

**Concord United Committee**  
**Tuesday, February 27, 2024**  
**Room 330 and Zoom - 6:00 p.m. EST**

**Members Present:** (21 + liaison)

**In-Person:** Lamarie Austin-Stripling (Co-chair), Bishop Bertram Hinton (Co-chair), Robert Kirk (Co-chair), Ann Fleming, Amos McClory, Bob Anderson, Cindy Hanson, Michelle Joshua, Quinton Locklear, Rayshion Sashington, Sandra Torres, Tina Boyer, Wendy McConnell

**Virtual:** Jaime Brown (liaison), Cecilia Plez, Douglas Carroll, Gracie Galloway, Greg Mills, Ingrid Nurse, Jaymond Bryant-Herron, Kay Tembo, Theresa Scott-Stills

**Members Not Present:** (3)

Aimy Steele, Lyndia Gabriel, Roy Hawkins

**Visitor(s):** (3)

Tara Bengle, A.J. Clark (Guest Speaker- President of Logan Community Association (formerly *Logan Community Concerned Citizens*)), April Clark (Guest Speaker-daughter of A.J. Clark, works in finance for the City of Concord)

**Call to Order:** Meeting was called to order at 6:03 pm by Robert Kirk.

**Discussion:**

- Lamarie Austin-Stripling made a motion to accept the January 2024 Minutes as presented and Tina Boyer seconded the motion.
- Robert Kirk reminded everyone that we are a public meeting, and all are invited; however, only committee members are allowed to vote on issues.
- Review of meeting agenda done by Lamarie Austin-Stripling.
- Summary of meeting with City council representatives and the Mayor went well. Co-chairs and Jaime Brown met with Mayor Dusch and council members Betty Stocks, Jennifer Hubbard, JC McKenzie to review the committee's second annual report and review the city departments' responses to our outstanding questions
  - Rev. Bertram Hinton's two major takeaways from the meeting were related to cooperation between law enforcement and certified mental health professionals and council is looking into ways to pursue this coordinated effort under our advisement.
  - The Mayor and Council members clarified how future communication should occur between Co-chairs and members of council. If an urgent issue arises that cannot wait until the Committee's standing meetings with council, and if there is consensus from the Committee, those issues will be communicated to Council from the Co-chairs for their consideration and input. Members of the committee are always welcome to address the mayor and council members with any concerns as citizens, however, all communications relevant to and representative of Concord United Committee will flow from the Co-chairs to the Council.
  - Currently, Co-chairs meet with the Council each August. Council members have agreed to increase the number of annual meetings to two each year, to include February and August going forward.
  - Sandra Torres asked if committee members could be a part of the discussion of what will be presented to the Council prior to those biannual meetings and Kay Tembo asked if it is possible to bring up new items to the biannual council meetings with Co-chairs.
    - Rev. Bertram Hinton responded that any new issues should be discussed by the Committee prior to either biannual Council meetings (February and August) in order

to gain consensus from the Committee whether or not it rises to the level of needing to be presented to Council.

- Wendy McConnell asked about how to request or adjust the budget of the committee.
  - Robert Kirk explained that thus far the budget has been used for funding educational book reviews with a meal along with virtual learning. Rev. Bertram Hinton and current Co-chairs rely on Jaime Brown to advise them on training/education. Jaime Brown explained that we do not need Council permission to spend the budget but only to spend it wisely.
- Tara Benge asked about the process to increase the fiscal year 2025 budget.
  - Jaime Brown responded that she needs all budget requests no later than December to increase or change the budget. Fiscal year 2024 budget is \$2,500.
- Robert Kirk introduced guest speaker, Mr. AJ Clark
  - Logan Community Association meets every 4<sup>th</sup> Monday at 6pm at Logan Community Center.Mr. Clark explained that Logan has always been his home. He worked professionally for Charlotte Fire Department and later moved into construction. He later became a project manager for Prosperity Unlimited helping people gain access to affordable housing.

Historically, Logan was self-sufficient community where you did not have to leave the community for any basic needs (stores /recreation /movie theaters /dry cleaners /swimming pool /library / school (closed during desegregation and torn down around 1969)/groceries /meats all within walking distance. All that remains of Logan school is the cafeteria and gymnasium which is now the Logan Community Center. Teachers were transferred to Concord High School, for example, Ann Fleming's father was my math teacher at Logan. The school was connected to family and vice versa; families knew each other, and everyone grew up together.

Logan is a food desert – how did we get there? Logan had a riot in 1972 around the time I had graduated from high school. It started at a grocery store, and I don't know what happened, but the white storeowner shot a black gentleman in the store. Logan community members responded to the incident and burned down all the stores in our community. The national guard came in with tanks driving down the street, helicopters flying above, blockades blocking us in, and curfews. There were both black-owned and white-owned stores, but everything disappeared after that. Before this incident, it was a time when you could leave your doors and windows unlocked and feel secure. The biggest impact was the neighborhood was rezoned and brought back to residential and even today very few areas are zoned as business.

It was said that Logan was *banned* and there was an ordinance that we could not build another store in the Logan community. When you look at the unified development ordinances that include buffers and setbacks, we would have to tear down 15-20 houses just to build something. We can never have a grocery store as it is because there's no room for parking.

*Logan Community Concerned Citizens* was established in the 1980s to help restore what we had lost and help one another, in particular, our senior citizens. We had certain things, but we lost the abundance we previously had, and people and seniors needed help, so we built the Senior Center. We have 16 churches in our community. What we lost was a sense of family. When they stopped us, banned us, created policy where we couldn't bring anything back, that was the downfall of so many aspects of our community and we live with that to this day.

There are things we'd like to see. And anything is possible. But we can't do it alone. I've began a historic legacy story that I've been working on for the last four years with the State. It tells the whole history of our community. So, when we talk about affordable housing, we need to ask who is it affordable for? We can't find affordable anymore. Talking about food deserts, there's nothing within walking distance and senior citizens are on fixed incomes and need a ride to get food. A bus ride may take 3 to 4 hours to get back home. Churches in the neighborhood have programs that feed those in need but there's still no neighborhood infrastructure in place. If you don't have family or friends, then you have no way.

I was 200 hours away from being a paramedic but had an accident at the fire department and I couldn't be a paramedic or a firefighter anymore. That's when I began serving my community.

I share this history as much as I can and I listen to family and friends when they talk about our community because it tells me where I came from, not where I'm going. The question is, the way things are going, are we going to be pushed out of our community or are we going to be able to stay? When City employees, police and fire department can't even afford to live in what we're building now, where are they going, where can my daughter live?

Everyone is invited to our Logan Community meetings; our doors have always been open. We will communicate and share resources with you. We share with everybody (Underwood, Silver Hill, Shankletown, Gibson Village, Beverly Hills, North & South Union). The only way it's going to work is if we work it together.

Daily, I see the need with senior citizens and our kids. No kids should be starving for food or education. And if they are our future then we need to do it for them. I talk to everyone, not just the left and not just the right, and make sure if there is a language barrier, I'll get information to you too. People are moving to our community from all different places.

- Rev. Bertram Hinton thanks Mr. Clark for sharing and asks is there one particular thing that you would want us to attack that you've seen that might be affective?
  - Mr. Clark responded by pointing out that there's no community school; kids have to travel a distance outside to get an education. Concerning food, charities are not enough. Because of the unified development ordinances and not being able to bring things back, where will you put anything? You have to have the space.
- Rev. Bertram Hinton asked if a mobile food pantry on T/Th would help?
  - Mr. Clark explained that, yes it would help but how long could it be sustained, funding could fail, or a breakdown of services or limited services.
  - April Clark explained that charitable nutrition programs are necessary because people are hungry, but seniors cannot necessarily cook the canned food you get at a food pantry. Seniors eat crackers, bread, or whatever is available.
- Tara Benge offered that it's a complex problem with no single solution.
- Amos McClory offered that after the riot the city only allowed the barber shop, beauty shop, churches, funeral homes, and daycare to stay. Scott Padgett (former mayor) and I went through all 72 ordinances that excluded businesses. So, when you talk about food deserts, Mayor Padgett said clearly there is no space to build.
- Lamarie Austin-Stripling asked about the community's stance on farmer's markets.
  - Mr. Clark expressed that transportation is a big problem due to many seniors that have limited mobility
- Quinton Locklear asked how many in Logan shopped at the Bi-Lo when it was open?
  - Mr. Clark says everybody shopped there. The next closest is Food Lion on S. Union, then Walmart on Highway 29 and you have to catch a ride or take the bus. Transportation is a big issue in Logan because those streets are horse and buggy streets. Because they are horse and buggy streets buses are too large to make the turns. Smaller shuttles are needed so nobody rides on a bus for 3 hours. Buses only come in on Georgia Street at Barber Scotia College all the way to Booker Street where the Community Center is and right on Lincoln Street and stops by the Senior complex at the end of Lincoln where they're building the new townhomes then on to Parkview Street and comes out to Marvin Caldwell Park. The bus route is missing everybody on the other side.
- Wendy McConnell reflects on how everything Mr. Clark has talked about is a community that had power and infrastructure albeit during Jim Crow era of legalized segregation and all that power was eliminated. You can say it was the riot but what caused the riot and how is it that this has happened to black communities all across our nation. You can see the systematic divestment, devaluation and disempowerment of Logan and it's been done through policy. We, as a committee, can see it happening

here in Mr. Clark's story (housing, transportation, education, healthcare, geographical zoning and ordinances, public safety, food and nutrition, business, recorded history).

- Rev. Bertram Hinton invited Mr. Clark to attend, listen in and be available to possibly share at the meeting with Steve Osborne next month. We are committed to work with the Logan community specifically in regard to food access but will get back with you on how we might be helpful.
- Michelle Joshua asked Mr. Clark if Meals on Wheels were servicing the Logan community.
  - April Clark said she has not seen them but is unsure if they do.
  - Multiple conversations started about multi-faceted issues around food access, with affordability, transportation, mobility, literacy.
  - April Clark explained that sometimes we have to be willing to go outside of what we are accustomed to doing to meet people where they are.
- On the topic of potentially offering prepared food access to seniors, Tara Bengle offered that federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) does not provide benefits for prepared foods, however, there are examples of local government that find alternatives for funding those programs which could become a local policy initiative.
- Mr. Clark highlighted that in 2021 the City of Concord initiated documenting a historic legacy for Concord communities (Logan, Underwood, Silver Hill, Southside Shankletown, Gibson Village, Beverly Hills, South and North Union). It was about the historic aspect of the houses and churches. All of this history was gathered, 284 pages worth, but there were some things in it that just weren't right. We wanted to make sure everything is correct before we send it to the State for approval. We want to see if Logan could be designated as a historic legacy community by the State. I've also located the boundaries to our community. Historically, Logan and Barber Scotia have always been connected. The students lived in our community. We've never been a college town, but we have been a college community. It's the resources that we pull together that make it work for all of us.
- Lamarie Austin-Stripling asked about the one-room African American school house that has been deconstructed and being held by the Historic Cabarrus Association. Have you been in touch with them?
  - Mr. Clark is aware and has been in conversations. Niblock says he might have a space for it.
- Grace Galloway asks how many seniors are in the community?
  - April Clark responded that roughly half of the seniors in the senior complex are needing better food access but does not know the exact number of seniors in the community.

**Next Steps:** Closing next steps led by Rev. Bertram Hinton

- Anyone interested in subcommittee group work, please send an email to the Co-chairs. We can have up to 9 people on a subcommittee. Subcommittee meetings will resume after next month's meeting with Steve Osborne.
- Please come to hear from Steve Osborne next month about planning and ordinances
- Co-chairs to talk with Dr. Tara Bengle to gather her insight on policy initiatives. We acknowledge charitable programs are necessary, however, our focus will be primarily on reviewing policy and practices that create more equitable outcomes.

**Closing:** The next full committee meeting will be March 26 at 6pm.

Lamarie Austin-Stripling adjourned the meeting at 7:19pm.

Minutes prepared by Wendy McConnell, Secretary.

See next page for signatures!

eSigned via SeamlessDocs.com  
*Lamarie Austin-Stripling*  
Key: 2d11f26d321611e1bec95d96821dac5

Lamarie Austin-Stripling: Co-Chair Concord United Committee

10-15-2024

Date

eSigned via SeamlessDocs.com  
*Robert Kirk*  
Key: e8e64fc120660e75ca71ee3da5b1289c

Robert Kirk: Co-Chair Concord United Committee

10-15-2024

Date

eSigned via SeamlessDocs.com  
*Bertram D. Hinton, Jr.*  
Key: e48a7a00d877e96dd239be84417d73be

Bertram Hinton: Co-Chair Concord United Committee

10-15-2024

Date