

## COMMUNITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

DATE: March 12, 2008

CALLED TO ORDER: 5:52 p.m.

ADJOURNED: 6:42 p.m.

### ATTENDANCE

#### ATTENDING MEMBERS

Kent Smith, Chair  
Paul Bateman  
Susie Day  
Brian Mahern  
Michael McQuillen  
Christine Scales

#### ABSENT

### AGENDA

Introduction of the Teen Employment Directive (TED) – Chair Smith

Presentation on Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) – Aaron Laramore

Presentation on the OK Program – Timothy Knight with IMPD

## **COMMUNITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

The Community Affairs Committee of the City-County Council met on Wednesday, March 12, 2008. Chair Kent Smith called the meeting to order at 5:52 p.m. with the following members present: Paul Bateman, Susie Day, Brian Mahern, Michael McQuillen, and Christine Scales.

Chair Smith asked that each Committee member introduce themselves. Councillor Scales stated that she represents District 4. Councillor McQuillen said that he represents District 12. Councillor Day said that she represents District 20. Councillor Bateman said that he represents District 11. Councillor Mahern stated that he represents District 16. Chair Smith stated that he is an At-Large Councillor representing the entire county.

Chair Smith stated that this committee will address a few challenges differently than before. He said that Community Affairs will still see the same organizations but will broaden the scope of what the committee does. Chair Smith stated that they will be more proactive and not wait for some of the organizations that have been established come before them. This will help the committee support them more to become proactive by creating entities to help supply organizations with what they need.

### **Presentation on Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)**

Aaron Laramore, Program Officer

Mr. Laramore stated that LISC is a national intermediary organization supporting resident-led community development efforts around the country. He said that LISC currently operates in about 36 communities and has been in Indianapolis since 1981 and has invested about \$90 million dollars in affordable housing and commercial efforts. Mr. Laramore stated that the role of LISC is to operate as quality control and technical assistance provider and financier to community-led efforts that are seeking to revitalize distressed and troubled areas. He said that LISC works with non-profit organizations to help them raise resources to find strategies for redevelopment in those areas that are distressed. Mr. Laramore stated that as a financial company, LISC plays a very important financing role with certain organizations and spans a wide variety. He said that LISC works with Community Development Corporations (CDC) and non-profit organizations that particularly have a geographically focused area in which they do all of their investment work. They have a board composed of people who are residents or stakeholders in that particular area and who attempt to formulate strategies for turning around the housing market in those areas. Mr. Laramore stated that LISC has been a very dominant force in the housing market. He said that they provide a variety of products, both early technical assistance and financial support. He said that LISC provides up-front dollars, like a 0% interest loan that can be used for pre-development expenses associated with real estate projects. Mr. Laramore stated that LISC provides acquisition and construction financing and mini-term loans, which are longer financing that is helpful for projects such as Charter Schools, where those schools may not be able to obtain a permanent mortgage loan. Mr. Laramore stated that in the last few years, LISC has been steadily changing strategic focus and broadening out from housing development and beginning to really push the agenda of comprehensive development. He said that LISC is not only looking at housing needs, but at commercial development.

Councillor Bateman stated that he has been involved with LISC and thanks them for all they do in the community and for the city. He asked how someone can get in touch with LISC. Mr. Laramore stated that LISC hopes that their efforts are successful in helping communities turn their neighborhoods around. Mr. Laramore stated that individuals can call the office at 317-396-0588, and there are several program officers that address a variety of areas.

Councillor McQuillen asked what type of default rates LISC is seeing in the loans, as opposed to grants, and how that impacts current offers. Mr. Laramore stated that LISC has been fortunate to have very low default rates. He said that, historically, the default rates have been one or two percent over the life of the loan. He said that LISC is very familiar with the organizations they work with.

Councillor Mahern echoed Councillor Bateman's comments and stated that he is excited about some of the projects on the Eastside.

#### Presentation on the Our Kids (OK) Program

Timothy Knight, Facilitator with OK and Sergeant with Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department (IMPD)

Mr. Knight stated that the OK program in Indiana is an affiliate of the national OK program that was started and ran for 17 years out of Rancho Cordova, California. He said that the objective of the program is to reduce the high incarceration and homicide rates among African American males, steering them toward academic success. He said that the OK program in Indianapolis started in 2005 through the Indianapolis Police Department and is a 501(c) 3 not-for-profit organization and is a unit with the IMPD. Mr. Knight stated that the OK program seeks to achieve its goals working from three different levels; micro, mezzo, and macro. Mr. Knight stated that there are 322 young men in the program and there are six components that are used to meet those goals and objectives:

- Student has to attend one of the schools where the program is stationed
- Join the program voluntarily with consent from their parent
- Memo of understanding with Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) to provide office space, computers, use of the gym and transportation
- Law enforcement partners
- Businesses – provide funding, speakers and allow the young men to job shadow
- Volunteer organizations and the religious community

Chair Smith asked if Mr. Knight can explain the effect of the OK program on the young men as a crime deterrent. Mr. Knight stated that 90% of the young men that have graduated from the program have gone on to college, 8% have gone to the military and 2% have taken up a trade. He said that not one of them have been a victim or have committed a homicide. He said that this is significant when the number one killer of African American males between the ages of 13 and 34 is criminal homicide.

Chair Smith stated that a few years ago the Center for Disease Control (CDC) required that in every coroner's report, they are to be notified of all African American males' deaths, because it is considered an epidemic.

Councillor Scales asked what percentage of IMPD officers are involved with the OK program and if Mr. Knight finds it an obstacle to get the youths involved and how he overcome that. Mr. Knight stated that there are currently four IMPD officers that are volunteers. He said that two officers are currently working the program full-time. He said that in working with these young men, they crave affection, love and positive attention. He said that most of them are in survival mode and are supporting their families with the parents' consent to sell drugs or other narcotics.

Mr. Knight stated that the OK program is trying to break the cycle that these young men cannot depend on African American male role models. He said this effort shows those young men that African American adults can be responsible, and so can they.

Councillor Bateman stated that the prison population of tomorrow is potentially the juvenile population of today, and if they are going to break that cycle of recidivism, it has to start happening now. He said that he would like to become a part of the OK program.

Mr. Knight stated that the OK program asks the young men to maintain a Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.5 or above. He said that a large part of their budget is creating incentives for them to do that. He said that at the end of every nine weeks, the young men's grades and attendance is accessed, and those that have achieved that goal will be taken on an outing. He said that every outing is a teaching opportunity. Mr. Knight stated that at the end of the year, those young men that have made every step are taken on a much larger trip, such as Morehouse College, Smithsonian Institute, or Annapolis Naval Academy.

Mr. Knight stated that the volunteer males dedicate their time to this program. He said that the volunteers are asked to give three Saturdays per school year. They are asked to make at least two phone calls regarding the young men that are assigned to them. Mr. Knight stated that the objective is to see this program work, and with the support of the entire community it is believed this program will work.

Chair Smith stated that one of the reasons he asked Mr. Knight to come to speak to the committee is not just to explain the OK program but, being an officer with IMPD, he can give insight as to what this community can do to help the young men in this city.

#### Presentation on Teen Employment Directive (TED)

Chair Smith stated that there has been discussion in detail regarding the devastation caused by hurricane Katrina, but the tidal wave of destruction that has been happening to the country's youth is equally as devastating. In many parts of Indianapolis, devastation is greater, because it is perpetual, yet subtle. The lasting effects of hopelessness and helplessness are leading youth to develop negative habits and behavior.

Chair Smith stated that the purpose of TED is to take direct action to change the behavior of Marion County youth and to give empowerment back to the communities by supplying employment for teens. The effect of training and employment are multi-faceted.

The acronym TED comes from the purpose of the program. TED is to give employment direction to youth. This direction will provide:

1. Personal Growth Opportunities
  - Employment will instill a greater sense of self pride and self worth.
  - Develop positive social interaction skills.
  - Create positive vocational abilities
  
2. Effect on Crime
  - A working teen has a decreased capacity and availability to create mischief or conduct criminal activity.
  - The teen participant will not be as accessible to criminal deviants that otherwise could influence their behavior.
  - Having to work to earn an income will improve their view on life and instill a greater respect for the property of others.
  
3. Financial empowerment to Marion County Communities
  - Teens will spend most of their income within eight miles from where they live, thereby investing in their community.
  - Earning extra income for some families may mean the ability to have proper food and clothing.
  - During the months of employment, neighborhood and community assistance programs will have decreased strains on their financial resources.

TED will facilitate the pre-employment training and structure the efforts of community and faith-based organizations in relation to referring the teen to the participating employer corporations.

TED is asking for local business entities to employ 3,000 youth through this program. Each employer will be asked to offer \$8.50 (eight dollars and fifty cents) per hour with a minimum of twenty hours per week.

Chair Smith stated that by using business and civic leaders from the Greater Indianapolis Progress Committee (GIPC), this will bring together the whole community to provide different types of services. He said that, as a community, they have the ability to reach the teens they need to reach and add strength to the community.

Community Affairs Committee

March 12, 2008

Page 5

With no further business pending, and upon motion duly made, the Community Affairs Committee of the City County Council was adjourned at 6:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kent Smith, Chair  
Community Affairs Committee

KS/law