



PALM BEACH COUNTY OFFICE OF COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION

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**COUNTYWIDE COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION TEAM
MEETING MINUTES**

Meeting Title:	Countywide Community Revitalization Team Meeting
Facilitator:	Houston L. Tate, OCR Director
Minutes Prepared by:	William Wynn, OCR Senior Planner
Date/Time:	February 13, 2024
Location:	2300 N Jog Rd., Room 1E-60, West Palm Beach, FL 33411

MEETING ATTENDANCE

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|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1. Alexander Muhammad | Gramercy Park Resident |
| 2. Andrell Jones | Gramercy Park Resident |
| 3. Audley Reid | PBC OCR |
| 4. Bobbie Williams | TC Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America |
| 5. Centralia Hines | Parianna Precious Hands |
| 6. Christina Jenkins | New Green Valley Missionary Baptist Church |
| 7. Cinthya Cunningham Massiah | West Palm Beach Veterans Affairs (VA) |
| 8. Crystal Mathews | PBC OCR |
| 9. Daniel Duenas | PBC Parks & Recreation |
| 10. Elisha Jenkins | New Green Valley Missionary Baptist Church |
| 11. Elizabeth Gonzalez | PBC Code Enforcement |
| 12. George Schott | PBC OCR |
| 13. Giselle Badillo | PBC OCR |
| 14. Houston Tate | PBC OCR |
| 15. Jasmin Baker | FoundCare, Inc. |
| 16. Jonathan Oakley | United Way of PBC |
| 17. Katharine King | CAM Estates Resident |
| 18. Larry Caraccio | PBC Code Enforcement |
| 19. Leroy Rouse | Gramercy Park Resident |
| 20. Lorna Stamp | Gramercy Park Resident |
| 21. LoWanda McFadden | West Palm Beach Veterans Affairs (VA) |
| 22. Liz Figueroa | National Wildlife Refuge Association |
| 23. Marqui Craig | Essence of Heritage Foundation |
| 24. Mary Christie | Gramercy Park Resident |
| 25. Michael Owens | School District of PBC |
| 26. Michelle Maceaastacio (Macea) | PBC Community Services |
| 27. Mike Moore | CAM Estates Resident |
| 28. Millie Rodriguez | FoundCare, Inc. |
| 29. Mohan Baijnauth | Limestone Creek Resident |
| 30. Myron Baa | Gramercy Park Resident |
| 31. Nicole Prieto | Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge |
| 32. Rae Milmore | Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge |
| 33. Richard Padgett | PBC Code Enforcement |

34. Ruth Moguillansky	PBC OCR
35. Scott Lavellee	211 Palm Beach / Treasure Coast
36. Sherry McCorkle	South Florida Water Management District
37. Stefania Russell	PBC HED
38. Tamia Williams	PBC Youth Services
39. Valerie Brooks	Limestone Creek Resident
40. William Wynn	PBC OCR

MEETING MINUTES

I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Houston L. Tate, OCR Director, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Mr. Tate introduced the presenters LoWanda McFadden, LCSW-QS, Homeless Outreach Social Worker, Minority Veterans Program Coordinator with West Palm Beach Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center, and Michelle Macea, USMC (Ret), Veteran Service Officer with Palm Beach County Division of Senior & Veteran Services.

II. DEPARTMENT UPDATES

- Michael Owens, School District
 - The newly modernized Melaleuca Elementary reopened in January 2024.
 - The modernization of Wynnebrook Melaleuca Elementary is underway and the students are attending a temporary school site at the Royal Palm Beach holding school. The project's estimated completion date is August of 2025.
- Daniel Duenas, PBC Parks & Recreation
 - Parks & Recreation is currently running an ADA assessment throughout all our county parks, and Parks is looking into addressing those that have accessibility issues.
 - The Gramercy Park community center project was approved by the BCC. The department is currently waiting on the notice to begin the project. Mr. Duenas will provide updates as he receives them.
- Tamia Williams, PBC Youth Services
 - Youth Services' Summer Camp Scholarship Program is open. The program provides full tuition and covers fees for summer camp for children coming from families with income at or below 185% of Federal Poverty Guidelines. Parents can apply at https://discover.pbcgov.org/youthservices/Pages/Summer_Camp.aspx Registration is open until April 12th. Application assistance for parents is being provided at the Youth Services office Monday through Friday from 8 am – 5 pm, Tues and Thurs until 7 p.m. (appt. only), at 50 S Military Trail, Suite 203, in West Palm Beach. Application Assistance will be also provided on Saturday, February 24th, from 10 am to 3 pm at the Belle Glade Library, at 725 NW 4th St., in Belle Glade; and Saturday, April 6th from 10 am to 3 pm at the Palm Beach County Main Library, 3650 Summit Boulevard, in West Palm Beach.
- Stefania Russell, PBC HED
 - HED currently has three RFPs for developers through the Housing Bond Loan Program (HBLP)
 1. For-Sale Housing Development - The deadline for submittal of proposals in response to the RFP is Thursday, March 21, 2024, at 4:00 pm. <https://discover.pbcgov.org/HED/Pages/RFP-HED.HBLP.2024.3.aspx>
 2. Affordable Housing - The deadline for submittal of proposals in response to the RFP is Thursday, March 14, 2024, at 4:00 pm.

<https://discover.pbcgov.org/HED/Pages/RFP-HED.HBLP.2024.2.aspx>

3. Workforce Housing - The deadline for submittal of proposals in response to the RFP is Thursday, March 7, 2024, at 4:00 pm.

<https://discover.pbcgov.org/HED/Pages/RFP-HED.HBLP.2024.1.aspx>

- SHIP Foreclosure Prevention funds are available online at <https://www.pbcgov.org/pbc-cares4housing>. For more information, contact the Mortgage and Housing Investments Division, located at 100 Australian Avenue, 5th Floor, in West Palm Beach or by phone at (561) 233-3600 (Receptionist) or Antoinette Prescott (561) 233-3606.

III. OCR UPDATES

- Chrystal Mathews
 - The Neighborhood Engagement and Transformation Grant (NEAT) program is currently underway. The pre-application workshop, which is mandatory, is on March 6th at 6 pm. You can find more information on the OCR/NEAT website at <https://discover.pbcgov.org/ocr/Pages/NEAT-Program.aspx>
- Ruth Moguillansky
 - Keep Palm Beach Beautiful will be having a tree giveaway on February 24th beginning at 9 am at John Prince Park. First come first served.
 - The United Way of PBC is collaborating with the IRS to provide free confidential and secure tax preparation for households whose income is \$75,000 or less. More information can be found at taxesfiledfree.org
 - Registration for Back to School PBC! 2024 has opened. The registration deadline Date is Wednesday, May 1st, The event will be held on August 3rd. Students can register for the event at <https://www.backtoschoolpbc.org/>
 - Ms. Moguillansky ask participating organizations' representatives to contact the OCR with any information they might have that an organization wants to share or any topic they would like to present at one of our upcoming meetings.

IV. PRESENTATIONS

LoWanda McFadden began her presentation by introducing Cinthya Cunningham Massiah with West Palm Beach Veterans Affairs Medical Center and thanking the CCRT for inviting her to talk about the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Minority Veterans Program (MVP) PACT Act. A summary of items covered include the following. A copy of the full presentation is included as an attachment.

- **What is the Center for Minority Veterans?** The Center for Minority Veterans is the Department of Veterans Affairs model for inter-and intra-agency cooperation, to ensure all veterans receive equal service regardless of race, origin, religion, or gender.
- **Why does the VA have a Center for Minority Veterans?** The Center for Minority Veterans was established by Public Law 103-446 on **November 2, 1994, in response to lagging utilization by minority Veterans in VA benefits and services.**
- **Who are considered Minority Veterans?** Veterans who are identified as African Americans, Asian American/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, Native American/Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian
- **Whom does CMV serve?**
- The Center Director serves as principal advisor to the Secretary on the adoption and implementation of policies and programs affecting minority Veterans.
- CMV serves as an advocate for minority Veterans by conducting outreach activities to promote the awareness and use of VA benefits and services.
- **CMV assists all Veterans and Family members**
- **Who are the Minority Veterans Program Coordinators (MVPC)?**
 - Increase local awareness about issues related to minority Veterans

- Supporting and initiating activities that educate and sensitize internal staff to the unique needs of minority Veterans.
- Target and participate in outreach activities and educational forums utilizing community networks.
- Develop strategies for increasing Veteran participation in existing VA benefit programs
- Advocating on behalf of minority Veterans by identifying gaps in services and making recommendations to improve service delivery within their facilities
- **What is the PACT Act?**
 - Expands and extends eligibility for VA health care for Veterans with toxic exposures and Veterans of the Vietnam era, Gulf War era, and Post-9/11 era.
 - Expands eligibility for benefits for Veterans exposed to toxic substances.
- **Under the PACT Act**, survivors may be eligible for VA benefits, including Dependency and Indemnity Compensation and Burial benefits
- For more info, visit [VA.gov/PACT](https://www.va.gov/PACT) or call 1-800-MyVA411
- Contact Information:
 - LoWanda McFadden, LCSW
Licensed Clinical Social Worker
Minority Veterans Program Coordinator
Homeless Outreach Social Worker
LoWanda.McFadden@va.gov
(561) 528-4817
 - <https://www.va.gov/west-palm-beach-health-care/>
 - CMV Website: <https://www.va.gov/centerforminorityveterans/>

Questions/Comments

- Mr. Tate asked if it is possible to bring someone who can talk specifically about benefits to the upcoming GTAC meeting and a future CCRT meeting. Ms. McFadden replied yes.

Michelle Maceaastacio (Mecea) introduced herself and provided an overview of the services provided.

- PBC Veteran Services assists and counsels former and current members of the Armed Forces who reside in Palm Beach County.
- Services include assistance in preparing and filing claims for benefits to which veterans are entitled under federal, state, and local laws. Dependents and survivors of present or former members of the Armed Forces may also be eligible for the services of this program.
- Resources, a services directory, and benefits for veterans can be found at <https://www.pbc.gov/communityservices/seniorservices/Pages/Veteran-Services.aspx>

Questions/Comments

- Mohan Baijnauth, Limestone Creek Resident, asked about veteran education and job opportunities. Ms. Mecea replied that Veterans Services collaborates with Career Source with job opportunities. They have specific counselors who work with veterans. For additional information, visit <https://www.careersourcepbc.com/job-seekers/veterans-services>.

Veterans Services assists veterans in achieving educational benefits. Veterans can also register for the Veteran Readiness and Employment (formerly called Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment) through the VA. For additional information, visit <https://www.va.gov/careers-employment/vocational-rehabilitation/>

V. RESIDENT QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

- Mr. Tate introduced Bobbie Williams, Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) and President of the Treasure Coast Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America. Mr. Williams shared that he is a retired colonel of the military and a native of Boca Raton, FL. and resides in Port

St. Lucie, FL. He is the president of the Military Officers Association of America, the first vice-chairman of the United Veterans of St. Lucie County, FL., a trustee at two universities, on the board of Mustard Seed Ministries Port St. Lucie and Sarah's Kitchen a service of Mustard Seed Ministries. Mr. Williams has been instrumental in the receiving of five grants (Wawa, Bank of America, Target, Military Officers Association, and Wal-Mart) that help provide personal hygiene kits, clothing, shoes, and other items. Mr. Williams has also been instrumental in providing housing for 14 veterans who were previously homeless, which also included the benefits that they have earned. Mr. Williams stated that another one of his missions is to increase meal distributions to those in need. Food insecurity and mentorship are two problem areas. As President of the Military Officers Association of America, Mr. Williams has helped raise \$15,000 for their scholarship fund. There are eight schools in his area. \$1,500 to \$1,600 scholarships are given out to the top cadets of these schools. Mr. Williams believes that we have a moral responsibility and obligation to inspire and motivate young people.

Alexander Muhammad, a Gramercy Park resident, advised Mr. Williams that he made contact with the local American Legion representative (Bill Miller) and they would like to connect with Mr. Williams. Mr. Muhammad advised that he would share the contact information with him after the meeting.

- Mr. Tate introduced Ms. Marquis Craig, Co-founder and Executive Director of Essence of Heritage, Inc. Ms. Craig shared that her organization benefits and provides scholarships for in STEM and Arts. The organization matches programs both in the United States and abroad. The organization also goes door to door and provides free information to residents in the Plantation community about resources available.
- Jonathan Oakley, Senior Director of MISSION UNITED with the United Way of PBC, provided a brief overview of MISSION UNITED. He explained that her organization is tasked to provide support to nonprofit agencies that serve the veteran population. Some partner organizations are 211 Palm Beach / Treasure Coast, Bob Woodruff Foundation, The Fire Watch/Veteran Suicide Prevention, and America's Warrior Partnership (AWP). For more information, please visit <https://unitedwaypbc.org/our-impact/mission-united>
- Rae Milmore, Arthur R., Marshall of the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge, stated that they have on and off-site programs and do community outreach related to nature, the environment, and wildlife. Staff works with youth to get them involved with conservation. Career opportunities were shared as well.
 - The kickoff for the Everglades Days festival began on Saturday, February 10th
 - Thursday, February 15th, 4:00 pm, Free Archery in the Park at Merritt Park in Delray 316 SW 2nd Ave, Delray Beach, FL 33444.
- Millie Rodriguez, Outreach and Engagement Manager with FoundCare, Inc., shared that FoundCare provides medical services. FoundCare has been granted a part of the network to provide behavioral health services to veterans. There is currently an outreach initiative targeting the homeless including the veteran homeless. Ms. Rodriguez indicated that they would love to partner with food distribution initiatives and agencies that have health initiatives. FoundCare services are for all ages. FoundCare is part of the Riviera Beach Health Initiative. They also have a mobile bank to serve the homeless and individuals who do not have access to services or insurance. FoundCare has seven locations and an eighth location in Riviera Beach has been approved for construction. <https://foundcare.org/centers>
- Centralia Hines, with Parianna Precious Hands, shared that they serve the homeless every Wednesday and second Saturday of the month. They also provide financial literacy. Ms. Hines inquired about available community resources for Palm Beach County residents.

- Valerie Brooks, Director of Clinical Services with Monarch Health Services, Inc., shared that Monarch Health Services is a nonprofit that provides outreach and education as well as services. Services provided are Preventive Medicine, Primary Care, STD Testing, Rapid Hepatitis C Testing, Rapid HIV Testing, Chronic Care, and Diagnostic Testing. Their services benefit individuals, families, and communities.
- Alexander Muhammad, a Gramercy Park resident, asked for an update on the Gramercy Park community center. Daniel Duenas, PBC Parks & Recreation replied that the BCC approved the project and that the department is currently waiting on the notice to begin the project. Mr. Duenas will provide updates as he receives them.
- Katharine King, CAM Estates resident, presented the following concerns. Mr. Tate indicated that the OCR staff would follow up on these items with Code Enforcement.
 - Ms. King asked for an update about the light pole at the community's main entrance. Mr. Tate advised that OCR staff is still working to resolve this issue.
 - 1110 Cameo Circle - A back gate has been installed at the back entrance of the property to allow access for the resident to park his red semi-cab in his back yard, when not in use. This is causing concern as it is beginning to tear up county property right-of-way from driving over the grass area.
 - 1130 Cameo Circle - The residence's back fence is so old, and due to its state of disrepair, it will soon become a safety hazard because to resident had recently installed a pool in their back yard, but has not upgraded the barrier fence.
 - 6263 Camp Lee Rd - the resident has a side gate entrance in the fence, accessing Brian Way, and uses it to back up his landscaping equipment into his back yard after hours, which in turn is tearing up the grass in the swell area.

The meeting adjourned at 11:42 a.m.

Approved by: *Houston L. Tate, OCR Director*

