

## Allied Partners

May 17, 2022

**Present:** Eileen Ahearn, Yanette F Cole, Mary Collet, Eileen Dresser, Wynn Davies, Sue Hoffenberg, Molly Plunkett, Shonita Roach

**Visit from neighborhood alderperson** (Yanette Cole)—Yanette is working on affordable housing and bringing Fitchburg and Madison neighborhoods together; she has been working with Mary Mullen of the Dunn's Marsh Neighborhood Association. Yanette feels that the Allied African American and Latinex communities have much in common, like belief in a strong family and conservative values. Another connection is the community garden. "Food and music is all you need to bring people together," she says. She is advocating for Belmar Hills Park to be turned into a soccer field. She is interested in seeing the results of the neighborhood survey created by Alice Howard. She says that the City is reluctant to build a community center because of financial concerns.

### **Treasurer's report** (Wynn)

Eviction prevention fund—A personal contributions of \$50 was received from Kathryn White. The eviction prevention fund was used to intervene in five situations. Current balance is \$10,436.

There was no activity in the Scholarships, Special Projects, Ryan Estrella Discretionary, and Wellness Center funds.

**Joining Forces for Families** (Ryan Estrella, via email)—Ryan provided a link to the updated Allied Drive Community calendar:

<https://calendar.google.com/calendar/u/0?cid=Y19sNTcwYzJ0czBsOXZpZDBhM3Jkc3RhODJlc0Bncm91cC5jYWxlbmRhci5nb29nbGUuY29t>

Calls for rent assistance have increased with a significant increase in rent; e.g., from \$900 to \$1,150/month. Requests for utility assistance have increased as well. MGE is being very understanding and flexible with making payment arrangements. Ryan tries to deflect the majority of calls to CORE. The Allied JFF office will open to walk-ins on June 20. Ryan would appreciate volunteers to do some office cleaning beforehand. Contact Ryan if you can help ([estrella@countyofdane.com](mailto:estrella@countyofdane.com)).

**Wellness Center** (Molly)—Bianca Cruz has been hired as manager. She has a strong background and is bilingual. Allied Fresh has been serving 250 people/week. Essentials are delivered once/month. The building has not yet reopened.

**Neighborhood Center** (Shonita Roach)—Shonita is the new president of the Neighborhood Center. The community meal program is being revisited: What is its purpose? Who is being served? "Taking a step back to step forward." Efforts are being made to engage local businesses into being involved in the community. Post a billboard at McDonalds? Molly mentioned the possibility of a digital billboard that would stream local events in English and Spanish. One barrier is cost. Efforts are being made to bring homeowners and renters together.

**Next meeting:** June 21, 2022