



Mailing Address:
 Gulf Coast Interfaith
 c/o St. Patrick's Catholic Church
 1010 - 35th Street
 Galveston, Texas 77550
 Contact Telephone: 409 939-8017
 Email: info@gulfcoastinterfaith.org

Gulf Coast Interfaith (GCI) continues its work in the key areas of democracy, disaster recovery, housing, healthcare, employment, education, and Latino Outreach in an effort to advance social, economic and health opportunities for the residents of the city of Galveston and Galveston County and the Gulf Coast area. Collaborating with local congregations and community advocacy groups, we are consistently reaching to fulfill our goal to produce tangible, sustainable solutions to the issues facing our neighbors.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

TMO

GCI leaders Compian and McGaskey attended the TMO meeting in Houston on January 27th.

Collaborating Organizations¹

A regular CO meeting was held at GCI office on January 18th. There was a wide ranging discussion concerning disaster housing recovery, open meetings, Sec. 3, and Northside redevelopment. Another CO meeting was held on February 15th where the discussions continued to also include warranty and insurance concerns affecting disaster housing.

Galveston County Community Action Council and Galveston County Coalition of Black Democrats have expressed interest in joining the Collaborating Organizations.

National Action Network

GCI leaders Compian and McIntyre attended the January 16th organizing meeting of the Galveston Chapter of the Rev. Sharpton's National Action Network at the Gospel Missionary Baptist Church.

¹ The Galveston County coalition of Collaborating Organizations is a coalition with a membership that varies depending on the issue. Generally the CO is comprised of: NAACP Galveston Unit 6180, LULAC Galveston Council 151, Galveston County Coalition for Justice, Northside Task Force, Gulf Coast Interfaith, Barbour's Chapel Community Development Corporation, NAACP Mainland Branch Unit 6201, NAACP Dickinson/Bay Area Branch Unit 6280, LULAC Texas City Council 255, and Galveston County Homeless Coalition.

Galveston County Community Action Council

GCI leaders Murrell, Compian, and McIntyre and other member organizations of the CO and Galveston County Community Action Council met on February 12, 2013 at the Island Community Center to discuss community concerns and desire for GCCAC to be the best in the country.

DEMOCRACY

Open Meetings at Galveston City Council

GCI and Collaborating Organizations (CO) attended the Galveston city council meeting on January 29th that was almost exclusively a one hour executive session. At the conclusion of the executive session the mayor announced no action had been taken because no reply had been received from the GLO concerning the amended letter sent to GLO on January 24th. The lengthy executive session, resulting in nothing, prompted an editorial by the Daily News about open meetings. GCI scheduled a meeting with Daily News Editor, Heber Taylor. GCI (Joe Compian, Barbara Crews and Steve McIntyre) had a long visit with Heber Taylor on January 31st to discuss public meeting issues and other matters. During the meeting Joe Compian reminded Heber Taylor of GCI's deep concern about GHA's recently imposed restricted access to the Island Community Center. On February 2nd Heber Taylor ran an editorial questioning the ID requirement by GHA prior to being able to enter the building to attend a public GHA meeting or the federal health clinic. The picture accompanying the editorial was forwarded to Taylor by Joe Compian after the January 28th GHA board meeting. The sign-in process requiring a signature and ID was totally eliminated a few days after the editorial and was replaced by a security guard sitting in the front hallway.

GCI leaders Crews and McIntyre drafted a letter to the editor on January 31st that was signed by former Galveston mayors Jaworski, Thomas, Crews and Coggleshall. The letter appeared in the Daily News on February 3rd and called for the City Council to make a better effort to conduct its business in public rather than in executive session.

DISASTER and HOUSING RECOVERY

Round 2 in Galveston

GCI leaders Compian and McIntyre met with Kevin Hamby (URS) and Kenna Bush (United Way Director) on December 17th to discuss ways of helping the outreach for Round 2 to be successful.

GCI and CO leaders and members attended the February 20th public hearing at the Galveston County Court House where URS notified the public of the proposed Round 2 outreach effort in Galveston and also attended a later March 27th public hearing at the Island Community Center. During the URS Needs Assessment Committee meetings on January 30th, February 20th and March 27th it was stressed, repeatedly, by GCI and CO that there will be a need to overcome the negative effects from the problems in Round 1. It was suggested that local residents be hired and that waivers and alternative solutions be

developed to address problems such as: rental and storage, warranty enforcement, taxes, insurances, and applicant rollover from Round 1.

City of Galveston annual CDBG public hearing

GCI leader Steve McIntyre testified at Galveston's CDBG public hearing on March 26th requesting the city consider using a portion of the annual \$1.5 million for a fund to assist low income home owners with rent and storage fees during the upcoming Round 2 rebuilding. It would be similar to the fund established by the city during Round 1.

Northside redevelopment

GCI and CO and Friends met on January 3rd at Moody Mansion to plan a January strategy for the redevelopment of the Northside of Broadway in Galveston.²

GCI leaders Compian, Murrell, McGaskey, and McIntyre attended a January 17th meeting at Galveston City Hall to discuss the proposed Land Development Rules with the Planning Director. The meeting was also attended by several members of the Collaborating Organizations which included David Miller (NAACP), Leon Phillips (Galveston County Coalition for Justice), Lillian McGrew (Northside Taskforce), Eva Martinez (LULAC) and others. The CO stressed its concern about the proposed boundary lines for urban neighborhoods on the Northside of Broadway and the restrictions on rebuilding after six months.

On January 21st GCI and the CO sent a third letter to GLO that repeated the request that the CO be designated as the Advisory Committee to GLO for the redevelopment of the Northside community, and also pointed out a concern that the new LDR of the City of Galveston will devastate the redevelopment of the historic Northside as a residential neighborhood. The letter also included copies of proposed plans for the Northside community and around Magnolia Homes.

\$500,000 HUD planning grant

GCI and CO members (aka Galveston Housing Advocates) met with John Henneberger (TLIHIS) and Maddie Sloan (Texas Appleseed) (aka Austin Housing Advocates) and their staff on January 29th at the Children's Center to discuss the status of the struggle between the City of Galveston and GLO over the \$500,000 planning grant from HUD.

On January 30th GCI and CO members attended the morning City of Galveston Needs Assessment Committee meeting administered by URS. Before the meeting at Moody Mansion ended, GCI and CO along with Texas Appleseed and TLIHIS left to attend an afternoon meeting at City Hall with Galveston city manager and attorney to discuss the \$500,000 HUD planning grant and the upcoming new LDR for Galveston. During the meeting there were negotiations concerning allowing several significant infrastructure projects to proceed before the completion of the study. In order to do so, it was suggested by the Austin and Galveston Housing Advocates that : 1) the problem with the lack of a Sec. 3 program was to be eliminated, 2) removal of all the water tanks on 31st Street to 59th Street, 3) redrawing the

² The "Friends" include three former Galveston mayors Joe Jaworski, Lyda Ann Thomas and (GCI leader) Barbara Crews and three former GHA Chairpersons Betty Massey, Paula Neff and Art Mabasa.

“urban neighborhood” zoning lines to run from Broadway to Church, and 25th to 46th Streets, 4) participation in the decision making on any non-housing infrastructure, 5) focus on funding to address flooding on the Northside, and 6) moratorium on any further metal buildings or other buildings being built on the Northside until the LDR is adopted. The city agreed to redraw the urban neighborhood lines and a moratorium on building until the LDR is adopted.

Round 2 in Galveston County

GCI and CO members participated in a private meeting with Horne on February 26th concerning Galveston County’s Round 2 housing program. During the private meeting there was advocacy about the need for waivers to assist and broaden access to recovery assistance for the LMI community. A letter requesting waivers was drafted and circulated among some members of the CO on March 3rd. Prior to sending the letter to GLO, Compian and McIntyre were advised by Kevin Hamby, a waiver had been secured to expand the size of the Freddieville outreach zone to include several streets across Hwy 6. Hamby also advised that another waiver had been granted to create flexibility in the designated areas for targeted service so that small neighborhoods, not eligible for participation in Round 2, might receive assistance by setting aside 10% of the funds for targeted discretionary service which would allow service to the Latino and Vietnamese communities in San Leon and other small neighborhoods.

HEALTH CARE

GCI and Free Care Monitoring Project requested a meeting with Ben Raimer on February 1st. The meeting was finally scheduled for March 8th. GCI and Free Care Monitoring Project met on March 8th with Dowling and Yoes from UTMB to discuss Charity Care. The meeting was not productive. Articles by Harvey Rice appeared in the Houston Chronicle on March 23rd and April 1st about access to health care at UTMB by the poor.

EDUCATION

No current activity.

EMPLOYMENT

Sec. 3

On Feb.14th the Galveston city council approved a resolution adopting a Sec. 3 program based upon the program adopted in the Valley after a complaint had been filed by community groups and the Austin Advocates. Galveston's Sec. 3 program will be administered by URS for the Round 2 housing recovery and by the city for its annual CDBG and other housing programs.

Living Wage

GCI hosted a meeting of local activists on January 19th and February 9th at the home of GCI members Steve McIntyre and Maria Luisa Mercado to discuss living wage issues. The next meeting was scheduled for March 14th at Karl Eschbach's office and it was followed by another meeting at Eschbach's office on March 23rd that was attended by Steven Stokes, a Houston organizer with the SEIU. Stokes has agreed to attend future meetings of the living wage study group.

On February 11th GCI leaders Joe Compian and Steve McIntyre attended a meeting of the Galveston County AFL-CIO Labor Council to discuss living wage issues.

LATINO OUTREACH

Deis y Seiz

GCI leaders Mercado, Compian, and McIntyre met with the other community activists on January 10th at the Children's Center to discuss the creation of a Deis y seiz de Septiembre Celebracion in 2013. Joe Compian met with LULAC on March 5th and was informed by Miguel Aleman that the Parks Board may provide seed money for a Hispanic Festival/Fiesta Patrias. Aleman is a Parks Board commissioner and the former LULAC council president.

Galveston College

Many in the community have been attempting to identify a Latino candidate for appointment to Galveston College to replace GCI leader, Barbara Crews. GCI leader Maria Luisa Mercado has been mentioned as well as LULAC President, Anna Olivares.



GULF COAST INTERFAITH

c/o St. Patrick's Catholic Church, 1010 – 35th Street, Galveston, TX 77550 • Phone: 409 939-8017
info@gulfcoastinterfaith.org • www.gulfcoastinterfaith.org