DC NLG Board Meeting: June 17, 2020 (via Zoom), 6:30-8:30 pm

MINUTES

Present:  Anitra Ash-Shakoor, John McCoy (Co-chairs), Ann Wilcox (Executive VP/Secretary), James Drew (Treasurer), Turna Lewis, Bill Montross

Members attending (observing): Edmundo Saballos (MD Committee chair), Ava Morgenstern

I. **Old Business/May Board meeting minutes**: Ann Wilcox, Executive VP/Secretary noted that there were no particular decisions held over from the May meeting. The May 2020 minutes were approved as circulated (posted on DCNLG.org website).

II. **Treasurer’s Report**: James Drew, Treasurer, noted that the chapter continues to have a “healthy balance” and that we had received additional dues proportion payments from the National NLG office. Since the last meeting, we have paid invoices for IT services, and have purchased new Legal Observer “green hats.” We project hiring a part-time staff assistant and possibly getting office space, as events permit.

III. **Org Chart / Membership**: We reviewed an Organizational Chart prepared by the Co-chairs. Membership lists will be forwarded to Anitra Ash-Shakoor and Jim Drew for review. - John McCoy is liaison to Max Rameau, our IT contracting assistant, regarding upgrades to the website, list-serve and other communications. He reported on work to update the membership list-serve, and create “sub-lists” which are more usable.
IV. **DC Chapter Committees:**

**New Committee Proposal:** The board discussed a new proposal for Standing Committees, as proposed by the new Co-chairs. These include Mass Defense (existing); Private Practitioners Monthly Meeting (currently on hiatus).

The co-chairs proposed new standing committees, to include: Police Misconduct, Mass Incarceration, and Housing. We have a track record and active members, on each of these issues. All of the new committee proposals were approved; more complete descriptions of the committees will be included in the July newsletter.

**Mass Defense Committee:** We discussed the status of Mass Defense and legal observing in the DC area. Edmundo Saballos, current MD Chair discussed the structure, as well as other mass defense operating in our region. At the close of the discussion, we decided to transfer chair of the DC NLG Mass Defense committee to John McCoy, Chapter Co-chair, who will take leadership of this critical area. There is a large need for demonstration support in the DC area, so we are comfortable moving on to provide support for requests that come to our MD Committee. Edmundo Saballos, who has served as chair of the DC Mass Defense Committee for the past several years, resigned this position, with the thanks of the Board.

V. **LO Training/Attorney Training:** John McCoy and Turna Lewis are planning a training for attorneys, who have expressed interest in handling protest cases in DC (there have been many inquiries in recent weeks) A 90-minute training is scheduled for Weds, July 24; trainers are longtime NLG member Mark Goldstone and attorney Andrew Clarke. The training is free for NLG members, with a fee for others.

VI. **Other Chapter Events:** In the context of discussing new committees, etc several ideas for chapter and membership events were discussed. These include events on Voting Rights, housing, police misconduct and mass incarceration. We will have webinars on these topics. We also discussed having a Film Series: Friday evening programs where we can show films related to NLG history and movement lawyering – which would be a good way to keep members engaged during Covid-19 restrictions.

VII. **Speakers from allied organizations:**

We heard remarks from two guest speakers, who work with NLG and its members. -- Marques Banks of Law for Black Lives, discussed representation and legal observing being conducted by his organization. Law 4 Black Lives works with advocacy groups (such as Pan African Community Action) as well as legal groups; it developed partly out of the DC Ferguson movement. We hope that we can cooperate with Law for Black Lives on current and future protest actions, and legal observing.
- Daniel del Pielago of Empower DC, discussed the displacement of DC public housing residents; redevelopment plans of the City and litigation in this area; and needed reforms. There will also be a need for pro bono Landlord-Tenant counsel for eviction defense, as the Covid-19 restrictions are lifted (evictions are currently stayed, but landlords can file in L&T court 60 days after restrictions are lifted).

VIII. **Media inquiries:** We have received media inquiries in recent weeks; these will be forwarded to Ann Wilcox, as Executive VP, for referral to the best person to respond.

The meeting concluded at 8:30 pm. The next NLG Chapter Board meeting is July 15, 2020.