Andy Schor, Mayor

City of Lansing DEI Advisory Board Minutes
Tuesday, January 9, 2024
5:30 pm – 6:30 pm
7th Floor City Hall
Lansing, MI

Attendance: Muhummad Qawwee, Prince Solice, Raquel Sparkman, Amber Denney, Emily Sorroche, Florensio Hernandez, Randy Watkins

Staff: Kim Coleman (HRCS)

Others: Amany Williams (OCA), Teresa Bingman (Consultant), Tina Alonzo and Ashley Green (Consultants, The Advocacy Group)

Public: Julie Vandenboom, Candidate for the Lansing City Charter Commission.

The meeting was called to order at 5:44 pm by the Advisory Board Chair, Muhummad Qawwee, followed by a roll call.

Approval of Agenda: Ms. Denney requested to be added to the agenda to address former concerns. It was moved by Mr. Solace and seconded by Mr. Hernandez to approve the agenda with Ms. Denney's request to be added under business other. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes: It was moved by Ms. Denney and seconded by Mr. Watkins to approve the November and December minutes. Motion carried.

Public Comment: Julie Vanderboom is a candidate for the City of Lansing Charter Commission.

Directors Report: HRCS is currently interviewing for the DEI position. The Advisory Board will be informed when an offer has been accepted. Information about the 2024 MLK Observance was shared with the advisory Board. All were encouraged to attend.

Discussion of Communication Plan

- TAG reported that an updated version of the communications plan, with corrections, was emailed to everyone; the Board was asked to review it.
- There will be time for committees to discuss prioritizing items. Suggestions for how goals will be accomplished will be discussed as well.

Committee Reports:

- **Justice and Safety-** *Chair Randy Wakins***:**
  - Meeting at 2 pm in the Cesar Chavez Center on the first floor of Lansing Community College. No report.

- **Economic Empowerment –** *Chair Prince Solace*:
  - Meet on the 2nd Friday of each month, 6:30– 7:30 pm. The committee expressed the need/concern for the following:
  - Access to data and understanding of what is taking place.
  - What are the obstacles and challenges people in Lansing are experiencing?

  - A lack of clarity and guidance is needed. The committee hopes to learn this at the retreat.
  - How do we introduce ourselves to the community?

- **Community Sustainability**
  - This committee's chair position was vacated due to Kendall O'Connor's resignation.
  - A motion was made to accept Raquel Sparkman as chair of the community sustainability committee. Members voted unanimously to support Ms. Sparkman's nomination to chair the committee.
  - Director Coleman will accept recommendations for potential candidates to fill the Board's vacancy.

- **The Advocacy Group:**
  - TAG recommended that committee reports be formalized and submitted in writing for public record.
  - Committee reports will be submitted to the Secretary beforehand, so when the advisory Board meets, all will be given with the minutes.
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Finalizing Date for External Board Report

  - Director Coleman shared that, in error, this topic was added to the agenda and intended for the HRCS Board. Director Coleman further clarified that each city board is required to submit an annual report to the Mayor. The HRCS Annual Report was presented to the Mayor in November, where she included a brief update on the DEI Advisory Board, along with other HRCS department and board activities.
  - Next year, the advisory Board can submit an independent report to the Mayor, or they may adopt a resolution to accept the HRCS Annual Report, where a DEI update is included, as theirs. The annual report is due in November.
  - A copy of the annual report will be shared with the DEI board when it becomes available.

Old Business

- **A. Ms. Denney's Concerns:**
  - Referencing the incident with the public comment, Ms. Denny recalled a recommendation to add time for public comment at the beginning and end of the meeting from 2 to 5 minutes.
    - No action was taken. In Ms. Denny's absence, the DEI Advisory Board voted to increase public comment to 3 minutes.

  - Ms. Denny recommended another public comment at the end of the meeting to give time to respond to what was discussed in the current meeting.
    - No action was taken. Ms. Williams (OCA) referenced the Open Meetings Act, where one public comment was referenced.
  - Ms. Denny recommended that the Board continue to meet if we don't have a quorum.
    - No action was taken. Ms. Williams noted that it was against the Open Meetings Act and would be considered a violation. Treating the meeting as an informal gathering still operates as a meeting agenda.

  - A suggestion was made to replace the meeting that didn't meet the quorum with committee meeting space.
    - No action was taken.

- Ms. Sparkman asked about identifying a proxy from another DEI Advisory board member, approval by the city council, and approval to be added to the bylaws.
  - The lawyer will look into this and report back.

- Ms. Denney suggested the president, vice president, and Secretary meet before the meeting. No action was taken.

- Ms. Denney asked why we were at City Hall for the meetings. We need an inclusive and welcoming space; the room is crowded, and there isn't space for our guests. Mr. Watkins added there is intimidation for city hall, payment for parking, and traveling in traffic coming to city hall.
  - No action was taken. Over half of the members, consultants, and staff expressed safety concerns after the September Board meeting.

Meeting Adjourned 7:01

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