

**DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE MEETING
MT. CALVARY AME ZION CHURCH
800 LASALLE STREET
MONROE, NC 28110
www.monroenc.org**

June 8, 2023 – 6:30 P.M.

AGENDA

Meeting will be conducted in the sanctuary.

1. Call to Order
2. Acceptance and approval of May 11, 2023 minutes
3. Old Business
 - a. Ideals on committee goals and procedures
4. New Business
5. Adjournment

Mission Statement

The City of Monroe is committed to ensuring that barriers of inequality are removed and all voices are heard. We will develop and improve socio-economic opportunities. We pledge to promote open and inclusive conversations to foster cultural sensitivity that creates a sense of belonging.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee
Meeting Minutes
May 11, 2023 – 6:30 P.M.

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee met on Thursday, March 9, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. at Mt. Calvary AME Zion Church in Monroe.

Staff Present: Debra Chestnut Reed, Human Resources Director, Liaison, and Sheila Couick, Minute Taker

Members Present: Chairperson Surluta Anthony, Althea Richardson-Tucker, Benita Sanders, Cynthia Baez, Lanny Lancaster, Melvin Tate (Co-Chairperson), Michael Hall, Selina Campbell

Members Absent: Councilman Freddie Gordon, Cress Barnes, Melissa McKeown, Swindell Edwards, Tamara Williams, and Tiffany Wilson

Chairperson Anthony open the meeting at 6:40 p.m. by welcoming everyone to the meeting.

Chairperson Anthony stated that there was not a quorum at this time and the minutes from the April meeting could not be voted on and that this meeting would be informational only. If we get a quorum, then we will go back to the minutes for review and acceptance.

Old Business:

Chairperson Anthony stated that there was one person who attended the job fair training workshop at the Old Armory on May 3, 2023. The training covered resume writing, researching of companies in advance, and interview techniques. Three people planned on attending, however, call the day of event to say they were sick. Four committee members attended the training.

Chairperson Anthony stated that the job fair was scheduled for May 17 and that she had not received any direction from Pat Kahl on responsibilities for the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee members. Chairperson Anthony also commented that no Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee member had committed to attending the job fair. Chairperson Anthony stated that we were not recognized on the flyer for the job fair.

Chairperson Anthony handed out the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee shirts.

Chairperson Anthony stated that we needed to start thinking about where we wanted to go from this point. Chairperson Anthony commented that we were talking about getting Dr. Samuel back and we needed to discuss a plan before talking to him. We have no other initiatives at this time and will continue to work with Dr. Samuel. Chairperson Anthony asked members for suggestions.

Co-Chairperson Tate commented that he had not a good experience with the Chamber and thought that the job fair was a sincere opportunity for us to partner with the Chamber. The flyers did not have our logo and that the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee was not mentioned. Co-Chairperson Tate stated that we needed to stay away from the job fair and someone will have to take the blame if people don't attend the job fair. If we are responsible for getting people to the job fair that have not attended

before then that is an indictment that is not true since we were not included on the flyer. Co-Chairperson Tate stated that we needed to bring Dr. Samuel back and introduce ourselves to the community. Co-Chairperson Tate commented that the Chamber has some bad history with job fairs and it has made members of the black and Hispanic community afraid of it. He has talked with people and they told him that they had bad experiences with it. Co-Chairperson Tate commented that we have spent time developing the mission statement and working relationships and we need to give DEI a fair chance to work in Monroe and Union County. Co-Chairperson Tate stated that he was speaking for himself and that he was not going to the job fair. It is nice that we have shirts, however, we are not going to be the hired help and they are not paying us. We may need to back away from the job fair. There was good intent after meeting with them and asking us to partner with them. We committed ourselves to the partnership - why were we not included on the flyer. The problem with this was that it was creating a conflict between the Chamber and their members. We need to think about changing the status quo of the community and being inclusive. We missed the mark by not being included on the flyer.

Chairperson Anthony commented that if we are not going to attend the job fair then we need to let the Chamber know and not just not show up since we committed in advanced. Chairperson Anthony stated that she did not want it to look like we did not follow through with the commitment. Co-Chairperson Tate stated that the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee should have been included on flyer. Co-Chairperson Tate stated that this could hurt us in the long run since we have not presented Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to the community. In a lot of places DEI is being attacked and we need a good opportunity to present ourselves and to give it a chance in Monroe and Union County.

Benita Sanders commented that the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee was established around the time of COVID and there was some push back. This was a new program and we had Dr. Samuel come in and a lot of the time the program was hit or miss. We worked on establishing goals for each quarter. We suggested a job fair for one of the quarters. Then we started talking about the Chamber's job fair and trying to get shirts. We need to discuss who we are, what we stand for and what we want to do. We were not ready for the Chamber's job fair. We either need to be all in and ready or we are going to skip some bases. We are talking about bringing Dr. Samuel back and we have to look at goals and objectives this is all new so we cannot rush this because it is sensitive. Benita commented that she would not be at the job fair due to other commitments however she attended the workshop. Benita stated that she felt like we were not ready for the job fair due to not having enough information to pass out. The Chamber already had the companies lined up from previous years and knew who would be attending. Benita stated that both parties bear some of the blame for the omission on the flyer.

Chairperson Anthony stop the meeting and called it order due to another member showing and making the quorum number of eight. Chairperson Anthony asked for a motion to approve the minutes of April 9, 2023. Michael Hall made the motion to approve the minutes from April 9, 2023 and Althea Tucker-Richardson second the motion. Chairperson Anthony asked for a show of hand for those in approval of the minutes from the April 9 meeting.

Ayes: All in Attendance
Nayes: None

The minutes from the April 9, 2023 meeting were approved and accepted by all in attendance by vote.

Chairperson Anthony stated that the Chamber did not have our logo to add to the flyer.

Co-Chairperson Tate commented that we went to the Chamber in good faith and the Chamber attended a meeting and stated what they needed from the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. We agreed to what the Chamber requested; however, we were not mentioned on the flyer and they were more interested in their members. We were trying to get people to the job fair that would not normally go. The problem is that it is a closed community. Co-Chairperson Tate commented that a former president for the Chambers stated that they had jobs and questioned why minorities didn't apply. Co-Chairperson Tate stated that the good old boy/girl system is still in place.

Chairperson Anthony stated that she asked Pat why we were not on the flyer. Pat replied that at the time of printing she did not have our logo or anything from us.

Benita Sanders commented that if someone from the committee does not show up at the job fair then we will look bad.

Co-Chairperson Tate commented that Pat left Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion out of the job fair due to the fear of the chamber members or the group she has to work with. When we talked to Pat about the job fair there were no minorities on the call. Benita asked Chairperson Anthony if she had a listing of companies attending the job fair. Chairperson Anthony stated that she did not have the list with her at this time. Benita asked if the City of Monroe was on the list. Chairperson Anthony stated that were on the list. Co-Chairperson Tate stated that when they talked to Pat there was no representation from the minorities. Co-Chairperson Tate stated that the same people and companies go to the job fair. Co-Chairperson Tate commented that we need to push Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and give it a fair chance.

Debra C. Reed commented that the City of Monroe will be represented by individual departments at the job fair.

Benita Sanders asked what the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee member would do at the job fair. Chairperson Anthony stated we could help the people get their resumes, applications, etc. Chairperson Antony stated that we brought Pat to a meeting and we created a plan to get the word out with flyers and training. The committee made the decision that this was a project that the committee wanted to do. Once we identified what we were going to do we made a plan to get the word out and the flyers out. We had additional flyers made about the job fair training. We made a valid attempt to get the word out in the communities.

Chairperson Anthony stated that the other part was the job fair and asked the committee should we continue to the end or stop now? Benita Sanders commented that we did not have a plan for this project. Chairperson Anthony stated that we had a plan for this project.

Michael Hall commented that we were not ready and the Chamber choose not to put Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion on the flyer and we should not go. It should have been done correctly and since it was not we should let that be known.

Cynthia Baez commented that NC Works had a job fair at Carowinds. Meetings were conducted by TEAMS and people were assigned jobs. It seems that the Chambers has not assigned anything to the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee to do. The Chamber should have had a meeting to explain what is expected from the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee.

Althea Richardson-Tucker stated we were not invited to the job fair. Debra C. Reed commented that employers received a different flyer asking if interested in participating in the job fair and if so a table would be provided for that employer. Chairperson Anthony stated that we only received the flyers announcing the job fair not a flyer asking if we wanted to participate.

Chairperson Anthony stated that we fulfilled our obligation to get the information out to the communities to get people to the job fair.

Althea Richardson-Tucker asked if we knew which residents were going to the job fair. Chairperson Anthony stated that we did not know who was attending.

Chairperson Anthony asked the members if they felt that we got the information out to the communities. The consensus of the members was that they felt we did get the information out.

Althea Richardson-Tucker commented that if we are not going to the job fair then we need to send a letter to the Chamber stating what we did and hope they have a large attendance and look forward to working with them in the future.

Chairperson Anthony stated that a report should be sent to the City and a letter should go to the Chamber to let them know the disappointment in not being on the flyer and that we felt we were not included.

Debra C. Reed stated that if a letter is sent it should be from someone who attends the fair.

Cynthia Baez stated that she would go to the fair and if nothing else she would represent NC Works. The difference between this job fair and the one at Carowinds is the TEAM meetings. Cynthia Baez stated that there was a lot of advertising for the Carowinds job fair.

Chairperson Anthony stated that we got the flyer out to a lot of places. The job fair is May 17, 2023 from 9:00 am – 1:00 pm at the Ag Center. People will need to have the initiative to go.

Chairperson Anthony stated that a letter will be sent to the Chamber stating the efforts taken to get the word out about the job fair and the displeasure at not being included on the flyer. There was a consensus from the committee for the letter to the Chamber.

New Business:

Chairperson Anthony stated that we need to finish with training and setting goals and programs. She asked when the committee would like to meet with Dr. Samuel. Chairperson Anthony stated she would need to meet with Debra and Sheila to discuss the details.

Althea Richardson-Tucker asked what we wanted Dr. Samuel to do. Chairperson Anthony stated that we needed to work on goals for each of the quarters.

Cynthia Baez stated that we needed to talk to Dr. Samuel in reference to payment and that she was not impressed with him in the past. Dr. Samuel needs to focus on the plan and not use a lot of examples. We need to know the next steps. Chairperson Anthony stated that we could be more specific in the request. Debra C. Reed commented that this is not training and that the committee needs to meet beforehand to decide what Dr. Samuel needs to bring to the table. Chairperson Anthony stated that we needed to be specific as to what is needed.

Althea Richardson-Tucker stated that at the next meeting committee members needed to bring ideas for what the committee wants to do and then bring Dr. Samuel in. Email out the agenda stating what is needed for the next meeting so member can be thinking about it.

Chairperson Anthony stated that the next meeting will be "Think Tank" as to where are we going and what do we want to do. Once this is decided then we will bring in Dr. Samuel. Need to discuss contract and payment for Dr. Samuel.

The mission statement was read aloud by all members.

Chairperson Anthony asked for a motion for adjournment. Lanny Lancaster made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Co-Chairperson Tate second the motion. Chairperson Anthony asked for a show of hands to adjourn the meeting.

Ayes: All in attendance

Nays: None

The motion carried by all in attendance and the meeting was adjourned.

The meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

The next meeting will be June 8, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. at Mt. Calvary AME Zion Church.

Respectfully submitted by Sheila Couick.

Chairperson Surluta Anthony