



I Call to Order

Commissioner Shari Miles-Cohen called to order the regular meeting of the D.C. Commission for Women at 6:35 p.m. on Tuesday, January 13, 2009 at 441 4th Street NW, Room 1114 South.

II Attendees

The following persons were present: Niambi Jarvis, Towan Isom, Jennifer Grayson, Cynthia Harrison, Stacy R. Long, Shari Miles-Cohen, Mioshi Moses, Cherita Whiting, Natalie Cofield, Judy Berman, Debbie Billet-Roumell, Sarah Oldmixon, Tambra Stevenson, Johnica Reed, Tanya Morrison and Shailaja Bista. Chair Reta Lewis is serving as the Director of Business Outreach, Office of the Public Liaison for the Obama-Biden Presidential Transition Team, and will be back to attending meetings after the transition.

III Business

Minutes - we could not approve the minutes from December because not enough commissioners were present.

DC Appleseed Report Presentation

- Judy Berman and Maura Boyce from DC Appleseed gave a report on Working for District Women.
- DC Appleseed is a local public policy research and advocacy group working to solve problems affecting the daily lives of those who live and work in the National Capitol area.
- They are involved with a variety of District issues, including voting rights, affordable housing, workforce and economic development, child support, environmental policy and HIV/AIDS.
- They are part of a Working Poor Families Project that recently released a report on the working poor in the District (2/3 are headed by a single woman).
- The report includes recommendations on jobs for women, and focuses on green jobs for women.
- They provided the Commission with a copy of their green collar jobs advisory council proposal
- They will also be distributing a white paper on child care workers shortly.
- Niambi responded by stating that the Commission's intern, Adrienne, has been working on a project researching "green women, green

jobs”, and suggested that the Younger Women’s Group take on some of these recommendations.

- In addition, Niambi will reach out to the DC Council regarding women and green jobs and connect DC Appleaseed with various Commission committees.

Update from Debbie Billet-Roumell from the DC Women’s Agenda

- Last week The DC Women’s Agenda held a Tech Lunch and Learn, with the DC Women’s Commission as a collaborator
- The event was very successful - the whole MLK Library computer lab was filled, SOME and DASH made presentations, and Wider Opportunities for Women showed how to use a calculator to help figure out what benefits one is entitled to
- There were professors in attendance as well as direct service providers

The DC Women’s Agenda is working on two legislative initiatives and they are interested in getting our support

- **The first issue is the HPV vaccination.**
- The DC Women’s Agenda opposed the requirement for 6th grade girls.
- DC and VA are the only states currently requiring it for these girls.
- The vaccine costs \$360, and while this would be covered for the lowest income families, it would still be a big problem for other families.
- In addition, some families won’t give it because the reimbursement rate is so low.
- This is a nightmare to implement, and kids can’t go to school without it.
- The Women’s Agenda wants DC to require insurance companies to cover the cost of the vaccine (which will start being required in September).
- **The second issue is categorical eligibility for Food Stamps.**
- The current requirement is that you be at 130% of poverty and have only \$2000 in assets. The concern is that we are basically saying to the new unemployed that you need to sell all your assets in order to eat.
- The DC Women’s Agenda wants to raise these amounts. Currently, 35 states have raised the requirement.
- It wouldn’t cost the District anything, because Food Stamps come from federal funds.
- This is important right now because Food Stamp usage has never been higher, and women are the greatest user of Food Stamps.

- **The DC Women's Agenda is seeking the Women's Commission's endorsement of categorical eligibility.**
- Debbie raised an additional issue relating to TANF.
- A bill was introduced last session by Council members Brown and Barry making it so that if you are receiving TANF and don't attend PTA or school conferences you cannot receive your TANF benefits.
- This is very discriminatory
- Cherita agreed that this is a very bad bill and she has been advocating strongly against it.
- There was some debate amongst the Commissioners regarding the legislation, and it was established that when we take a position on something there is a vote.

Washington Area Women's Foundation Washington Economic Security Council Update

- There are 30 people on the Council, pulled together from government, non-profits, foundations, etc...
- Niambi attended the meeting.
- They want to convene a local Council
- We collaborated with them on the Stepping Stones report (which was handed out)
- Commissioners may be invited to meetings based on their various expertise
- Finding up to date data is a challenge

Washington Area Women's Foundation DC Metro Area Commission Meeting

- They will be bringing together the various local Women's Commissions
- Stacey, Niambi, and Towan will be reporting the meeting on January 2, 2009 and will report back at the next meeting
- The group will compile all the Commissions top 5 goals

Committee Updates

Education Committee

- Cherita has been working on the issue of security in schools. All schools should have police officers on site.
- Teen dating violence is another issue she has been working on with Break the Cycle. Several schools have already signed up.

- Cherita has been also been working on the summer jobs program and working with kids to do community service hours.

International Affairs Committee

The Committee provided a handout with their Committee Objectives for 2009 (see attached).

Economic Development Committee, Mioshi and Reta, co-chairs

- The Economic Development Committee is planning to do economic summits in the various wards and to hold women's business leader breakfasts
- Natalie will be speaking at a women's business fraternity on how to start a business and would be happy to follow up on green collar jobs issues
- ***Doing Business in DC*** will be published in several languages, and released shortly

Legislative Committee

The legislative committee's goals focus around health care, employment, support for the development of small businesses by women, early education and domestic violence (see attached).