

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

March 14, 2024 – 6:30 P.M.

AGENDA

Meeting will be conducted in the sanctuary.

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Minutes:
 - a. Meeting of November 9, 2023
 - b. Meeting of January 11, 2024
 - c. Special Meeting of January 25, 2024
3. Old Business
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
November 9, 2023 – 6:30 P.M.

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

Staff Present: Debra Chestnut Reed, Human Resources Director, Liaison

Members Present: Chairperson Surluta Anthony, Councilman Freddie Gordon, Althea Richardson-Tucker, Benita Sanders, Cynthia Baez, Melvin Tate (Co-Chairperson), Lanny Lancaster, and Tiffany Wilson

Members Absent: Cress Barnes, Melissa McKeown, Michael Hall, Selina Campbell, Tamara Williams, and Swindell Edwards

Guest: Jessica Eason, Human Resources Manager and Lisa Hollowell, Assistant to the City Manger

Chairperson Anthony open the meeting at 6:30 p.m. by welcoming everyone to the meeting stating there was a quorum.

Approval of Minutes:

Meeting minutes from the June 8, 2023 were reviewed by committee members. Benita Sanders made the motion to approved the minutes as presented. Althea Tucker Richardson second the motion. Chairperson Anthony conducted a vote on accepting the minutes.

Ayes: All in attendance

Nayes: None

Minutes were approved by all in attendance by vote.

Old Business:

Chairperson Anthony stated the next item on the agenda was old business. Chairperson Anthony stated that the committee was waiting to see how the DEI committee would fit in with the Good Jobs Great Cities program. Dr. Samuel attended the first meeting of the Good Jobs Great Cities program due to being asked by Chairperson Anthony. Chairperson Anthony stated that she thought we were being left out. Dr. Samuel was asked when he arrived to represent the faith based community and not DEI which was good because he got a clearer understanding.

Chairperson Anthony stated that one of the things that we need to decide is when are we going to bring Dr. Samuel back to our meetings. Keep in mind we need to use the time on his contract but we need to have a clear understanding of what we need him for. It seems that it is taking a long time but we need to build a strong foundation rather than to go fast. Chairperson Anthony asked for suggestion on when to bring Dr. Samuel back and how he should be utilized.

Melissa McKeown stated that she was at the Good Job Great Cities meeting and brought up the DEI Committee and stated that she served on this committee. This committee wants to be a part of this

program and wants to be there when plans are being made to be sure that they are thinking about diversity, equity, and inclusion. Chairperson Anthony thanked Melissa for holding up the banner for DEI at the meeting. Chairperson Anthony stated that she had been told that this committee was a stakeholder in this project and the people from the Department of Labor would be taking all of the information provided back to various groups to work out a plan and then we will see where we actually fit and what our responsibilities will be. Chairperson Anthony stated that it did not mean we could not ask questions in the meantime.

Melissa McKeown commented that this meeting was with the stakeholders and other people and then the next day there was a meeting with the manufacturers. So they were getting information from both sides and then they are going to bring back all of the information, however they have not scheduled the next meeting.

Chairperson Anthony stated that she had a meeting with Mark Watson, City Manager, and Teresa Campo and they stated that we would be invited to the second meeting, however this did not happen. Chairperson Anthony stated that she called about not being invited. We are still waiting on information and waiting for the stakeholder part to take place. Chairperson Anthony stated that she would be meeting with Mark Watson to get up to speed and what she learns she will share with the committee.

Melissa McKeown stated that they talked a lot about benefits. Mark Watson actually sat with Melissa and she felt that they actually heard what was being said. They talked a lot about people who have live in poverty. We are going to give them the manufacturing jobs, which is great, but that leads to healthcare which puts them at a net loss. Melissa stated that she feels that they don't know what the whole process is yet. Chairperson Anthony commented that she agreed that was part of the problem not knowing the whole process and understanding it. Melissa commented that there was two people getting information at the meetings and that it would be shared with the committee.

Chairperson Anthony asked Debra about the letter that went out to members in reference to whether they wanted to stay on the committee or be removed from the committee. Debra commented that we have not received all of the information back and that Sheila was out of office. Debra commented that she would update her on the final response. Chairperson Anthony stated that would help her determine what the committee would be doing in December.

Rev. Tate commented that he was concerned that we were not included at the table for Good Jobs Great Cities. He had the feeling that we were going to be and then somehow we got left off from table. Rev. Tate wonders if there was some fear that we would not fit it to that environment. DEI is not looked upon positively at some settings. Rev. Tate commented that he would like to make sure that we don't divide people by title – faith based or education. You will not hear other voices if it is the same people and same groups. Part of the reason for going after the grant was that the City had a DEI Committee.

Lisa Hollowell introduced herself to Chairperson Anthony stating that she was involved in both of the meetings for Good Jobs Great Cities. The first day was all of the providers and they were talking about what they knew as the obstacles for employment. The second day was just the employers and their view on what the obstacles were. It was very interesting, the first day it was traditional obstacles that people think about, childcare, transportation, etc. and on the second day hearing from the employers it was different viewpoint. But with the Department of Labor and the academies working on everything they are going to be bringing it all back and it is going to be a much broader process with a lot more of the stakeholders. Teresa Campo is the one heading this up from the City's perspective. It was a pretty successful couple of days.

Tiffany Wilson asked Lisa if she could elaborate on the second day from the employer's perspective since there was not representation on that day from the committee. Lisa commented that what she heard at the table was talk about drug testing and why they don't come back for the second interview or on their start date. The employer's perspective is that they don't show back up. So it is getting people in the door on the second shifts and the ability to get people to work the second shifts. Also they were saying that with the heavy labor intensive positions someone can make about the same amount of money working at a place that is not as labor intensive. They lose a lot of people to these types of jobs. The first day was a lot about the things that we heard. The second day was more about the employer's side of thing – people not coming back for second interview or showing up for work. There was one employer that had been using transportation services and paying for that for people to come to work. They also talked about housing and hiring the homeless stating that they were doing this, so they did not see that as an obstacle on their part. They are hiring people that were coming from the homeless shelter.

Benita Sander commented that Lisa stated employers were saying that people were not coming back for the second interview and some of the work was labor intensive. Did they give examples of this happening? Tyson and Pilgrim Pride is labor intensive working in the freezer and cutting chickens on the line. What type of labor intensive job descriptions are out there? Lisa Hollowell stated that was a good question and the Department of Labor person stated that some could be working in hot weather and these people could go work at McDonald's making about the same money. Lisa Hollowell stated that Harris Teeter stated that heavy labor was an issue. Melissa McKeown asked if it was because of Harris Teeter's distribution center? Lisa Hollowell stated that she did not hear of a location for them.

Melissa McKeown stated that some of this is when the employer reaches back out to the person they don't want to work second shift - there is no childcare for second shift. So much of this is going to be getting both groups to see the other group's perspective. It's not that people are lazy and don't want to work second shift, it is that they have kids and family and no one to take care of their kids to ensure homework is done and they get a meal. Or there is no transportation for second shift – how are they going to get to work and then home in the morning.

Tiffany Wilson commented that there are points system and once you reach a certain number of points you lose your job. Melissa McKeown stated that the other thing that employers are saying that they can go to McDonald's and make the same amount of money, maybe the employer should look at their pay scale to see if it is equitable.

Chairperson Anthony stated that this is where the committee will come in and most employers don't really understand the DEI part of it. If we come in as stakeholders that will be a part of our responsibilities. The thing is that we are at the table so that we can have these discussions. Chairperson Anthony stated that she was going to talk to Mark and request that Teresa Campo come to a meeting to answer questions.

Melissa McKeown stated that she was not invited to the meeting, however one of her staff was and that it did not make sense to her so she had to call and let them know that she was coming to the meeting.

Chairperson Anthony stated that when the email went out she was not copied on it and should have been since she is the Chairperson of this committee. Going forward we are going to do this the correct way and we will have Teresa Campo here to inform us of what is going on.

Tiffany Wilson commented that if the City got the grant based on DEI would it not seem logical to include to the DEI aspect because that is the reason for the grant? Chairperson Anthony stated that was

logical but right now it is not reality. Chairperson Anthony stated that it was not based on that but it helped put the City on a more level playing field. Chairperson Anthony stated that these are not just jobs but they are careers that involves some type of skills. You don't have to have a skill for Tyson, Pilgrim Pride or McDonald's. Benita Sanders commented that she hoped that when these employers are coming to the table and talking there are not giving excuses as to why people are not being hired. Benita commented that with us not being at the meeting we cannot see that the real picture. Chairperson Anthony stated that a big part of that was communication and doing away with the misunderstanding. This is going to be a learning experience for the employee as well. Melissa McKeown asked if some of the job skills should they still be job requirements? Obviously if it is safety regulated you are using a machine that could cut your hand then you cannot be "high" when you are doing that but if you are picking up a boxes at a distribution center with your hands and putting them down and you fail a drug test then is that a big deal? Cynthia Baez stated that several years ago when she worked for the Employment Security and they received notice that Tyson or Pilgrim's Pride was hiring people would line up and be around the corner by the time the doors opened. Once we told them that they had to take a drug test half the line would walk out the door. Tyson and most employers give drug test. Employers are drug testing by swiping the mouth not by urine due to test being easily switched out by employees. Most employers are giving drug test regardless of the position level. Chairperson Anthony stated that the responsibility will fall on both sides the employee and the employer. There are things in the past that identify different groups of people. Melissa McKeown stated that could be used to discriminate against individuals and honestly times are different now. Melissa McKeown stated that some of the views are changing.

Lisa Hollowell commented that she did want to mention that a lot of the employers did say that they were not testing for the marijuana however they would test for other drugs. One employer stated that they did not test at all anymore. This was an oddity and was rare because most of them stated that they did test. They only test when there is an accident and then they have to test. Melissa McKeown stated that a lot of employers don't test new hires for jobs. They only test if there is an accident due to worker's compensation not paying.

Chairperson Anthony suggested that if there is a particular question(s) that a person has and wants an answer for them to email her and she will get an answer for them.

Debra C. Reed commented that only five letters out of fourteen had been returned indicating their status as to whether or not to remain on the committee. The question was asked if the five that returned the letters wanted they to stay on the committee. Debra stated that she did not have that information at this time.

Chairperson Anthony stated that we may need to go back to Council to reorganize. Melissa McKeown stated that we had talked about that a lot due to not being able to make a quorum and reducing the number again. We have been struggling and that is why the letter was sent out to see who really wanted to be on the committee. It is a volunteer opportunity and people don't always make time and things change. If a person wants to roll-off, then they can. Chairperson Anthony commented that right now we are locked in at fourteen with eight as the quorum.

Rev. Tate commented that the reason this was brought up was that if we get the employer and other people at the table some of them have not been through this long process. We don't need to split people up but everyone needs to be at the table to hear other voices. He thought that the night Mr. Watson was at the meeting that was what has going to happen. We need to start bringing Teresa Campo into the planning because it sounds like they are doing something totally different. Rev. Tate states the politics can sometime reduces things to nothing and he does not want to see all of the work already put

in place to go down as just a political move. Chairperson Anthony stated that it was up to the committee to make sure that it does not happen.

New Business:

Tiffany Wilson commented that she had new business – where are we in the process? We have moved past the logo, mission statement, and what is our next step? Chairperson Anthony stated that before the grant the next step was to go back to the quarters that was identified and doing what was identified in those quarters. But when this project came about it changed the focus a little bit. Melissa McKeown stated that we were trying to come with the quarterly project but then we didn't have quorum and that stalled us out a lot. But if we want to be recognized then we need to start some projects.

We need to do some strategic planning. Even with Good Jobs Great Cities we are waiting on them to tell us something, we need to decide on how we want to be involved and where we want to be involved. After this project what would be our next step.

Chairperson Anthony commented that besides the Good Jobs Great Cities project we need to have a strategic plan and other projects.

Tiffany Wilson commented that even when we get to the table we are going to have to speak for the people and so if we are sitting here waiting we need to be going out and seeing what is keeping people from taking a job. We need to get to the people to find out what is keeping them from the second interview or from taking the job. So when we go to the table we can talk facts.

Melissa McKeown stated that we needed a strategic plan and asked if that was something that Dr. Samuel could help with? If we get a strategic plan with his leadership, it should be a three-year plan since we have him for a limited amount of time. We could use his expertise to cover a fair amount of time.

We need to bring things to the table so that Dr. Samuel will know which direction to take.

Chairperson Anthony stated that at the December meeting are you saying that it is time to bring Dr. Samuel back? Tiffany Wilson commented that we need to have some ideals and some input on where we want to be in three years – how we want to grow – before we bring Dr. Samuel in so that we are using his time effectively.

Chairperson Anthony stated that in the meantime we need to get our portion for Mr. Watson ready. In December we will work out the strategies that we want – how we see ourselves and what we want to do.

Melissa McKeown stated that for the strategic plan we need to see our long term goals and work our way backwards. Between now and the next meeting everyone should be thinking about where we should be in three years – what should we be doing and how active we should be.

Chairperson Anthony stated that for December be prepared to have a discussion on where we should be in three years – how we see ourselves. Also what is the best way to get out into the community to get the answer to what is preventing people from keeping or getting jobs and what is some of the barriers.

Debra C. Reed commented that the strategic plan is a good foundation and when we were talking about the job fair scenario it worked out the way it should have. The foundation is still the people – coming to the table to discuss what you have or don't have. When you do a strategic plan it doesn't alleviate

anyone from making sure that the community is prepared. Whether it means going back to South Piedmont Community College to get people to come out to help with interviewing skills or resumes writing. This is where the disconnect is. Employers are saying that people will not come back to the second interview, sometimes people who interview don't know how to get people back to the second level interview. So people have to be prepared on the both side of the table.

Chairperson Anthony stated that we needed a process for employee to use. Althea Tucker Richardson commented that she had already started a business plan. The business plan was a training program for soft skills and hard skills and resume writing and preparedness. All of this is needed in this community. If there are jobs available people may not have understood at the interview or didn't know what questions to ask or how to answer. How do you prepare people for this and how do you check to see what skills a person has already?

Melissa McKeown commented that she agreed with that, however employers need training. It is not always the job seekers fault; the employer also need the training. When we do the business plan we need to focus on both sides.

Tiffany Wilson commented that we needed to go back to apprenticeship due to people not be able to learn by reading but learn a skill being taught or shown to them. We also need to deal with people with a criminal history who cannot get a job – does not mean the person is a bad person based on something that happened when they were twenty or twenty-one. These are skills that employers need to look at also. People coming in with a GED only are being judged. Teach and equipment people that are coming in at entry level.

Chairperson Anthony stated that we should make this part of our plan. Debra C. Reed commented that we talked about this earlier, even when Dr. Samuel was here, that when we go to the table and we talk about having employers trained we have to understand what they don't know. We can walk through the door and not understand that there is a different level of understanding for each employer. We need to use the resources in the communities that specializes in these areas, which is part of the business plan, such as partnerships.

Melissa McKeown commented that there are some training modules available that non-profits use to help employers understand how to bridge a person from poverty into the workplace. It teaches employers the rules that people in poverty live by which is different than middle class people. Jobs are created by white middle class people and we are trying to have people who are in poverty trying to figure out these rules which are foreign to them. Employers need to be taught the rules of poverty and adjust the language so that they understand.

Tiffany Wilson commented that we needed to go back to South Piedmont Community College and tap into that resource to get someone to come onboard with us. A lot of the training they have is free and it is not getting to the people who need it. If they partner with us, then we can help get resources to the people.

Chairperson Anthony stated that it almost sounds like the employers need their own workshop for DEI. Tiffany Wilson commented that it is two separate workshop because they are working in two separate worlds. Chairperson Anthony stated that everyone brings their own experiences. Tiffany Wilson commented in poverty you work in survival mode.

Melissa McKeown commented that the benefits are a real thing that we need to look at. A person that has Medicaid for their children will not want to take a job where they will lose this benefit. Also if they

are on food stamps they don't want to lose those either. There is a stigma attached to the person because they don't want to lose these benefits. Employers don't know about those issues. Melissa McKeown stated that it can take up to twelve years to replace the net loss when a person loses their benefits (Medicaid or food stamps). You can lose the benefits over a couple of dollars but you have to have an entry level income of \$20-\$22 dollar an hour to make up the loss.

Chairperson Anthony stated that those of us here at the meeting don't understand it and the employers understand it less. Melissa McKeown stated that for the employer it is about the money at the end of the day.

Rev. Tate commented that we needed to make sure that it just didn't look good on paper and that we have an advocacy with us that helps transforms that mindset and thinking and thoughts of people that do the hiring. Hiring people look at people differently race, creed, sex, gender and appearance. These barriers need to be removed so that people would have an opportunity to be hire. This is where we come in.

Chairperson Anthony commented that it was 7:28 p.m. and we try to stay close to an hour. We have a lot on the December agenda. Please send Chairperson Anthony any question that you have. The December meeting is on December 14. Chairperson Anthony commented that she would contact Mr. Watson to try to get on his schedule.

Chairperson Anthony commented that we always end the meeting with the reading of mission statement.

With no other business to discuss the motion was made to adjourn the meeting. Chairperson Anthony conducted a vote on adjourning the meeting.

Ayes: All in attendance
Nays: None

Meeting was adjourned by consensus vote.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Sheila Couick.

Surluta Anthony, Chairperson

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee
Meeting Minutes
January 11, 2024 – 6:30 P.M.

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee met on Thursday, January 11, 2024, at 6:30 p.m. at Mt. Calvary AME Zion Church in Monroe.

Staff Present: Sheila Couick, Minute Taker

Members Present: Councilman Surluta Anthony (Chairperson), Councilmember David Dotson, Councilmember Franco McGee, Althea Richardson-Tucker, Cynthia Baez, Lanny Lancaster, Melvin Tate (Co-Chairperson), Melissa McKeown, Tamara Williams, Tiffany Wilson

Members Absent: Benita Sanders, Cress Barnes, Michael Hall, Selina Campbell, and Swindell Edwards

Guest: Jessica Eason, Human Resources Manager

Chairperson Anthony open the meeting at 6:30 p.m. by welcoming everyone to the meeting and stating that there was a quorum in attendance.

Chairperson Anthony stated that there was two new Councilmembers joining the committee and asked Councilmember Franco McGee and Councilmember David Dotson to introduce themselves to the committee.

Chairperson stated that we also needed to discuss the use of the remaining funds for this committee.

Councilmember McGee stated that this is his second term on City Council.

Councilmember Dotson stated that he is Mayor Pro-Tem and that this is his first term on City Council. He stated that he volunteered for this committee and that he was previously a police officer for 24 years.

Chairperson Anthony asked committee members in attendance to introduced themselves to the new members.

Chairperson Anthony stated this committee is different as it started as a Mayoral committee with the Open Conversation on Racism due to the George Floyd event and then changed over to the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. We talk openly without anyone being judged. This committee has learned what racism is and the history of racism. We have created a mission statement, worked with Union County Chamber on a job fair, and will be working with Sheila Crunkleton on a sickle cell project in the future.

Chairperson Anthony stated that she, Althea Tucker Richardson and Rev. Tate have met with City Manager Mark Watson to define this committee's role with the Good Jobs Great Cities initiative. Chairperson Anthony commented that they are waiting to hear back from Mr. Watson on the committee's roles. Rev. Tate stated that the meeting with Mr. Watson was good and that there were some misunderstandings about being at the table and we thought we should have been. Althea Tucker

Richardson stated that we thought we would have been included and if we would have been then we could help them understand the issues with employment. Althea Tucker Richardson stated that we needed to know how they are going to ensure that residents of Monroe get hired and not residents outside of Monroe. Mr. Watson, City Manager, stated that there is another meeting and that these concerns would be addressed. Mr. Watson, City Manager, stated that he would work these issues in the conversation. Another issue is how are the disadvantage people (people without transportation) going to get to the job fairs or job sites.

Chairperson Anthony stated that Dr. Samuel was at the Good Jobs Great Cities meeting as representative of the faith community and not DEI, however he did help make awareness of DEI at the meeting.

Chairperson Anthony stated that we need some type of program to help people understand what DEI is in the business world. Chairperson Anthony stated that Dr. Samuel is under contract and that we needed to use this resource. When do we want to bring Dr. Samuel in and why?

Councilmember McGee asked what were the initiatives to bring Dr. Samuel in? Chairperson Anthony stated Dr. Samuel helped in identifying projects and what steps to take to accomplish these projects. Dr. Samuel was also representing us with DEI. Due to not having a quorum at a lot of meeting we were unable to do a lot.

Tiffany Wilson asked how many times could we bring Dr. Samuel in?

Chairperson Anthony stated that we needed to use the funds in our budget. We could host a gathering or forum for the community to understand what DEI is.

Councilmember McGee asked what the budget was?

Chairperson Anthony asked Sheila for a current budget report. Sheila Couick reported the following:

Training Budget	\$9,000 assigned to a contract for Dr. Samuel
Shirts/Pins	Remaining balance is \$25.40
Promotions/Publicity	Remaining balance is \$399.41
Programs/Projects	Remaining balance is \$775.61
Miscellaneous	Remaining balance is \$2,000

Attached is a budget spreadsheet showing expenditures to date.

Tiffany Wilson stated that we did not have enough funds for a dinner. Chairperson Anthony stated that we could do refreshments.

Tiffany Wilson asked if we would have to pay to use a city facility? Chairperson Anthony stated that we would not have to pay.

Tiffany Wilson commented that we could plan something for the month of March with light refreshments and talk about diversity.

Councilmember McGee stated that a movie could be shown that would open up communication on diversity.

Althea Richardson Tucker stated that an open forum would allow speakers to talk more openly. Could also have Dr. Samuel speak at the event to address the audience and engage the people to talk.

Chairperson Anthony stated that we would invite the business community.

Tamara Williams stated that we should have all three together at one time – gather information and show a short movie that captures all issues.

Councilmember McGee stated that the movie would open the dialogue.

Tiffany Wilson commented that it should be three separate topics. Have a three-part series with short sessions and then one main overall meeting.

Chairperson Anthony stated that we needed to utilize Dr. Samuel.

Chairperson Anthony stated that at the next meeting we would discuss a date for the event.

Melissa McKeown stated that we could use Dr. Samuel for goal planning.

Tiffany Wilson commented that we needed to reach out the Chamber for a list of business names.

Chairperson Anthony stated the City is responsible for the Good Jobs Great Cities program.

Chairperson Anthony asked Councilmember McGee, Tiffany Wilson and Tamara Williams to come up with two plans for a program in March.

Melissa McKeown asked if we could use the Old Armory and we needed to get a quote on refreshments. The date would depend on the availability of the Old Armory.

Chairperson Anthony asked when do we need to bring Dr. Samuel back in. Althea Richardson Tucker stated that he needs to be at the February meeting. Chairperson Anthony commented that we needed to tell Dr. Samuel what we wanted him to do. Althea Tucker Richardson stated that Dr. Samuel needs to bring to the table what DEI can do in Monroe. Chairperson Anthony stated that it needed to be divided into quarters.

Rev. Tate commented that the important piece to remember is that the business community needs to partner with us to use DEI in their hiring process. How do we approach businesses with buy in to DEI – recruitment and retention. We need to get people to the table to close the gap. We need to hear from Dr. Samuel on how to do this and how to close the gap. We need 3 or 4 things on how to approach businesses.

Melissa McKeown stated that we need a business plan – long term.

Rev. Tate commented that we need a Union County Chamber meeting to discuss being presenter to get interest.

Melissa McKeown stated that we needed to reach out to the Rotary, Civic and Kiwanis groups.

Chairperson Anthony stated that we needed to tell our story.

Althea Tucker Richardson stated that the event should be 2 hours long at the most. A person with disability could speak on the process of getting a job and a movie could be shown at the beginning.

Chairperson Anthony stated that one thing is to tell our story and the other is to discuss the issues.

Rev. Tate suggested holding the event at the Dowd Theater – space in front for people to get information and have a meet and greet. Chairperson Anthony stated that the Dowd Theater would be good for maybe next year and we need to settle on a date for the Old Armory.

Councilmember Dotson commented that the first meeting should cover the misconceptions of what DEI is. How are we working with the community to create diversity and equity? Create a group of businesses that will work with SPCC to help train people for these opportunities.

Althea Tucker Richardson commented that a goal is the educational piece. Get businesses to understand what DEI is. They need to understand why people have disadvantages getting jobs. Invite the businesses to the meeting to hear what people have to say.

Chairperson Anthony stated that the mission statement needed to be included in the event.

Councilmember McGee, Tiffany Wilson and Tamara Williams met and was ready to present their plan to the committee. Tiffany Wilson commented that they are presenting a movie night showing the movie “Stamp from the Beginning” which is currently on Netflix and is 1 hour and 30 minutes long. The movie could be broken down into sections and refreshment could be provided. The event could be held on March 1, 15 or 22 from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Chairperson Anthony stated that the timeframe was too long. Councilmember McGee stated that you needed time to watch the movie and for discussion. Chairperson Anthony stated that we would need introductions and then the movie. Tiffany Wilson commented that we would lead the discussion on issues in the movie. Tamara Williams stated that this would relate us to the community – people have seen us in the community. Tiffany Wilson stated that a movie would bring in more people.

Jessica Eason commented that the movie was a great ideal however you need to make sure that you know what the “triggers” are in the movie – make sure you hit everything in the movie. Use Dr. Samuel on the back end for topics and help with leading into the discussion.

Tiffany Wilson commented that we needed to leave people hanging so that they would come to another meeting.

Jessica Eason stated that you needed to market the movie so people would feel comfortable with the movie.

Tiffany Wilson stated that everyone should watch the movie for discussion at the February meeting so that the “triggers” can be discussed.

Councilmember McGee stated that Dr. Samuel could be there to offset triggers – people need to be comfortable with uncomfortable conversations. The movie is to help ease into conversation and have a series that will engage the community. You have to have a “carrot” to bring people in. Need to have a professional there to facilitate in the event there is a lot of discussion.

Councilmember Dotson commented that we needed a facilitator to help move the event along.

Althea Tucker Richardson commented that there is a person in Wingate that teaches DEI and could help facilitate. She stated that she did not know if an hour and half movies would work – maybe streamline it.

Melissa McKeown commented that everyone should watch the movie first.

Chairperson Anthony stated that half of the work was done and asked if there should be a called meeting to discuss other ideals.

Councilmember McGee stated that we could do a formal dinner. Chairperson Anthony stated that we did not have enough funds for a dinner.

Chairperson Anthony stated that we needed another ideal. Chairperson Anthony stated that a Special Call meeting would be held on January 25, 2024 at 6:30 p.m. to discuss a second ideal.

Chairperson Anthony and the committee member read the mission statement.

With no other business to discuss, Chairperson Anthony adjourned the meeting.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Sheila Couick.

Surluta Anthony, Chairperson

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee
Meeting Minutes
January 25, 2024 – 6:30 P.M.

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee met on Thursday, January 25, 2024, at 6:30 p.m. at Mt. Calvary AME Zion Church in Monroe for a Special Called meeting.

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

Members Present: Councilman Surluta Anthony (Chairperson), Councilmember David Dotson, Councilmember Franco McGee, Althea Richardson-Tucker, Benita Sanders, Cynthia Baez, Melvin Tate (Co-Chairperson), Tamara Williams, Tiffany Wilson

Members Absent: Cress Barnes, Michael Hall, Melissa McKeown, Selina Campbell, Lanny Lancaster, and Swindell Edwards

Guest: Lisa Hollowell, Assistant to the City Manager, Jessica Eason, Human Resources Manager

Chairperson Anthony opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and stating that the purpose of this meeting was to discuss the community event. Chairperson Anthony handed out a program layout for the meeting to each attendee and stated that she wanted to move the first three items to the end of the meeting for discussion.

Chairperson Anthony stated that this was the first time for this type of event which would introduce the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee to the community. This meeting would also convey the meaning of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

Chairperson Anthony started reviewing the “Program Layout” that she had given everyone at the beginning of the meeting and assigning task on the program to members. The following task were assigned:

- Greetings – Tamara Williams
- Logistics/Traffic Flow/Room Set-up – Benita Sanders
- How We Began – Chairperson Anthony
- History – Rev. Melvin Tate, Co-Chairperson
- Committee Introduced – Cynthia Baez
- Facilitator – Dr. Samuel (will not have a speaking role)
- Mission Statement – Councilmember Franco McGee
- Introduction of Speaker – Althea Richardson-Tucker
 - Guest speaker will be Dr. Dana Patterson, President of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee at Wingate University. Unsure of her presentation at this time.
- Guest Speaker – Dr. Dana Patterson – What is DEI
- Guest Acknowledgment – Councilmember David Dotson
- Upcoming Projects –
 - Good Job, Great Cities – Mark Watson, City Manager
 - Job Fair – Melissa McKeown
- Wrap Up – Chairperson Surluta Anthony
- Master of Ceremony – Tiffany Wilson

Benita Sanders asked if there would be a "Question and Answer" session after the presentation.

Chairperson Anthony stated that this event would take place sometime in March and that she had talked to Pat Kahle at the Chamber about the use of the Chamber for the event since this would be neutral place. Pat was open to the ideal of the Chamber being used for the event.

Chairperson Anthony stated that the movie had been viewed and she felt that it was not appropriate at this time. The items in the movie are true, however, we need to first introduce the committee to the community. Councilmember McGee stated that the movie was to be the drawn to get people to come. Althea Richardson Tucker stated that the movie could be another event. Chairperson Anthony stated that she decided to go in a different direction after viewing the movie.

Lisa Hollowell asked if the Dowd Theater had been considered as an event location.

Althea Richardson Tucker asked if the event was going to be held on a weeknight or on the weekend. Chairperson Anthony took a vote on the date and the consensus of the committee was to hold the event on a weeknight. The date of March 21, 2024 was selected for the event. The time of the event will be 5:30 p.m. Debra C. Reed stated that if the event started at 5:30 p.m. then light refreshments could be provided if later then people would have time to get something to eat before the event. Benita Sanders suggested maybe changing the date to a Saturday due to people working, however Chairperson Anthony stated that a vote was taken and it was voted to have the event on a weeknight. Chairperson Anthony asked if there was a suggestion to change the event date. Cynthia Baez asked if the Chamber would be open on a weekday. Benita Sanders stated that a weekend would get more people.

Councilmember Dotson stated that parking in downtown could be an issue on a weekend if the event was at the Dowd Theater unless it was done later in the day. Parking downtown is limited due to the restaurants that are open.

Debra C. Reed stated there is a need to help get people prepared for job fairs and interviews. Maybe SPCC could come in as a vendor at the event to help with resumes. Residents need to get prepared on how to interview for a job.

Benita Sanders stated that SPCC could be brought in at the end of event.

Althea Tucker Richardson stated that if SPCC could not attend maybe we could have a table set up with their information and that part of the program should tell resident about the services that SPCC provides.

Cynthia Baez stated that NC Works could also have a person there to help residents with resumes since they offer this service.

Chairperson Anthony asked how long this event should be. Tamera Williams stated one to two hours. Althea Richardson Tucker stated that the speaking part would be one and half hours and then thirty minutes for questions and answers. Chairperson Anthony stated the event would be one and half hours and no longer than two hours.

Tamera Williams asked if the guest speaker was free.

Lisa Hollowell stated that times needed be added to the program agenda for each topic.

Chairperson Anthony asked how long the question-and-answer session should be. Benita Sanders commented that question could be written down and picked up for addressing.

Tamera Williams stated that Publix's could do some refreshment trays. Benita Sanders stated that she knew someone that might could cater the event.

Chairperson Anthony stated that we needed a RSVP for the event so we know how many people are attending. Althea Richardson Tucker suggested that residents register for the event.

Chairperson Anthony stated that a table could be set up with cards and pens for questions.

Cynthia Baez asked if there was going to be any type of entertainment. Chairperson Anthony stated that music could be playing before the event starts.

Cynthia Baez stated that we would have to set up the Chamber. Chairperson Anthony stated that the food vendor would be responsible for their set up and clean up. Althea Richardson Tucker asked if we would be using table and chairs or chairs only. Chairperson Anthony stated chairs only with tables for handouts and food.

Chairperson Anthony stated that members should wear their black polo shirts to the event. Cynthia Baez stated that members needed to look more professional and we should wear something more than the black polo shirt. Professional business attire should be worn with the women wearing black dresses and the men wearing slacks and jacket.

Councilmember McGee stated that he would handle getting identification badges with the logo and committee member's name on them. He will also get some brochures printed for handing out prior to the event.

Chairperson Anthony stated that there would be a meet and greet before the event starts.

Althea Richardson Tucker stated that we also needed a tablecloth.

Chairperson Anthony stated that we had the pens and cards.

Chairperson Anthony asked what type of timeframe did we need to allow for Dr. Patterson? Did we want to allow thirty minutes for her presentation and fifteen minutes for questions or fifteen minutes for presentation and fifteen minutes for questions. The decision was to allow fifteen minutes for the presentation and fifteen minutes for questions.

Chairperson Anthony stated that at the next meeting we will discuss refreshments and badges.

Debra C. Reed reminded everyone that they needed to get an invoice in order to be reimbursement for purchases. Chairperson Anthony restated the need for invoices for purchases.

Councilmember McGee asked if we were going to have a program for the event and Chairperson Anthony stated that we would.

Tiffany Wilson stated that we could include a QR code on the program for more information.

Debra C. Reed asked how people would register or RSVP for the event. Debra stated that the City's IT Department could create a sign-up on the City's webpage.

Althea Richardson Tucker stated that invitation should be mailed out to organizations, businesses, and residents. Lisa Hollowell commented that Teresa Campo should have a list that could be used.

Councilmember Dotson commented that we could reach out to Teresa Campo at the City and include her to make this a crossover event for Good Jobs Great Cities.

Tiffany Wilson stated that the information could be sent to the City's Parks and Recreation Department for them to place it on their webpage as an upcoming event.

Chairperson Anthony stated that the cutoff date for registering for the event would be the week before the event, March 14, 2024.

Councilmember Dotson commented that we need to overprint the brochures and programs by 50 for hand out downtown. Councilmember McGee stated that he was going to print the programs and poster to place in businesses downtown.

Tiffany Wilson stated that if we had more RSVP or people register that what the Chamber could hold then the event could be moved to the Dowd Theater.

The mission statement was read aloud by the committee members present.

Chairperson Anthony adjourned the meeting at 7:20 p.m.

Meeting notes respectfully submitted by Sheila Couick.

Chairperson Surluta Anthony