

# ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY FAIR HOUSING TASK FORCE

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[fairhousing.stlawco.org](http://fairhousing.stlawco.org)



## Draft Meeting Minutes

November 29, 2018

Public Safety Complex, Second Floor Conference Room  
49½ Court Street, Canton, NY 13617

- 1. Call to Order and Determination of a Quorum.** Chair Fred Hanss called the meeting to order at 9:04 AM. **A quorum was not established.**

**Members Present:** Diana Dufresne; Michelle Durham; Fred Hanss; Jim O'Neill; John Tenbusch; Courtney Toms. Matilda Larson, CPO staff.

**Members Absent:** Terry Feuka; William Jones; Brian LaVair; Mike McQuade; Andrea Montgomery; Colleen Ryor; Amy Simmons.

- 2. Adoption of the Agenda.** Not acted on due to lack of quorum.
- 3. Approval of May 24, 2018 Meeting Minutes.** Not acted on due to lack of quorum.
- 4. Reports.**
  - a. Update: “Assessment of Fair Housing: St. Lawrence County 2017”.** Matilda Larson reported that copies of the “Assessment” have been produced and sent to partner communities, including the City of Ogdensburg, Villages of Canton, Gouverneur, Massena, and Potsdam. She noted that St. Lawrence County, and the City of Ogdensburg have adopted the “Assessment”. She also reported that the “Assessment” has been posted to the County’s Web site:  
<https://www.stlawco.org/data/files/Departments/Planning/A%20-%20FH%20Assessment%20-%20Entire%20Report.pdf>

### 5. Old Business.

- a. Magistrates and CEO Forum, Oct. 29, 2018 in Ogdensburg.**
  - i.** Larson reported that the Forum had been well-attended; 40 persons came.
  - ii.** Presenters included Whitney Russell, of NYS DOS Codes Division; James. T. Phillips, Jr., Morristown Town Justice and President, SLC Magistrate Association.

D. Dufresne noted that there was a good mix of CEOs and local magistrates. She thought that each group could learn from the other group.

M. Durham stated that the event was not what she had expected; she had expected a more nuts-and-bolts presentation (“In this situation, you should do this, then that, then ...”). She noted that she saw value in the event that occurred, as a first step toward improving communication between CEOs and magistrates. She suggested that a follow-up meeting with CEOs and magistrates be scheduled. There was general discussion on this topic.

## 6. New Business:

- a. 2019 FHTF Meeting Calendar. Larson reviewed the proposed schedule of meetings for 2019; these include Feb. 28; May 23; Aug. 22; Nov. 21.
  - i. All meetings to be held in the 2<sup>nd</sup>-floor conference room of the Public Safety Complex, 49½ Court Street, Canton.
  - ii. All meetings to start at 9 AM.

With no quorum, the Task Force could not adopt this schedule. Chair Fred Hanss stated that he will call for meetings according to this schedule.

- b. April 2019 Fair Housing Event. J. Tenbusch reported that a new group is forming in the area, called the “Poor Peoples’ Campaign (PPC) of the North Country”. Tenbusch noted that he had first become aware of the PPC in early 2018 as he was doing research for Fair Housing Month (celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passage of the Fair Housing Act).

The Poor Peoples’ Campaign had been developed by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; its goals were to address issues of systemic racism, systemic poverty, and problems with the military economy (see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poor\\_People%27s\\_Campaign](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poor_People%27s_Campaign) ). Dr. King believed that all three issues needed to be addressed. Dr. King was murdered before the PPC could happen; when it did take place, marchers established “Resurrection City” on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. The event lasted about six weeks, then was broken up by police.

In 2017, civil rights leaders including Rev. William Barber and Rev. Liz Theoharis decided to re-establish the Poor Peoples’ Campaign. Their reasoning was that the issues that Dr. King had wanted to address continue to plague our society: systemic racism; systemic poverty; the militarization of our economy. To these issues, the current PPC has added “Destruction of the environment”.

In 2018, the PPC put on “40 Days of Action” in more than 30 state capitals. In NYS, direct actions and civil disobedience took place in Albany; organizers reported that 1,500 people participated, and 150 people were arrested. Since these “40 Days of Action”, organizers in NYS have been working to establish a statewide organization with PPC groups in regions around the state.

For more information see <https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/>

Tenbusch proposed that the FHTF look into whether/how the Task Force might work with the PPC to stage an event during Fair Housing Month, in April 2019. He distributed a 2-page information sheet (attached).

***The group decided to have staff look into this further and report at the next FHTF meeting in February.***

**7. Announcements:**

- a. Larson reported that the “St. Lawrence County Community Survey: has been released. Among its findings: poverty, housing issues and energy costs are seen as growing problems. (**Note:** Larson emailed the whole report to FHTF members on 11/29/2018.)

Larson reported that this annual Community Survey is able to add questions, if the Task Force has any questions they would like to have surveyed.

**b. Next Meeting Date.**

Thursday, February 28, 2019 at 9:00 am  
2<sup>nd</sup> floor conference room  
County Public Safety Complex  
49½ Court Street in Canton

- c. **Adjourn.** The meeting adjourned by consensus at 9:50 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John T. Leubrecht". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J".

Planner II



# THE POOR PEOPLE'S CAMPAIGN

## A NATIONAL CALL FOR MORAL REVIVAL

Fifty years ago, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and many other leaders launched a Poor Peoples Campaign to tackle the pervasive problems of systemic racism, poverty, and militarism. By many measures, these interrelated problems are worse today than they were back in 1968. And if you add in climate change and ecological devastation, the urgency is even greater.

### NATIONWIDE:

- Voting rights protections in many states are weaker than they were 50 years ago.
- We imprison, detain and/or deport more people than any country in the world
- 140 million people are poor or low-income
- Despite strong economic growth, wealth inequality has expanded, the cost of living has increased, and social programs have been cut dramatically
- 53 cents of every federal discretionary dollar goes to military spending and only 15 cents is spent on anti-poverty programs
- 13.8 million U.S. households cannot afford water, while the poor are bearing the brunt of climate change effects

### IN NEW YORK:

#### Somebody's been hurting my people and it's gone on far too long:

- 51 percent of people in New York are poor or low-income—a total of 9.9 million residents. This includes 61 percent of children (2.6 million), 52 percent of women (5.2 million), 67 percent of people of color (5.6 million), and 39 percent of White people (4.3 million).
- From 1979 to 2012, the income for the top 1% grew by 307 percent, while the income for the bottom 99% increased by only 8 percent.

#### Systemic racism and its relationship to poverty:

- Since 2013, of the 123 reported police killings where the victim's race was identified, 64 percent were people of color.
- Of the 51,000 people imprisoned, about 75 percent are people of color. Black residents are incarcerated at eight times the rate of White residents.
- Over 99,000 people were deported from New York between 2003 and 2017.

#### Militarism and the war economy:

- New York law enforcement currently possesses least 32 million dollars in military equipment.
- 9.1 billion dollars were spent on defense in 2015, with 6.5 billion in defense contracts.
- Almost 214,000 veterans have incomes below 35,000 dollars in New York—23 percent of New York's veteran population.

#### Ecology and health:

- 1,094,400 people are uninsured.
- 15.8 of census tracts are at-risk for being unable to afford water
- 27,896 tons of NOx are annually emitted in New York, a leading cause of respiratory problems.

#### Everybody's got a right to live:

- About 89,500 people are homeless. Working at the state minimum wage, it takes 116 hours of work per week to afford a 2-bedroom apartment.
- 3.2 million workers make under 15 dollars an hour—38 percent of New York's workforce.
- Over 2.8 million people participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

# THE POOR PEOPLE'S CAMPAIGN

## A NATIONAL CALL FOR MORAL REVIVAL

### IT DOES NOT HAVE TO BE THIS WAY

### *A MORAL AGENDA BASED ON FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS*

Contrary to common myths, our country — the richest in the world — has abundant resources to protect the environment and ensure dignified lives for all people. The problem is a matter of priorities, as more and more of our wealth flows into the pockets of a small but powerful few — and into our bloated Pentagon budget.

- The richest 1% of New Yorkers are expected to receive 18% of the benefits of the new federal tax law. Their average tax cut in 2027 is expected to be \$18,930, while the poorest 20% are expected to have to pay \$60 more.
- New York's contribution to the country's endless wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and beyond totals \$490 billion since 2001, and could instead have created 389,400 new jobs in clean energy, or placed every New York child in Head Start early childhood education programs, or covered the cost of Medicaid for 6.1 million adults for the past 17 years.
- New York has spent at least \$6.2 billion in public subsidies for corporations over the past five years without doing as much as they could to ensure funds are used to create good green jobs for low-income communities.

The Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival has developed a detailed *Moral Agenda Based on Fundamental Rights* that would revive the efforts of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and many others for a "revolution of values" in America. This agenda includes demands on the federal and state governments to:

- Ensure the wealthy and corporations pay their fair share of urgent social needs, including decent and affordable housing, quality education and health care, safe and affordable water, and job creation.
- Protect voting rights and prohibit racist gerrymandering, hiring, policing, and sentencing policies that exacerbate inequalities for black and brown people.
- End military aggression, ban the proliferation of guns, and demilitarize our communities on the border and the interior.
- Ensure the right to clean water, air, and a healthy environment and increased public investment in jobs programs to transition to a green economy.

For a detailed copy of the campaign's agenda, see:  
<https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/index.php/demands/>

