

**Meeting:** Town Hall – Refining Priorities & Realizing Our Mission

**Date:** Tuesday, July 9, 2019, 7:00-8:50PM

**Location:** Trinity Faith Christian Center, 15516 New Road, Lewes, DE 19958

**Chairperson:** Charlotte King

**Moderator:** Charlotte King

**Speakers:** SDARJ Committee Chairs

**Recorder:** Ann Loar Brooks

### Introduction & Opening

Charlotte King opened the meeting and welcomed an audience of about 30 steering committee and community members.

### Program

After Ms. King stated SDARJ's mission and introduced the Steering Committee members in attendance, she asked that the remaining audience members introduce themselves and mention their connection to and interest in SDARJ and its mission. Of note, was Barbara Bond, an Outreach Committee member who is working with the Lewes Historical Society to create a Black history museum in connection with the colored school on the ACE Hardware property at Five Points in Lewes. Stephen Guthrie, Superintendent of Sussex Technical School District, described his efforts to create equity in the district and his success in designing and offering a new course on social justice. And, Hal Lipton, a new Sussex County resident who spent his career in social work, hopes to become an active participant in SDARJ. Many highly committed and active members spoke as did a few persons new to our community.

Steering Committee members who spoke were:

Don Peterson, Outreach

Outreach spreads the word about SDARJ's mission and its activities to the wider community. Recently, they created a *Changing the Narrative* display for the Lewes Library that hope to place in other area libraries.

This fall, in conjunction with YMCA-DE, they will be offering *Dialogue to Action*, six-week facilitated conversations about racism in three locations in the county.

#### Nancy Powell, Advocacy

Advocacy, in conjunction with groups such as the ACLU and the League of Women Voters, addresses key social justice legislation issues in Dover. Information about these issues can be found at [www.legis.Delaware.gov](http://www.legis.Delaware.gov).

Setting up and offering expungement clinics for juvenile offenders is another vital activity of this committee.

#### Gwendolyn Miller, Education & Scholarship

This past year, this committee designed and implemented the process for selecting the first class of SDARJ scholarship recipients, the theme of which was *A Just World*. This spring, six students from six different Sussex County schools received awards of \$500 each. Next year, the committee hopes to be able to award scholarships to as many as twelve students and will work to mentor students so that they may submit equally prepared applications.

In addition, this committee works to educate the community about African-American history curriculum in the schools, to assist schools in offering and enhancing African-American history classes, to involve community leaders in the classroom, and to assist teachers in educating students about civil rights issues.

#### Calvin Jackson, Communications & Social Media

This committee created and manages the SDARJ website ([www.SDARJ.org](http://www.SDARJ.org)) and is responsible for all communications with SDARJ and the broader community, e.g., email, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube.

#### Aimee Wiest, Book & Film Group

This group meets monthly (typically at the Lewes Library from 6:00-7:30PM on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month – though dates and times may change given movie lengths and holidays) to discuss books or to view movies pertinent to racism and social justice topics. A list of books and movies being considered for 2020 will be distributed to the SDARJ membership.

#### Ann Loar Brooks, Excursions

This newly formed committee is offering its first event September 3 from 4:30-6:30PM – the SDARJ-hosted reception at the Milton Historical Society's exhibit of *Walking into Greatness: Bryan A. Stevenson*. Future plans include transportation to the ACLU dinner honoring Charlotte King in November, exploring sites on the DelMarVa peninsula that are important in the history of enslaved people, creating a self-guided African-American

history walk in Lewes, trips to museums such as the National Museum of African American History and the Reginald F. Lewis Museum, and a civil rights road trip tour.

Carol Wzorek, Grant Writing

This committee's work is essential to the activities of all other committees. SDARJ does not require dues from its members and relies solely on grants and donations to fund its programs and work. Soon, the committee will send an annual fundraising letter to the membership.

Bishop A. D. Jones, Jr., Steering Committee Co-Chair

The Bishop, his family, and church members assure that SDARJ has space and appropriate meeting supplies for our monthly town halls. He is especially interested in seeing the school house and a local museum on African-American history come to fruition.

All committee chairs encouraged new members to join their committees!

Ms. King asked audience members if they had ideas or concerns that were not addressed by the committee reports. Issues mentioned were:

- The opiate and addiction crisis
- “ejail” – or the new practice of “jailing” persons with an electronic cuff and charging them for the associated costs
- Greater dialogue between the police and the community (After the meeting, the Recorder sent a copy of the record of the June Town Hall that focused on this topic to this audience member.)
- The role of private industry in incarceration
- More action on homelessness

Closing

The meeting ended at approximately 8:50PM.