



**Minutes**  
**Committee on Equity, Diversity & Inclusion**  
**Wednesday, June 12, 2024 @ 4:30 p.m.**  
**City Council Conference Room**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Council Member Jackson called the meeting to order at 4:31 p.m.

**PRESENT**

Council Member Jackson, Chair  
Council Member Pehlivanoglu, Vice-Chair  
Council Member Carter, Member

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Sherie Boak, Council Office Manager  
Luna Brown  
Greg Venker, OCA – arrived at 4:35 p.m.

**MINUTES**

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER PEHLIVANOGLU TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM MAY 8, 2024 AS PRESENTED.

Council Member Jackson noted at the May meeting he asked Ms. Lawrence-Hagen for a memo on the ordinance that was discussed (297.13), and asked if Council staff every received the memo. Ms. Boak stated she had not.

MOTION CARRIED 3-0.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Luna Brown asked for the Disability Pride Flag flown as well, noting it started in 2015 on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ADA passage.

**DISCUSSION/ACTION**

**DISCUSSION – City Programs for Committee to Consider**

Council Member Jackson noted Ingham County presented in April and a spreadsheet was created and asked Committee to discuss on topics and program that could be done.

Council Member Carter looked at merging duplicate entities and share the platform. She has heard there is the lack of knowledge and how to obtain the resources. They are interested not just in electronic but hard copies.

Council Member Pehlivanoglu agreed there are different entities that are working in “silos”, Ingham County is working on and so is the City departments.

# DRAFT

Council Member Jackson read the areas; health, trainings, health policies, equal opportunity with bidding, vendors, hiring, celebrations, and task force. The County is doing criminal reform research and there has already been research done on that.

Ms. Boak stated she would distribute the list to the HRCS DEI Coordinator. Council Member Carter asked when HRCS responds ask for the point of contact to bridge the City and County or other entity.

## DISCUSSION - FLAGS

Council Member Jackson noted this is a starting point to start the discussion. For background purposes, Council Member Jackson noted there have been two requests recently for flags to be flown at City Hall and it appeared at Council had some questions. The first question Council Member Jackson asked OCA what the legality is for denying a certain flag. There are unanimously positive and inclusion that could be considered in the discussion.

Council Member Carter asked about how many flags can be on a flag pole, will this be impacted. There needs to be an awareness for all people, but does not want it to appear cluttered. Mr. Venker stated there are flag code requirements on US Flags, State requirements, there is no ordinance on the City flag. From a basis physical flag, currently adding another one, and half- mast, it could be on the ground. If having more than 3 or 4 on a regular bases there should be a discussion with the Administration if there is a need for a more pole, or consider double mast to have flags on both sides of the pole.

Council Member Pehlivanoglu noted the two flags recently approved with resolution, and then asked if this was the same practice in the past. Ms. Boak and Mr. Venker were not aware of any other resolutions in the past. Council Member Pehlivanoglu noted that Ann Arbor recently flew an extra flag, but after researching their ordinances or resolution could not find anything.

Mr. Venker spoke on the legality of someone asking to fly a flag and the City says no, it is an area of changing law. For a period of time there is government speech; government can say things- protected speech, including putting up signs and flags, the government is stating their support and if someone complains about it, the City is protected. There are messages in the nation, and some cities can say they like and do not like, but a case in 2022 in Boston before the Supreme Court, the problem was there were three poles, and for year there was an application process. It became a problem when there was an issue of separation of church and state, and then was sued for view point discrimination. The supreme court told them they could not say no. With the recent resolutions at the City, it was encouraged a two step; a resolution from Council adopting the flag and recommending the Mayor to put up the flag. Then the Mayor can always say no, but at the 6/10/2024 Council meeting the Mayor stated if Council adopted a resolution that approved the flying of the flag he would do it. That would have all the elected officers on the same page and it would be government speech. If the City does not approve with a view point of a request, they can defend that it is government view point/government speech. Mr. Venker acknowledged he likes the two steps, but heard the concern of Council, and the Mayor as well, and he could determine with research on if the flag can be thrown.

Council Member Pehlivanoglu stated Mayor could come up with a criteria, but can this Committee work with OCA on a criteria for any requests in the future. This would have points that have to be met, so Council can look at that criteria when approached to make sure they are aware if it meets the criteria before bringing forward to the rest of Council for consideration. Mr. Venker stated OCA could do that, as a threshold, but the policy should not be hard and fast so

## DRAFT

that Council could say no at the end of the process. Even with a policy they cannot bind themselves or other Council to vote a certain way.

Council Member Jackson acknowledged the statement of it being legal, and was positive with that. Mr. Venker stated it is government speech and resolution would speak to that. Council Member Jackson asked OCA to have guidelines to review on the July 10<sup>th</sup> agenda to keep the discussion going. Currently an entity has to approach a Council Member to support and write a resolution before bringing to Council.

Council Member Pehlivanoglu asked for an interest in having more flag poles.

Council Member Carter was encouraged with the guidelines for the next meeting, and then asked for the option written as well for only an Administration process. Mr. Venker stated he spoke to the Mayor and he has already started to formulate what he would do on only his end, and would research other governmental bodies to see what they are doing. He encouraged the Committee to speak to the Mayor. Council Member Jackson asked for Council staff to invite the Administration to the next meeting. Mr. Venker asked for any of their "words", "ideas" to compile.

### **Other**

No other topics.

### **Adjourn**

Adjourned at 5:06 p.m.

Submitted, Sherrie Boak

Recording Secretary, Lansing City Council

Approved by the Committee on