

Open Conversation on Racism Committee
Zoom Meeting
May 6, 2021 – 1:00 P.M.

In Attendance: Chairperson Surluta Anthony
Councilmember Angelia James
Councilmember Freddie Gordon
Assistant City Attorney Ashley Britt
Debra C. Reed, HR Director/Liaison
Sheila Couick, Minute Taker

Chairperson Anthony opened the Zoom meeting at 1:00 p.m., welcoming everyone and conducted an attendance roll call to establish the presence of the council members.

Chairperson Anthony commented that the next the agenda was the selection of committee members for the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. Chairperson Anthony stated that she would read off names and would then need a motion to accept the names as members of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. Chairperson Anthony read off the following names:

Cynthia Baes, Cress Barnes, Matthew Belk, Cynthia Brown, Selina Campbell, Ernest Collins, Swindle Edwards, Michael Hall, Tripp Helms, Lanny Lancaster, Michelle King, Penelope Locklear, Emily McGinnis, Melissa McKeown, Lakeysha Medlin, Jamie Nader, Steven Ramsey, Benita Sanders, Melvin Tate, Althea Richardson, Tamara Williams and Tiffany Wilson.

Chairperson Anthony stated that twenty-two names were read aloud. Council Gordon second the motion.

Ashley Britt commented that Chairperson Anthony read twenty-two names and including Councilmember Anthony that would be twenty-three names. Ashley Britt commented that if Chairperson Anthony wanted to add two more names to the committee, whether it is Councilmembers or anybody else, she could include those names on this list. Ashley Britt stated that she could also keep it at the twenty-three members, which included Chairperson Anthony, and that would be fine.

Chairperson Anthony stated that she needed to ask the Councilmembers if they wish to be on the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. Chairperson Anthony stated that it was their choice and there could be up to three councilmembers on the committee. Chairperson Anthony asked Councilmember James what her desire was. Councilmember James stated that she had a question for Ashley Britt, which was "If Councilmembers are added on, can two more people be added on?" Ashley Britt commented that there are twenty-five total spots; there are currently twenty-two names with Councilmember Anthony making it twenty-three, so there are two more spaces that either Councilmembers or members of the public can fill, not both. Councilwoman James stated that there were twenty-six application that were received from people wanting to be on the committee. Councilmember James asked if the names of the one didn't make the list could be read aloud. Councilwoman James stated that this is for the citizens. Councilwoman James stated that she thinks that if there are some names that left off the selected list then their names should be added to the list if there is room for them. Chairperson Anthony stated that there was room if two Councilmembers wished not to serve on the committee. Councilwoman James asked for the names that did not make the list. Chairperson Anthony stated she would need to get that list as she only brought the list with the names that made the committee. Chairperson Anthony ask Councilman Gordon if he planned to serve on the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. Councilman Gordon stated yes he would serve at the Chairperson pleasure. Chairperson Anthony stated that left one space open now on the committee and asked if that was correct. Ashley Britt stated that was correct, there would be twenty-two members of the public plus Chairperson Anthony and Councilman Gordon so that would be twenty-four.

Chairperson Anthony commented that she would retrieve the list for names not selected for the committee.

Councilwoman James asked Councilman Gordon if there was room for citizens to be on the list would he be willing to vacate his spot or is he still going to be on the committee? Councilman Gordon stated that he would do whatever was requested of him.

Chairperson Anthony stated that Councilman Gordon had already expressed his interest to be on the committee, so there is one spot open. Chairperson Anthony ask if the Councilmembers had their participant list stating that she did not want to read off the names of those not selected to the public. Chairperson Anthony stated that the names not selected were Sharon Edwards, Monike Craig, Sharon Polston and Lacey Trull.

Chairperson Anthony asked Councilwoman James if she heard those names and Councilwoman James replied yes she had heard the names. Councilwoman James stated that if these people applied and there is room for them to be on the committee, she does not understand why we cannot make room for them to be on the committee. Councilwoman James stated that this is a community decision and she thinks we need to get input from the community on this. Chairperson Anthony stated that this is a Council Committee and the Council voted for three Councilmember to be on the committee if they wanted to serve. Chairperson Anthony stated that if they do not wish to serve they can vacate that spot and that would open up a spot. Councilwoman James asked Ashley Britt why the councilmembers numbers were included in the twenty-five members if they are going to be on the committee. Ashley Britt commented that when Council created the committee it was stated that it would be limited to twenty-five people total and it was interpreted as being twenty-five members including Councilmembers. Councilwoman James asked could it be twenty-five plus the Councilmembers. Chairperson Anthony commented that when the parameters were being set up the motion was made for twenty-five and at that time it was the Facilitator suggested a number to work with and that is where the number twenty-five came from. Councilwoman James asked Ashley Britt if a decision could be made with the committee here to have twenty-five plus Councilmembers. Ashley Britt stated that it would have to go back to Council since Council created the committee with the twenty-five limit and they would need to be the one to change that if the committee want to change it to add in the extra members of the public. Councilwoman James stated that it would be one extra person, well three extra people, with the three Councilmembers serving. Councilwoman James stated that she thinks that three seats should not be given up just because Councilmembers are serving. Councilwoman James stated that we should leave room for the community to be on this committee because there were twenty-six names. Councilwoman James stated that we should have room for three more people to be on it and make it twenty-eight: Councilmembers plus the twenty-five members. Chairperson Anthony commented that if we decide to send it back to Council that would delay starting it and it would have to be put on the agenda and then re-voted on because it has already passed. Chairperson Anthony stated that it would require a motion and the motion would need to carry. Councilwoman James made the motion that we go back to City Council to include twenty-five plus Council for a total of twenty-eight members for the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. Chairperson Anthony asked for second to the motion. Chairperson Anthony stated that the motion died due to lack of a second motion. Chairperson Anthony stated that there was one opening, which could go to Councilmember or a citizen.

Councilwoman James stated that she was going to be on the committee, so there is no room for a citizen to be on it. Chairperson Anthony stated that there are twenty-two names and now we need to approve them. Chairperson Anthony asked if the names needed to be read again. Ashely Britt stated that Chairperson Anthony had read the twenty-two names and added Councilmembers Gordon and James to the list then we could vote on the names. Chairperson Anthony stated that the twenty-two names had been read and along with Councilmember Gordon and Councilmember James that would make up the twenty-five members for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee and entertained a motion to accept those members. Councilman Gordon second the motion.

Chairperson Anthony asked Councilwoman James if she made the motion? Councilwoman James commented that she did not make the motion. Ashely Britt stated that she thinks Councilwoman Anthony made a motion at the beginning of reading the list and that was what Councilman Gordon was seconding. If not then Councilman Gordon would need to make the motion since there would be no motion to second. Councilman Gordon made the motion to accept the twenty-five names of the members of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. Chairperson Anthony asked for a second motion. Councilwoman James second the motion. Chairperson Anthony stated that there had been motion and a second motion that the twenty-five names read be the members of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. Chairperson Anthony polled the Councilmembers for their vote. Councilmember James voted "Yes" and Councilmember Gordon voted "Yes" and Councilmember Anthony voted "Yes". Chairperson Anthony stated that those were the names of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee and they will be notified.

Chairperson Anthony stated the first meeting of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee needed to be scheduled and if possible, it needs to be scheduled as soon as possible. Chairperson Anthony stated that during the first meeting, one of the items for discussion will be to schedule the other meetings and they will be quarterly meeting and reporting to Council. Chairperson Anthony stated that we would also be looking at getting a Facilitator who would train the committee and discussed a proposal for training of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee. Chairperson Anthony stated that the first meeting would not be a regular meeting and would not be as long as the other meeting afterwards. Chairperson Anthony asked for a suggested date for the first meeting. Chairperson Anthony asked if everyone had their calendars with them and that we needed enough time for members to be notified. Councilman Gordon asked how much time would be needed. Chairperson Anthony asked Mrs. Debra Reed how much time would be needed to notify the members. Mrs. Chestnut Reed stated that members accepted into the committee would be notified along with members not accepted. Chairperson Anthony asked what the timeframe would be to make that happen. Mrs. Reed stated that we could get emails out within a week. Chairperson Anthony commented that it would put us with two weeks left in May; week of the May 17th or the week of May 24th. Councilwoman James asked that of the twenty-two names that were chosen if someone says "no" what will happen then – will people on the no list come to the yes list. How will that process work? Chairperson Anthony stated we still have the names of the other people who made application and we would reconsider those. Councilwoman James asked if it would have to come back before this committee to vote or how would that process work? Chairperson Anthony stated that it would have to come back to the committee and asked Ashley Britt if that was correct. Ashley Britt responded that it was correct. Ashley Britt commented that it would come back to the committee if we wanted to fill the spot(s); you do not have to have twenty-five. Twenty-five is just the maximum number; if you want to fill the spot(s) then it would have to come back to the committee to fill it. Chairperson Anthony stated that would be a decision that would have to be made. If we wanted to fill the vacant spot then the names that were not selected would be used to choose from.

Councilwoman James stated that with this meeting we are looking at the week of May 24 would it be ZOOM or in person? Chairperson Anthony stated it would be the week of May 17 or May 24 and she did not know due to the mandate not allowing in person meetings. Chairperson Anthony asked Ashley Britt what the mandate would allow for meeting in person. Ashley Britt stated she thought that the mass gathering limit was moved to one hundred indoors and that is only if able to be socially distanced and a lot of the rooms at City Hall can only allow for twenty-two people to be socially distanced. Ashley Britt stated we have capacity limits depending on the venue being used. Councilwoman James asked Ashley Britt about the Old Armory, what is the capacity there? Ashley Britt stated that she was not sure on that location, maybe Bruce would know since there has been talk about it for council meetings due to it being larger than the city hall rooms but she is not sure of the exact number. Bruce Bounds commented that the Old Armory limits are fine for this meeting, however you could not have one hundred there but for twenty-five that would be fine. Chairperson Anthony commented that we need to select two dates so that we can be sure that the Old Armory is not being used for anything on either date and need to

select a time. Chairperson Anthony stated that most of these individuals works so we would be looking at something in the afternoon or early evening. Ashley Britt stated that if we do choose to meet in person, even though it would accommodate the twenty-five committee members, members of the public might like to attend just like any other open meeting, not as committee members. If members of the public attend that might limit you and it might be better to do it remotely just because you are doing the council meetings remotely. Ashley Britt stated that they have tried to encourage that but it is up to the committee. Chairperson Anthony stated that with the open meeting laws if you were to meet in public you could not limit the number of people that wanted to come. Ashley Britt commented that you can limit the number due to the executive order, it just becomes a little problematic when you have to have someone stand at the door saying you can go in but you can not go in. Ashley Britt stated that if you do it remotely you would not have to limit it at all. Chairperson Anthony stated that the first meeting for the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee should be by ZOOM due to the reason just discussed and in June Governor Cooper is planning on changing the regulations, but for May we would be better suited to do it by ZOOM if there is no objection.

Ashley Britt commented that she would speak to the City Attorney because the committee may need to have Council approve a ZOOM meeting because Council has to authorize ZOOM meetings. Ashley Britt stated it should not be a problem, it just is an action that needs to be added for approval. Chairperson Anthony stated that we would present it to Council as requested and present it at the May 11 meeting. Chairperson Anthony stated that we would have time to ask for permission, should we not receive it then we would have to do it later after it is approved. Chairperson Anthony asked for two possible dates for the meeting. Councilman Gordon commented that Mrs. Reed suggested that we allow one week, so if you go out one week, people would have to respond in some form or fashion then that would leave two weeks really in the month. Councilman Gordon stated that it seems to him that Tuesday nights are good nights for a lot of people because on Fridays they are thinking about the weekend and Mondays they are trying to catch up from the weekend. Councilman Gordon stated that he would like a Tuesday and anytime is suitable to him, but as stated a lot of these people may work and not be able to get on and everybody might need to get a snack or dinner before they meet. Councilman Gordon stated that he thought we met at 7:00 p.m. before. Chairperson Anthony agreed that we did. Councilman Gordon stated that he did not have a problem with that time or that day. Councilman Gordon stated that May 18 would work if we wanted him to recommend something. Chairperson Anthony stated that the date of May 18 at 7:00 p.m. was suggested and ask if there was another suggestion. Chairperson Anthony stated that hearing none that May 18 at 7:00 p.m. would be a ZOOM meeting. Chairperson Anthony asked Bruce if the date was good for him. Bruce replied that the date was fine. Ashley Britt stated that the suggestion needed to be put in the form of a motion. Chairperson Anthony asked Councilman Gordon to put that in the form of a motion. Councilman Gordon made the motion that the first meeting of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee be on Tuesday, May 18 at 7:00 p.m. via ZOOM. Councilwoman James second the motion. Chairperson Anthony conducted a roll call to vote on the motion – Councilmember Gordon – Yes, Councilmember James – Yes and Councilmember Anthony – Yes. Chairperson Anthony stated that a request for ZOOM meetings would be sent to Council.

Chairperson Anthony stated that we needed to discuss a proposal to request a Trainer for the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. Chairperson Anthony stated that Dr. Samuels had served as the Facilitator for our Open Conversation on Racism Committee and his would be one proposal and we need at least another proposal so we can send out the Request for Proposals. Councilwoman James commented that Kamella Emmanuel did the one for the Chamber of Commerce and she would like for her to receive a Request for Proposal as well. Councilwoman James stated that we could contact Pat Khale with Chamber and ask her who the lady was that did their training. Chairperson Anthony asked Mrs. Reed if she would contact Pat Khale at the Chamber to find out the name of the person who conducted training. Mrs. Reed stated that she would contact Pat Khale.

Chairperson Anthony stated that there were three sets of minutes from the Open Conversation on Racism Committee that needed to be accepted. Chairperson Anthony asked if we needed to do them one by one or approve them all together. Chairperson Anthony stated that all members had all received them and had a chance to read them for mistakes and she did not see any changes. Chairperson Anthony asked if any committee members seen any mistakes or needed changes. Ashely Britt stated that the committee could vote on all of the minutes in one motion. Chairperson Anthony stated that the minutes needing acceptance were February 2, February 23, and March 4 and asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Councilwoman James made the motion to approve the minutes from February 2, February 23, and March 4. Councilman Gordon second the motion. Chairperson Anthony stated it had been moved and a second motion that the minutes from February 2, February 23, and March 4 be approved and conducted a roll call vote for acceptance. Councilwoman James – Yes, Councilman Gordon- Yes, and Councilwoman Anthony – Yes. Chairperson Anthony stated that the minutes were approved.

Chairperson Anthony stated that was the end of the agenda unless there was something else. With no other business, Chairperson Anthony asked for a motion to adjourn.

Councilwoman James made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Councilman Gordon second the motion. Chairperson Anthony conducted roll call to vote, Councilwoman James – Yes, Councilman Gordon – Yes and Councilwoman Anthony – Yes.

Chairperson Anthony stated that the meeting was adjourned and thanked everyone for their time.

Meeting adjourned at 1:26 p.m.

Chairperson Surluta Anthony