safety, community engagement/support and data driven decision making; and the partnerships they have with programs in the community.

Mr. McGuire asked how they will fund the Blueprint after ARPA funds expire and how many people they expect to help. Ms. Joy explained that the City Council has made the commitment to find funding for this program and they are working with their partners to help as many people as they can.

Ms. Fortado believes the County needs a full-time employee to make this initiative successful.

B. First Followers, H3 Coalition

Heather Rose, Owner of Forever Healing Us, introduced the speakers and the holistic H3 Coalition by listing their five pillars of this program and stating their vision and mission statements. Marlon Mitchell, Executive Director of First Followers, explained the phases of the H3 Coalition: developmental, integration, implementation and sustainability; and the programs that are in-process or currently being

launched. Mark Pelmore, Co-Founder of Business Elevator, described his two programs: Entrepreneur Coaching Academy and Chess Club; as part of the first pillar of the H3 Coalition.

Ms. Fortado asked how they recruit participants for the entrepreneurship programs and where they are held. Mr. Pelmore and Mr. Mitchell explained how they pull people in from the community and refer people in their other programs at First Followers. Ms. Carter expressed her excitement for these programs as an entrepreneur herself.

The presentation moved back to Ms. Rose to explain her counseling and therapy programs that are part of the second pillar of the H3 Coalition. Then Mr. Marlon gave details of two more pillars of the H3 Coalition: community outreach and education; and how they give supportive services to community members in these areas.

James Kilgore, Director of Outreach and Advocacy at First Followers, spoke about sustainability for the H3 Coalition programs. They will begin by strengthening the relationships with the partners in the City of Champaign's Blueprint. They are gathering data on all of their programs to be able to evaluate the success of their programs. Also, they would like to connect with other resources that are not currently being used. Finally, Mr. Kilgore listed the organizations that currently have memoranda of understanding with the H3 Coalition.

C. Karen Simms, CU Trauma and Resiliency Initiative

Karen Simms, Program Director at Trauma Resilience Initiative, believes it takes a village to heal. We need to acknowledge that trauma impacts as person as a whole and not just treat the symptoms. Communities need to feel connected. We cannot focus on just one solution to violence but need to collectively work together with several different solutions. Ms. Simms explained where her program fits in the H3 Coalition by supporting survivors and their plans to expand/build on services.

Ms. Carter explained how many different people are affected when there is violence and how difficult that is after going through COVID. We currently don't have any program in place to address the current issues and she Ms. Simms for her work. Ms. Fortado has seen how useful trauma informed teaching can be to reach those affected by violence and this is why we need these holistic coalitions. She believes a "one-stop-shop" is needed in the community to have one place for everyone to come together to provide services. Ms. Simms said a "one-stop-shop" is a great idea but having several could really be transformative.

Mr. McGuire listed some of the programs we already have in place and asked how Ms. Simms believes these are working to help and can they engage in a better way. She works very closely with some of those programs and knows there just isn't enough of those resources and/or employees to provide those resources. Capacity needs to be improved, a workforce development strategy is needed, a paraprofessional community needs to be built and we need to work to be more equitable.

D. Tracy Dace, DREAAM House

Mr. Dace was unable to come to this meeting but will be sending his presentation to the Committee.

VII. Other Business

A. Discussion of next steps

Mr. Patterson explained that the Committee needs to decide the best way to make the decisions for spending this allotment of ARPA funds and gave some ideas of ways to make those decisions.

Ms. Fortado does not want to see another grant application system. She suggested the Committee to decide on an initiative like the Blueprint created by the City of Champaign. She specifically mentioned the facility piece of the requests. The current allotment is enough to fund a facility and a position within the county to coordinate everything.

A few members of the Committee expressed their concerns with the facility request and the position within the County. Discussion continued on reasons why we should fund those ideas. Ms. Carter said that help must come from someone that looks like those affected by the violence. Mr. McGuire believes it is best to focus on the programs and their goals.

Committee members should come to the next meeting with specific recommendations to discuss.

B. Next meeting date and time

The Committee scheduled the next meeting for June 21st at 6:30 p.m.

VIII. Chair's Report

None

IX. Adjournment

Chair Patterson adjourned the meeting at 8:41 p.m.