



MIDDLE RIVER TERRACE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION INC.

P.O. Box 4561, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33338

www.middleriverterrace.org

MRTNA Board Meeting Minutes
MONDAY August 14th, 2017 from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m.
Warsaw Coffee Company
Celebration Church Discussion

MRTNA BOD:

Jose Chambless, Vice President
Laura Croscenco, Immediate Past President
Chris Dillon, Secretary
TJ Fiori, Treasurer (attendance by proxy)
Colleen Lockwood, President

Expected Community Representation:

Broward County School Board Member Heather Brinkworth-present
District 2 City Commissioner Dean Trantalis-present
Fort Lauderdale High School Principal Priscilla Ribeiro (not present)
Lake Ridge Civic Association President Michael Albetta, also BSO-present
Community Affairs-present
South Middle River Civic Association President Luis Castillo-present-
Vice Chair, Broward County Human Rights Board Michael Rajner-present
Equality Florida's new statewide Safe School Director De Palazzo (not
present)
Chair of the school board's Diversity Committee Brian Wilson - present
CEO of the World Aids Museum Hugh Beswick (not present)
Executive Director of FLIPANY, Lynne Kunins (not present)
President of Broward County Historic Trust Steve Glassman-present
Former City Commissioner and Mayoral Candidate Charlotte Rodstrom -
present
Former City Commissioner Tim Smith-present
Robert Ayen, Dolphin Democrat rep- present

Nancy Meegan, MRT Resident, - present

Additional residents from MRT and Wilton Manors present

1. Call to Order 18:06

4. MOTION TO SUSPEND REGULAR BOD BUSINESS TO DISCUSS CELEBRATION CHURCH

Colleen – Introductions- Board/guests/host introduced, format of meeting established.

Two speakers, then Q &A- social justice concerns and community impact. Request for a pragmatic conversation, open mind, diverse, work for a solution collaboratively with a positive attitude.

Heather Brinkworth – Comments- opening statement:

Issues that affect school and community/ important to be here. Has received several emails and had phone conversations. Reality is school is engaged in a contract. Policy allows schools to lease to different agencies. This particular contract is unique, a lease for a capital improvement. Multiple leases and entities, bound with the contract with the church. 251k capital improvement for the sound system. Church group has been on the campus with a cleanup.

Collaboration and moving forward.

Dean Trantalis – Comments- Issue with competing interests, both think they are correct. School board legal counsel present, bound by contract and can't interfere with laws pertaining to freedom of speech. Thinks better way to approach. This community will not allow bigotry to step within it's walls. We are right to discuss that this (bigotry) does not penetrate who we are. Too many times, our city/neighborhood, people are invited to visit/convene/prayer breakfasts...often tagged (afterwards) with a measure of indecency and just putting a good face on it. Unacceptable. Pastor will speak on how they want to present themselves to our community. This meeting would not take place if we



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didn't speak up. We would never hear from them (church) otherwise. City has history of discrimination. Need to learn from the past. LBGT/gender ID included. Our message will be understood, respected and carried out. We will not accept discrimination in Ft Lauderdale, FLHS, or in our community.

Open for Q&A (see known concerns summarized below)

Rules: similar concerns...don't repeat, social justice first, community impact next.

Jose Chambless (MRTNA V.P.) – homeowner/taxpayer... what process is in place to notify/inform?

H.B.- community was not overlooked. Personal beliefs. Impact on community, requirements of job vs. personal beliefs... conversation might not have immediate impact (with this contract), but could lead to a bigger conversation. Could mean process of vetting/denying/liability... need to have this conversation.

Steve Glassman- Did schoolboard have that aforementioned type of discussion? Web site of church, language offensive... marriage equality law of the land. Transgender section of website is extremely offensive. Is the school board able to reconsider this contract and why wasn't this vetted? Very easy access (website) to their anti gay beliefs. Warrants a conversation by the school board and that the contract be rescinded.

Barbara Myrick General Counsel, Broward County School Board -- Can't make a decision based on viewpoint, by law. There will be no reconsideration of the contract. Impossible to look at every contract. If they (church) prove to be discriminatory, then we can do something. Their website is what they believe, their right. Bound by law.



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H.B.- assured that the board does not agree with the website.

Barbara Myrick – Broward County school board has strong history of standing up for LGBT/Transgender rights.

Dean Trantalis - Policy of giving shelter to a group that advertises discrimination is a complete contradiction. Need understanding on this.

Barbara Myrick - (they) have the right (in their culture). Written in the contract that they cannot discriminate.

Random comments- preaching-mentoring/advertising/hatred.

Heather Brinkworth – many leases that don't have their beliefs posted on a website.

John McGuire- lease question. Sound system coming in right away?

Barbara Myrick- understanding that it has to be completed in the next 6 months, they (church) are responsible for installation.

John McGuire – why is lease different...locked in 3 years...special decision.

Barbara Myrick- school and district decided they wanted the sound system upgraded.

Michael Albetta- (Lakewood Civic Association)- definitely against this. Reconsider. Constituents are not for this program. Was there a public hearing?



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Barbara Myrick - on our website at least 7 days in advance. Not going back, would be a viewpoint cancellation, possible lawsuit.

Luis Castillo- no signage, no plaque, nothing good for the community. Zero influence.

Dean Trantalis - the question is can the school board ensure no signage?

Laura Croscenco -yes, and also request zero evidence (of church presence on school property).

Heather Brinkworth -signage has to be approved by the administration/principal of the school.

Barbara Myrick - guess it will be temporary (removable).

Rick Carland- unacceptable answer...

Heather Brinkworth- on record that there is a question and a request and notification with regard to signage as it relates to permanency or temporary/any engagement with the student population...we do not want that. Respectfully request that we, as a community, be a part of the decision making process.

Unidentified - policy of schoolboard with (church) mentorship.

Heather Brinkworth - churches all across the system have mentorships. Absolutely 100% unacceptable for a church member to mentor a student and impose their beliefs upon them. It is not unacceptable for (me) for a church member to mentor a student in a way that in no way imposes their belief on that student. A challenge the school board faces across the system.

Dean Trantalis - impossible not to assume they (mentors) are not going to proselytize with a 8,12,18 year old would be naïve. School needs to be part of the conversation. First before (Boy Scouts),we can be first again, to cleanse our schools of all forms of prejudice...we have a right/duty... this is a good place to begin.

Lindy Wren- concerned why they don't build/purchase their own school?
Influence could occur, human nature.

Michael Rajner – introduced LGBT coordinator of Broward Schools. To Pastor, your doctrine on your website means death to us. Asks that the church keeps this in mind. Objects to the church mission. Target our community. Hard to feel welcome with the objectives. Spoke to school board/superintendent. Based opinion on costs, slight favor toward the district of about \$5k. School board has been very engaged. School District is to enforce the laws. Has confidence in Barbara. School Principal could be a better neighbor with this community. Hasn't happened. Reasonable requests about signage. Use this as an opportunity.

Colleen Lockwood - need to talk about the infrastructure/noise/traffic. But, (time constraints)... very important to hear from the Pastor.

Heather Brinkworth - credits the Pastor for speaking. Asks for respect.

Pastor- Fully understands where you (all) are coming from. Website may not convey our message. Wants opportunity. Goal to better the community. Test of time. Apologizes for anything considered attacking.

Colleen Lockwood - for the record, traffic, parking, noise issues noted.



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Laura Croscenco- Traffic, congestion, infrastructure concerns... residential community, worked in the past with the schoolboard to stop bus idling... request of help to: Dean Trantalis, school board and the department of transportation, neighborhood not ready yet for large scale additional traffic. Stop sign on N.E. 16th and 5th Ave. South side (on 16th) sidewalks (acknowledged good job on north side sidewalk), avoid idling... no buses into our neighborhood (emissions), need to address infrastructure first before allowing so many people into our neighborhood. Question: Can you do that?

Heather Brinkworth- with regard to traffic. Incumbent upon the pastor and the church leaders, that they make sure that their parishioners should not drive through the neighborhood, not idle through the area... use main corridors to access the parking lot. Can't address the sidewalk issue at this time.

L.C.- Acknowledges some issues are being addressed, in the works, need your support (school board). Several incidents of jumping the fence, sometimes fun, sometimes criminal, is security supplied on Sunday?

C.L.-note recorded on security issues, infrastructure, additional traffic, parking and noise.

Tim Smith- Social objection. Discrimination- personal story. Church website leads to terrible things...fought battle with Boy Scouts ...asks church to embrace this community (and new position).

C.L.- summarize

H.B. – all questions/concerns can be directed to her.

C.L.- starting point tonight.



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Time adjustment 8a.m.-4p.m. for church services.

C.L. Thanked all

Next steps

- Distribute meeting minutes
- Work with Education Advisory Board
- Neighborhood group to monitor noise/traffic
- Church has since removed the ant-gay position from their website

Photos

Adjournment

Celebration Church Concerns - SUMMARY

Here are the open questions/known concerns about the church and its involvement with the high school:

- What constitutes a violation of the school board's discrimination policy and does Celebration Church's public stance against LGBT and women's equality qualify? This is a church that has a clearly anti-gay premise yet is "welcome all."
- How are discrimination policies enforced? Why was it (possibly) set aside in this case?
- What is the planned involvement with the student population by the church including any signage?

- Traffic considerations- especially in light of NE 4th Avenue lane elimination
 - Traffic management - plans to manage overall
 - Encroachment on other community/school activities that may occur on Sundays - sporting events, etc.
 - Enforcement of parking areas - this is an ongoing issue and there has been a lack of response from the high school

- Contractual obligations - what are the options for the school board to rescind the agreement with Celebration Church?

- Shouldn't the community have a say? The high school resides in Middle River Terrace but parents of students and residents from all of the adjacent neighborhoods are concerned about this - Lake Ridge, South Middle River, Poinsettia Heights, Wilton Manors. How can we work more closely together moving forward?

The community's current position:

- We would like the contract with the church rescinded.
- We would like to have this issue added to the agenda for the next school board meeting.

We look forward to working toward a resolution. We will work together, as a community, to help.