

LOUISIANA COMMISSION ON CIVIC EDUCATION

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Louisiana Commission on Civic Education

APPROVED MINUTES

June 9, 2017

I. CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Louisiana Commission on Civic Education was held on Friday, June 9, 2017 in the John J. Hainkel Jr. Room at the State Capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The chairperson, Beth Courtney called the meeting to order at 2:10 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

The secretary called the roll and the following was noted:

MEMBERS PRESENT

Beth Courtney, Chairperson
Fredell Butler
Shan Davis
Rep. Rick Edmonds
Barry Erwin
Ryan Gremillion
Morgan Robertson (on behalf of Brenda Hodge)
Suzette Daniel (on behalf of Polly Johnson)
Josh McNemar
Cheryl Serrett (on behalf of Sen. Blade Morrish)
Lawrence Narcisse
Emilie Bowman McBride (on behalf of Kelly Pepper)
Lauren Russell
Donald Songy
Judd Jeasonne (on behalf of William Stoudt)
Monica Taylor

MEMBERS ABSENT

Sen. Yvonne Dorsey, Vice Chairperson
John Alexander
Peggy Cotogno
Doris Hicks
Rep. Patrick Jefferson
Terry Landry
Judge Wendell Manning
Mitch Droge (on behalf of Pamela Mitchell-Wagner)
Criketa Matlock
Anita Sexton

STAFF PRESENT

Tammy Waldrop-Crain, Researcher
Candace Shields, Secretary

III. INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS

Per Ms. Courtney's request, upon roll call the commission members introduced themselves and stated who they represented.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Monica Taylor made a motion to approve the minutes of November 4, 2016. There being no objection, the minutes were approved.

V. APPROVAL AND ADOPTION OF 2017-2018 LYAC MEMBERS

Ms. Courtney read the recommendations from the review commission for the 2017-2018 Legislative Youth Advisory Council as:

Congressional District 1

Madelyn Carlos, Houma Christian School
Madeline Malbrough, Houma Christian School
Alex Wisecarver, St. Thomas Aquinas Regional Catholic High School

Congressional District 2

Nydia Cooper, Ascension Catholic High School
Micah Daggs, Ascension Catholic High School
Hrilina Ramrakhiani, Arden Cahill Academy

Congressional District 3

Alix Basden, Lafayette High School
Reed Broussard, Teurlings Catholic High School
Mary Catherine Reggie, Berwick High School

Congressional District 4

Bobby Alexander, Airline High School
Gabrielle Fontenot, Sacred Heart High School
Hannah Mitchell, Logansport High School

Congressional District 5

Campbell Creed, St. Frederick High School
Jesse Landry, West Feliciana High School
Aaron Wilson, West Feliciana High School

Congressional District 6

Caleb Broussard, Walker High School
Joseph Howard, Zachary High School
Revathi Menon, Baton Rouge Magnet High School

At Large Members

Kennedy Andara, Haynes Academy for Advanced Students
Taylor Collins, Isidore Newman
Chad Fuselier, Lafayette High School
Paxton dePingre, C. E. Byrd High School
Canlin Dionne, Bathal Sacal
Megan Register, Logansport High School
Eugenia Williams, Westminster Christian Academy
Katie Hall, Ouachita Christian School
Ruby Roberg, West Feliciana high School
Manny Bailey, Baton Rouge Magnet High School
Madelyn Cutrone, Cutrone Academy
Marian Luzier, Walker High School
Bailey Scott, Denham Springs High School

Fredell Butler made a motion to approve the recommendations of the Application Review Committee for the new 2017-2018 membership on the Legislative Youth Advisory Council. There being no objection, the recommendations were approved.

VI. PRESENTATIONS

A.(1.) #OnlyLouisiana Ambassador Program:

Testifying and providing information to the commission was Connie Silva, representing Louisiana Office of Culture, Recreation and Tourism.

Ms. Silva gave a Power Point presentation on several programs launched recently through the Louisiana Office of Culture, Recreation and Tourism. She provided two handouts to the commission regarding the Bayou Krewe Ambassador Program and the Louisiana Bass Trail. She stated the Office of Tourism is seeking to engage others to visit Louisiana through social media via the ambassador program. She stated the Office of Tourism is encouraging people to only use the hashtag #OnlyLouisiana to capture images and to increase its reach. She said they have partnered with a third-party software entity to gain the photographer's permission to use the photos which increases the office's photo assets in a cost effective way to promote Louisiana's attractions. She stated prizes provided by local companies are given to participants.

Ms. Courtney was concerned if school-aged children were involved.

Ms. Silva stated not yet, but the program was still in its infancy. She felt young people were the perfect audience as they were all on their phone on social media anyway. She said this is a way for them to engage civically with the attractions and assets in Louisiana and to also show their talents by using their photos in ads.

A.(2.) The Louisiana Bass Trail:

Ms. Silva stated the program is a partnership of the Louisiana Office of Tourism and Louisiana State Parks. She said Louisiana is home to the number one bass fishing lake in the country for the past two years – Toledo Bend Reservoir. She stated they wanted to showcase not only that lake and its two state parks there but the other bass fishing at other state parks in north Louisiana. She said in the Louisiana Bass Trail program visitors and residents can sign up and receive a Bassport which they can take to the state parks to get stamped. She stated there is currently eight state parks participating in the program, and there have been over 2,000 sign-ups. She said after participants visit four parks, they send in their stamped Bassport to get prizes.

Ms. Courtney was concerned what was the goal of the programs.

Ms. Silva stated to increase visitation to state parks.

B. Summer Employment Programs:

Testifying and providing information to the commission was Mayor Robert Myer, representing the City of New Roads.

Mayor Myer stated the Mayor's Summer Youth and Senior Citizen Employment Program is a unique summer employment program in the city of New Roads. He said the program provides youth and senior citizens the opportunity to qualify for temporary employment to earn money while using their skills and talents to do meaningful work within the city of New Roads. He stated the uniqueness of the program is that it is truly a partnership with the community and civic non-profit organizations. He said city workers from City Hall, the police department and Public Works participate. He stated the majority of the participants are shared community partners such as the Council on Aging, Hope Ministries, the school board, the police jury, Community Advancement and community outreach programs through the churches and learning centers that provide education and summer programs for youth. He stated the Summer Program started in 2004 with fifteen students that were hired to only do city work. He said the program was expanded seven years ago when he became mayor. He stated the program teaches the value of civic involvement at an early age which makes a community richer and stronger. He said now the program has forty-five youth who work at twenty different community partner sites. He stated the program is self-funded; and in 2016, the Pennington Foundation recognized the value of the program and awarded it a \$50,000 grant. He said the program offers soft-skills training, job readiness training, and a financial literacy workshop. He stated a new mentor program was implemented two years ago which pairs city employees or council members with three to four youth. He said the Summer Program has employed over four hundred youth since its inception.

Mayor Myer stated the Mayor's Summer Senior Program in New Roads was established in 2014. He said there were fifteen seniors who applied and were hired in its first year, and this year, there are twenty-six. He stated the program pairs senior citizens with youth for a bi-lateral learning experience. He said over half a million dollars has been invested in the program which stays in the community.

Ms. Courtney was concerned if he had reached out to other mayors around the state to replicate these efforts.

Mayor Myer stated he has had a couple of calls inquiring about the program, and he was glad to share that as it is truly a unique program. He said cooperative endeavor agreements are signed with non-profits, and it works well.

Mr. Songy was concerned if the program was totally self-funded by the City of New Roads.

Mayor Myer stated yes. He said this investment into their non-profit organizations and civic groups pays back to the community ten-fold.

Mr. Jeasonne was concerned if there was a waiting list of youth waiting to get into the program.

Mayor Myer stated every year people are rejected. He said there are standards such as the requirement to have a 2.5 GPA which eliminates some youth. He stated there are over seventy applicants.

Ms. Davis asked why there was a doubling of the senior citizen applications.

Mayor Myer stated he felt it was the success story of the senior citizen who was hired for the long term. He said a lot of folks did not want to retire as they believe they have value. He said the youth teach the seniors how to work their i-Phones and the seniors teach the youth things.

VII. UPDATES

A. Back to School:

Testifying and providing information to the commission was Morgan Robertson, representing the Senate Legislators' Back to School Program.

Ms. Robertson provided an update to the commission regarding the Back to School Program. She stated she is the State Senate Back to School Coordinator. She said the program has a forty percent participation by the senators this year which is an increase from last year. She stated most of the participation is by the new senators. She said the longer serving senators have been to all of their schools, and incentives are being explored for them to go back.

Testifying and providing information to the commission was Lauren Russell, representing the House Legislators' Back to School Program,.

Ms. Russell stated the House saw a drop in participation with only twenty-five members which is far lower than has been seen before. She said with the flood, some schools closed. She stated like the Senate, it is the new House members who seem to be participating the most. She said to encourage participation, she has made packets with program materials and a letter telling them how to get in touch with the schools and her.

Ms. Courtney was concerned if a letter from the commission bearing all the members signatures asking House and Senate members would encourage them to participate in Back to School.

Rep. Edmonds stated if someone would prepare a statement for him, he would ask for a personal privilege this week on the House Floor and call attention to the packets to the House members. He said he will work on getting someone on the Senate side to do the same thing.

Barry Erwin made a motion to prepare a Back to School statement for Rep. Edmonds to present on the House Floor. There being no objection, the motion passed favorably.

B. Legislative Youth Advisory Council:

Ms. Courtney introduced Megan Bella as the new LYAC coordinator.

Testifying and providing information to the commission was Tamiko Terrez Stroud, representing Legislative Youth Advisory Council.

Ms. Stroud stated Legislative Youth Advisory Council (LYAC) is the council of all youth councils. She said she has been a member of LYAC for two consecutive years, and during her second year she was elected vice president. She stated for the first year, the council voted to split into two committees to focus on different topics such as voter registration and how to help the Louisiana budget deficit. She said the first committee created a voter registration video to advertise to high schools throughout Louisiana to encourage youth when they are of age to go vote. She stated the second committee had the idea that companies purchase the naming rights to public road works which would go directly into the state's pocket. She said every year, the LYAC hosts an event known as the "LYAC Summit". She stated the summit's purpose is to recruit new members and inspire youth to help out in their communities. She said this year's summit seminars were: "Creating Small Businesses" by Lee Melancon, a CEO of Empower Group; "Ten Rules of Survival if Stopped by the Police" by Detective Bob Escamilla with the Ascension Parish Sheriff's Office; "Youth Voice and Community Activism" by Frederick Dwayne Bell, the 2015-2016 Louisiana Legislative Youth Advisory Council past-president; and a presentation on the National Beta Club by Mr. Kilrain Popleon, the 2016 president of the Beta Club. She said there was also a parliamentary procedure game entitled "Are you Smarter than a Legislator?" presented by Rep. Barry Ivey of District 65 and Senator Regina Barrow of District 15. She stated LYAC does not want to be the voice that speaks for you; LYAC wants to be the voice that encourages you to speak for yourself.

Testifying and providing information to the commission was Austin Sarver, representing Legislative Youth Advisory Council.

Mr. Sarver stated he served as the 2016-2017 LYAC council president. He said the flood was tough on LYAC members, but they made up their meetings as best as they could and pushed an initiative they hoped to pass. He stated the focus was on getting youth to register to vote. He

said they did not have a bill pass. He stated their goal was financial illiteracy, but it was already covered with a bill in the legislature that did exactly what they were aiming for so they changed course to focus on TOPS.

Ms. Courtney stated she would like to see the video that Mr. Sarver produced.

Mr. Sarver stated they would provide Ms. Courtney with a copy.

Ms. Courtney was concerned regarding future events.

Testifying and providing information to the commission was Megan Bella, representing Louisiana Advisory Council.

Ms. Bella stated the LYAC Leadership and Orientation Summit is scheduled to be held on July 24th and 25th.

Ms. Taylor stated the Attorney General's Office has a program directed toward highschool students called "No More in Louisiana", and she would be happy to do a presentation to the LYAC youth so they can then take that program and use it in their schools.

WITNESSES PRESENT:

Information Only:

Connie Silva, Louisiana Office of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, Baton Rouge, LA

Mayor Robert Myer, City of New Roads, New Roads, LA

Morgan Robertson, Senate Legislators Back to School Program, Baton Rouge, LA

Lauren Russell, House Legislators Back to School Program, Baton Rouge, LA

Tamiko Terrez Stroud, LYAC, Donaldsonville, LA

Austin Sarver, LYAC, Rayne, LA

Megan Bella, LYAC, Coordinator, Baton Rouge, LA

VIII. CONSIDERATION OF ANY OTHER MATTERS THAT MAY COME BEFORE THE COMMISSION

Ms. Courtney stated the commission needs to encourage public service, and for the members to consider ideas to present for the next meeting. There were no other matters that came before the commission.

V. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the commission, Rep. Edmonds moved to adjourn. Without objection, the meeting was adjourned at 2:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Wendell C. Manning, Chairperson

November 9, 2017
Approval Date