

MINUTES

Rosenwald Community Advisory Board Special Meeting

Thursday, May 25, 2023 - 6:00 PM
Mary C. Jenkins Community & Cultural Center

Members Present: Maurice Jones, Co-Chair, Council Member
Gary Daniel, Council Member
Susan Threlkel, Citizen Member
Victor Foster, Citizen Member
Edith Darity, Citizen Member
Karen Darity (Arrived at 6:33 PM)

Members Absent: Randy Lytle, Co-Chair, President MCJCC Board
Karen Darity, Citizen Member

Staff Present: Wilson Hooper, City Manager
Tyree Griffin, Community Center Director
Denise Hodsdon, City Clerk

Guest: Mayor Maureen Copelof

A. Welcome & Call to Order

Co-Chair Maurice Jones welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 6:15 PM.

Mr. Daniel asked to make a statement before the start of the meeting. He said I think it is highly inappropriate that the Mayor is here for this discussion considering her connection with Ursula Wynn. I asked her to not be here and she has decided to be here. I feel like there is a certain amount of intimidation by her presence here. She doesn't usually come to this, but she decides to come to this meeting. I just want that on the record and I will repeat it later if needed.

Mayor Copelof responded by saying I often go to committee meetings and sit in when there is a topic that I want to hear the discussion on. I do want to hear the discussion today. I know Ursula and I also know Rebecca Wynn quite well and served for years on boards with her. I know Royce quite well and in fact I know every applicant quite well. I don't view the fact that I am sitting here to hear a discussion that I care about as intimidation. I just want to be informed and know what people are thinking and I would like to hear it firsthand, not second and thirdhand. That's why I am here and it is an open meeting.

B. Invocation

Mr. Foster offered an invocation.

C. Certification of Quorum

Quorum was certified by City Clerk Denise Hodsdon.

D. Committee Member Applications

The Mary C. Jenkins Community Center Board has appointed the following four members to the Rosenwald Community Advisory Board:

Randy Lytle
Victor Foster
Edith Darity
Susan Threlkel

The Committee reviewed and discussed applications for at-large membership received from the following community members:

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|---------------|--------------------------------|
| Ursula Wynn | Application received 3/21/2023 |
| Royce Jenkins | Application received 3/30/2023 |
| Ella Jones | Application received 5/20/2023 |
| Rebecca Wynn | Application received 5/23/2023 |

Maurice Jones began the discussion and said this is a strong list of applicants and all would qualify in a sense of being members of the Rosenwald Community. I do have ill concerns about two of the applicants just for character reasons. These two individuals socially harassed me over what was going on in this community for a long time with very ill words. I would want somebody who would rather seek ways to move forward than to put another member of that committee down in front of people on social media. Ursula Wynn does have a voice and it could be powerful and very positive and it is going to be her choice if she wants to lead in a positive and powerful way to help her community. I would support her on another board, but I don't want her on this board. If she gets on this board, I will give my resignation from the Rosenwald Community Advisory Board. I will not be recommending Ursula Wynn or Royce Jenkins.

Mr. Foster said I have worked a lot with Rebecca Wynn and I know how strong she is, we've even had disagreements with each other in love, because she is strong in what she believes in. I admire her tenacity and wanting to always do what is right. I do recommend her and Ella Jones is like my sister. My personal vote is for Ella Jones and Rebecca Wynn.

Gary Daniel said I would agree with those two.

Susan Threlkel said I only saw parts of the social media video referenced earlier and had never met her at that point. I was petrified that Jim Fatland would see that video and it would end what we had been working on for so long. If she had realized that there was a committee desperately working on this and that it was actually going to happen, I don't think she would have done that. It all turned out okay, but it was still disturbing.

Ms. Edith Darity said I know the two young people that made the outrageous statements. It was so insulting when she mentioned Bethel "A" Baptist Church and the people who had been trustees over that property for forty years. They were getting ready to give us the land so that we would be able to build this building and have proper parking. I agree, they are not the two that should be on this board representing this community and speaking out on behalf of all that we have tried to do in a very decent and intelligent and respectful way. Not yet. I think Rebecca Wynn and Ella Jones would make good board members of this Advisory Board. They have wisdom and understanding of the community, they work with many organizations, both of them are loved and members of our church and they would look at things with a very wise eye.

Karen Darity said we have a lot of sweat in this game. We do not take any actions or movements on behalf of the community lightly. My primary concern with Ms. Ursula – she is a female Black business owner and I am proud of that because that is the first time that we have had somebody represented uptown. My fear is...on her application where it asks why do want to be on the advisory committee, she said that the community trusts her. I am very concerned about that because if you are in a position of leadership, you have to get your facts right. We are trying to bridge the relationship between Rosenwald and Transylvania County and I just feel that one particular person may not have our best interest at heart. I do not say that in a disrespectful way because she is a business owner and that takes a lot. Given time, I feel she would be a great asset to the community because she does draw the young people. But I am just not okay with people that promote us in a negative way. For Mr. Jenkins, I don't know him that well and have only seen him once or twice. I am not really sure what his opinion would be of the community center or of the board. Neither one of them have approached any of the board members to my knowledge to ask to get involved or offer their service or anything beyond wanting to be in charge of the kitchen, but we already had somebody slated for that. So, I am not sure about what he anticipates on doing, but again, once they get something under their belt, they will be great assets to the community.

Mr. Jones said I think they all can bring something good to the table, but what we're looking at is not just something, we need the whole person to be able to bring positivity and forward movement. Again, I think those would be Ella and Rebecca. It sounds like our recommendations are the exact opposite of the Finance, Human Resources and Citizen Appointment Committee.

Ms. Karen Darity said no matter who is appointed, we are going to go with it and we are

going to welcome them. But at the same time, we have to think about who is coming behind us and what legacy we are leaving behind.

Mr. Jones moved, seconded by Mr. Foster to nominate Ella Jones and Rebecca Wynn for the two at-large seats for the Rosenwald Community Advisory Board. The motion carried unanimously.

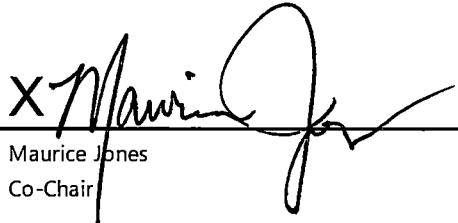
Mr. Hooper noted that the substance of the Board's feedback and official referral will be shared with the full Council in their packet alongside the Finance, Human Resources & Citizen Appointment Committee.

Mr. Jones inquired about whether he would need to recuse himself from the Council vote on the appointments, since nominee Ella Jones is his mother. Mr. Hooper said he didn't think recusal was legally necessary because there are no financial implications to the appointment but that he would consult with the City Attorney and have a more definitive answer before the Council vote. Mr. Hooper said Mr. Jones might consider a voluntary recusal to avoid a perceived conflict of interest.

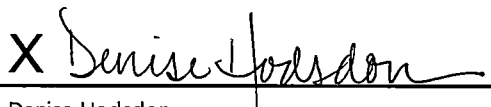
Before adjourning, Ms. Karen Darity noted that this is her last official meeting. She said she has enjoyed serving on the Board and she wished the Board much success because there is a lot of work to do in the community. She will continue to serve as a member of the MCJCC Board. Members of the Board thanked her for your input and commitment.

E. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:58 PM.

X 
Maurice Jones
Co-Chair

Minutes Approved: August 17, 2023

X 
Denise Hodsdon,
City Clerk