

**DC Commission for Women**

Time: 6:45-8:00pm

Date: Wednesday, Sept. 2, 2015

Location: John A. Wilson Building, 1350 Pennsylvania Ave. Room G-9, Washington, DC 20004

1. **Call to Order:** Meeting called to order at 6:50pm.
2. **Roll Call:** Commissioners in attendance

MOWPI Staff: Director Bassett, Shana Armstrong, and Krishna Ghodiwala

A Quorum is met to conduct the meeting.

Commissioners went around the room and reintroduced themselves.

1. **Approval of Minutes:** Meeting Minutes were accepted for record by consent.
2. **Correspondence/Notifications:** Comm. Ritu Upadhyay asked to be moved from the External Affairs committee; however she will remain Chair of Health & Human Services. Resignation accepted.
3. **Unfinished Business:** None Presented.
4. **New Business:**

**Committee Reports**

**Education Labor & Training:** Comm. Butler, Chair

A conference call was held and the focus was on IT Construction & Hospitality. Other items on the agenda included an increase of STEM education across the city and potential partnerships with universities.

Mayor’s Initiatives for Workforce & Education

* The Workforce Innovation Act (WIOA), which took effect on July 1, 2015, aims to offer job seekers access to employment, education, training, and support services needed to prosper in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled worker they need to compete in the global economy.
* Requires the workforce system to be job-driven, responding to the actual needs of employers and preparing workers for jobs that are available now and in the future.

Goals

* Increase STEAM Education Options Across the City, to increase STEAM education across the District to ensure that our students are prepared for the jobs of the future by strengthening partnerships with industry, universities, the federal government and other STEAM related non-profits.
* Engage with the DC Office of Returning Citizens to support the 25 cohorts who are being trained and connect/mentor them as they re-enter the workforce and help with future programming.
* Engage the New Heights Program and host life-skills workshops for the participants about topics such as financial literacy, employment, healthy eating. Bring these women in as part of our girl’s conference.

The committee is also researching Job Training programs with Department of General Services, Department of Employment Services, University of District of Columbia and Office of Returning Citizens.

**Health & Human Services:** Comm. Upadhyay, Chair

The committee will identify three 3 health issues: Fitness, Nutrition, Breast and Cervical Cancer (early detection).

To promote these issues, the committee will focus on a grassroots effort of participating in neighborhood walks; partnering with Fit DC and DPR Recreation centers to emphasize the importance of a healthy lifestyle.

Capital Area Food Bank distributes food to *Run for the City* and *DC Central Kitchen*. We could partner with them for fitness and nutrition programs; education programs; and possibly volunteering for these groups.

HIV Awareness is also an important issue on the Mayor’s agenda. Also look at the Women’s Collective, which is a local group that focuses on HIV & AIDS.

**Public Affairs:** Comm. Fenton, Chair

The committee met on Friday Aug. 25th and discussed three Initiatives.

Items discussed were:

1. Mayor’s Policy Conference for October or November 2015: Focus on Pay Equality
2. Hosting a one day event with a speaker and workshops/sessions. Also consider changing up the program and identify who is the target audience?
3. Fresh Start Initiative workshops will start at the RISE Center on Sept 9th from 4:00pm-5:30pm
4. Conference for Girls in May 2016: Answered pressing questions around event

The committee raised questions about the Policy Conference: how did we promote; previous location; budgeting; and target audience.

**Policy & Legislative Initiative:** Comm. Frazier, Chair

The meeting will focus on the following four (4) policies: Healthcare, Education, Legislative, and Economic Empowerment and currently writing the framework around the initiatives the Commission wants to promote.

This committee will make the group aware of hot topics with the DC Council and advise on the issues that directly impact the committee and/or communities.

**Public Safety:** Comm. McDuffie, Chair

Items discussed were:

1. Bringing awareness to Human and Sex trafficking and Self Defense for women and girls. Partner with a local self-defense trainer and have them provide self-defense tactics at the Girls Conference.
2. Using the ANC meetings to find out issues and work toward resolutions.
3. Partner with women’s groups such as Courtney’s House and Fair Girls to prevent exploitation of girls and women.
4. Support and partner with SHE DC upcoming events.
5. Focus on the issues of Prostitution and Human Trafficking. Partner with police and also have someone attend the Summit to talk about what to look for in human or sex trafficking situations.

**Comm. Rudd:** Committee Chairs and Commissioners need to streamline action plan by committee to help everyone stay on course on initiatives and how to implement them. This will help keep a clear focus on the goals.

SHE DC is off and running. Over 500 people were in attendance at the Mayor’s Mixer celebrating Women’s Equality. Program well planned and executed by the MOWPI staff.

SHE DC needs to be a part of our overall plans and partnering with various committees.

We need to engage our partners to support the events.

**Updates from MOWPI:** Director Bassett: Thanks to everyone for attending the Mixer event.

Commissioners should take the MOWPI Palm Cards and hand them out to partners and friends.

We have four spots open on the Commission, yet many are interested in joining. Nominations for those four spots have been sent to the Mayor’s Office and once accepted MOWPI will advise the Commission who the persons are. Subsequently, those persons will be sworn in and join the Commission.

On Sept 15th the Mayor held a press conference to discuss new public safety initiatives. The staff has been hitting the streets due to high crime to talk about safety on the streets and spread awareness Got Guns? Initiative. This initiative asks residents to please alert the police if they know of illegal guns in their area through an anonymous tip line.

The Pledge to End Homelessness in DC started the month of September. The goal is to close DC General and start providing transitional housing in all 8 wards. Please encourage friends and family to sign the pledge. Link: mayor.dc.gov/homewarddc

The Marion Barry summer jobs program focuses on setting up permanent jobs for those participants. The Mayor has funds to help find placement for youth in the 18-24 age range. We want to help the Mayor to find employment for these youth. The Commission wants to begin a dialogue with appropriate DC administrators to assist in potentially hiring the youth at their respective companies. A new program created by Mayor Bowser this summer is *Kids Ride Free* on Metro Rail.

Director Bassett recently visited a prison in VA to do a ‘Mommy & Me’ Day with the kids visiting their mothers in jail. The office wants to continue to work with returning citizens to help with resources and job opportunities when they are released.

Director Bassett visited with Miss. DC whose platform focuses on Voting Rights.

**Fresh Start Wednesdays**: Every Wednesday, MOWPI will be working with DCHR to do workshops at the RISE Development Center on workforce development. We are investigating getting a shuttle to take ladies to and from the RISE Center. MOWPI is also partnering with DSLBD to do the two workshops on Entrepreneurship.

**Conversations with Women Who Lead**: For our first *Conversations With* series, MOWPI wanted to focus on the expanding world of technology in DC. Mayor Bowser and U.S. Chief Technology Officer Megan Smith will be our keynote speakers, followed by a panel with some of DC’s most prominent women entrepreneurs, Stephanie Nguyen and Maci Peterson! Comm. Heilbron has connections with Google and Facebook who would like to talk about skills to work in the tech world at these companies. The series will continue with other topics for these events concentrated on Real Estate, Construction and Non Profit.

**Policy Conference**: No info was saved from last year. There is a Video on YouTube that we can reference. The Policy Conference 2016 will be impactful with a speaker and breakout sessions focusing on equal pay. The sessions will cover Salary Negotiations and Managing Your Career for Women and Minorities. The event will occur during the day and will have a celebrity keynote speaker to discuss equality in their industry and work/ life balance.

**Announcements/Good of the Order:** The Commissioners settled on Friday, October 2nd to hold the retreat and Commissioner Heilbron offered the YWCA as our host site.

Goal of the retreat is to confirm roles and responsibilities of the Commission and outline action plan to present to the Mayor.

MOWPI plans to feature the commission members on its website to include names, professional titles, brief bio and head shots of the Commissioners. More details to follow.

**Adjournment**: Meeting adjourned at 8:30pm. Retreat will take place in lieu of an October meeting.