



Minutes
Committee on Equity, Diversity & Inclusion
Wednesday, July 10, 2024 @ 4:30 p.m.
City Council Conference Room

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Jackson called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

PRESENT

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

OTHERS PRESENT

Sherie Boak, Council Office Manager
Lisa Hagen-Lawrence, OCA
Greg Venker, OCA
Terrance Frazier
Byron Haskins
Kim Coleman, HRCS Dir.

MINUTES

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER PEHLIVANOGLU TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM JUNE 12, 2024, AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED 3-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT

DISCUSSION/ACTION

RESOLUTION – Appointment; Terrence L. Frazier; 1st Ward Member; Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Board; Term to Expire 6/30/2025.

Mr. Frazier on Lansing Community College Board member, working with MSU as a consultant in their DEI Office, working in higher education and student affairs. Mr. Frazier noted he also co-owns Sweet Encounters with his wife.

Council Member Carter and Pehlivanoglu spoke in support of the appointment.

Council Member Jackson noted the application, and 25 years of DEI experience, what locations. Mr. Frazier outlined multiple universities he has done his 25 years. Council Member Jackson noted 25 years ago no one was speaking on DEI and asked for his previous experiences. Mr. Frazier explained back then they were not looking at social economics diversity, multi-communities in diversity within diversity groups, over time he has been working to pull those out work on the economic and social impact and look at diversity across the board.

Council Member Pehlivanoglu asked how he has worked with people in the communities with disabilities. Mr. Frazier confirmed that disabilities network at MSU report to him in his day job as

well. As part of this advisory board, he hopes to look at policies and how it impacts all the residents with those decisions.

Council Member Jackson noted that the role in this Board is for the whole City, and the Board does not report to Council but more to the Administration and focus on the whole City.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER PEHLIVANOGLU TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF TERERNCE L FRAZIER, 1ST WARD MEMBER TO THE DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION ADVISORY BOARD WITH A TERM TO EXPIRE JUNE 30, 2028.
MOTION CARRIED 3-0.

RESOLUTION – Appointment; Byron Haskins; At Large Member, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Advisory Board, Term to Expire 6/30/2027.

Mr. Haskins first introduced himself noting he was previously on the Sustainability Board, expanding that he has been a resident since 1982 on and off. His work experience has been as a State of Michigan employee, and in 1969 he was at a boarding school that was a diversity and equity program sent up by President Kennedy. The experiences there was the beginning and from there his higher education while doing that was working as a disability examiner and trainer. From there he moved to the State MDHHS where he supervised advocates who helped disabled to get on assistance.

Council Member Jackson asked if he plans to spend more time in Michigan, and Mr. Haskins confirmed they are back to be in Michigan and making an investment in Lansing.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER PEHLIVANOGLU TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF BYRON HASKINS, AT LARGE MEMBER TO THE DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION ADVISORY BOARD WITH A TERM TO EXPIRE JUNE 30, 2027.
MOTION CARRIED 3-0.

DISCUSSION - Enforcement of Human Rights Ordinance

Ms. Hagen-Lawrence was asked to summarize the document. Council Member Jackson explained that at the last meeting there was a question on how to enforce the ordinance. Ms. Hagen -Lawrence stated there is case law that supports the City authority as it protects human rights. This is a criminal ordinance, but at most a civil infraction and there are other remedies outside the fines. The memo in the packet summarizes the discussion the last time.

Council Member Jackson stated if anyone is discriminated against based on race, religion, ancestry, national origin, color, sex, age, height, weight, student status, marital status, familial status, veteran status, political affiliation, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, mental or physical limitations or source of income and want to see it remedied contact the HRCS department and the information is on the City webpage.

Council Member Carter noted sometimes the process is not shared, and it does seem to be straight forward.

Council Member Jackson asked where people should go, and Ms. Hagen-Lawrence stated they start with the HRCS department.

DISCUSSION – OCA Guidelines and Administration Discussion regarding Flags

Council Member Jackson noted there has been discussion in flying the flag in City Hall and City property, recently the Pride Flag and weeks later Juneteenth. That brought the discussion on what flags could fly, where, etc. At the last meeting Mr. Venker stated that as long as the city takes official action, it is protected under government speech under resolution or Mayor's power and not violation of Freedom of Speech. As a committee, they wanted to discuss the policy for

any future requests, and there has been one for Pride Disability. July is Disability Pride month, and there is a different flag. Council Member Jackson then referenced an email from Mark Lawrence, because the Committee wanted to work with the mayor and invited the Administration to see if they could work on a policy. The Committee members recalled that at the Council meeting in June the Mayor stated he wanted to work with Council. Council Member Jackson then read the email from Mr. Lawrence:

From: Lawrence, Mark <Mark.Lawrence@lansingmi.gov>
Sent: Monday, July 8, 2024 8:30 AM
To: Boak, Sherrie <Sherrie.Boak@lansingmi.gov>
Cc: Venker, Gregory <Gregory.Venker@lansingmi.gov>; Jackson, Brian T. <BrianT.Jackson@lansingmi.gov>; Carter, Tamera <Tamera.Carter@lansingmi.gov>; Pehlivanoglu, Trini <Trini.Pehlivanoglu@lansingmi.gov>; Frayer, Shelbi <Shelbi.Frayer@lansingmi.gov>
Subject: RE: City Council Committee on Equity Diversity & Inclusion - July 10, 2024

Hi Sherrie

At the last meeting, Council leadership very clearly indicated that the decision rests with the Mayor and that Council should not be a part of this. As such, the Mayor is working with OCA on a policy for the flying of flags outside city hall.

When the policy is complete, we will issue it and the EDI Committee will be welcome to discuss this policy and/or make any ordinance recommendations as legal and appropriate. The Mayor will certainly consider any input based on the discussion on the 10th as well.

We can have someone attend committee to hear the discussion, but we'll have nothing to share at committee at this time in terms of the policy being finalized. I'll let you know who will be attending from our office as we get a little closer to the meeting date.

Take care,

Mark Lawrence
Chief of Staff – Office of the Mayor
City of Lansing, Mayor Andy Schor
124 W. Michigan Ave. | Lansing, MI 48933
O: 517-483-4141

Council Member Jackson noted the email it is conflicting when at Council it was stated Council and Mayor were going to work on it, but now it states only the mayor will work on it, and then go to the DEI Board.

Council Member Carter asked, once the Advisory Board connects with the OCA and Mayor, there should be an opportunity to have a discussion at this Committee as well. Mr. Venker stated he spoke to the mayor and his policy is not drafted yet. Per the Mayor's perspective, the draft is to consider flags to be flown accompanied by Council government act, does not want it

to be solely in his decision, and that has not changed. The language has to protect a decision to say “no” if they want to.

Council Member Pehlivanoglu asked if it is fair to say, that this would not be a streamlined process, but community members can contact Council or the Mayor. Mr. Venker stated the policy is silent to the process to apply and stepping away from an application, and if they want this, they can approach elected officials. If it comes directly to the mayor, he will probably approach Council.

Council Member Pehlivanoglu asked since pending with Administration, can Council still accept requests for flying flags, or should Council advise community members they cannot move forward right now. That being said she noted there has been an informal request during public comment and via email, so in the interim what should they do. Mr. Venker stated that so far, with Council and Mayor, they have flown two flags, and if anyone has the desire to do that they can continue. Council at this time has not said “no flags”, and the mayor has not made an executive order that it cannot happen. At this time, it does not seem to be a reason that requests cannot be taken.

Council Member Jackson noted they did get a verbal request and would consider putting a resolution on the July 22, 2024, council agenda from three (3) Council Members to address the request, adding that it appears this topic will not be done until the Administration responds.

Council Member Carter asked about the time frame and space on the flagpole and Mr. Venker confirmed currently there are only three (3) flags on the pole in the plaza at City Hall.

DISCUSSION - City Programs for City to Consider
Council Member Jackson moved to the next agenda.

Other

No other topics.

Adjourn

Adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Submitted, Sherrie Boak

Recording Secretary, Lansing City Council

Approved by the Committee on August 14, 2024