Fair Employment Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
08/13/2020

I. Call to order

Commission Chair, called to order the regular meeting of the Fair Employment Commission at 4:34 pm on 08/13/2020, meeting held electronically.

II. Roll call

Farris Muhammad, Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer, as City of Peoria Staff Liaison, conducted a roll call. The following persons were present: Farris Muhammad as City of Peoria staff liaison; Commissioners—David McGinty (Vice Chair), Carl Holloway, Laraine Bryson, Pastor Chuck Brown; Councilwoman Denise Moore; Arriving Late (After Roll Call) Rev Barry Robinson; Absent-Excused: Sherry Carter-Allen (Chair), Commissioner Melanie Andrews; Quorum Established.

III. Approval of minutes from last meeting

Commission Vice Chair David McGinty calls for approval of the meeting minutes from the July 9, 2020 meeting. Motion to approve the minutes is made by Commissioner Laraine Bryson and seconded by Commissioner Carl Holloway. Motion carries by unanimous vote.

IV. Unfinished Business

None.

V. New business

Agenda Item I. Presentation by Christopher Setti, Chief Executive Officer, Greater Peoria Economic Development Council.

Councilwoman Moore provides a brief history and explanation of the Commission’s purpose for the purpose of familiarizing Mr. Gunn and Mr. Setti with the Commission’s purpose. Councilwoman explains that the commission was initially the Fair Housing and Employment Commission but recently split to allow for more focus. Councilwoman Moore explains that the Commission has been working on interpreting their role in Fair Employment practices in the City. Councilwoman Moore explains that she feels it is important that the commission be aware of the roles of Mr. Gunn and Mr. Setti’s organizations as it related to Fair Employment, so that the Commission can understand what they each do.
Mr. Setti thanks the Commission for the invitation to speak. Mr. Setti explains that he spent 12 years working for the City as an Assistant City Manager, and therefore is familiar with many of the Commissioners.

Mr. Setti identifies his current role as CEO of the Economic Development Council, a regional organization charged with helping to promote the economy in the 5-county area including: Peoria, Woodford, Tazewell, Mason and Logan Counties. Mr. Setti goes on to explain that the Council has several lines of business including: Business Attraction, attracting new businesses to the area; Business Development, assisting existing businesses in the area; Start Up and Innovation, to help grow small businesses into medium/large corporations; Rural Economic Development; and Workforce Services and Solutions, in the form of talent attraction for the region and helping to develop the local workforce.

Mr. Setti points out that the council is not a “direct service,” provider but does ensure that existing services for workforce development are matched with employers. Mr. Setti states that the Council puts on an annual Career Spark event which is an event for 8th graders in the area, which provides hands on experience in an array of fields. Mr. Setti notes that the event has been moved to an all online format this year and will be held in January.

Mr. Setti shares that the current difficulties being faced in the area are that the people that are most vulnerable to job loss, etc. due to the current crisis are the people with the least amount of skills. Mr. Setti goes on to state that the hospitality industry alone has lost 10,100 jobs locally. The majority held by minorities and women. These displaced workers may not have the skills needed to get into other available positions.

Mr. Setti shares that every 5 years the Council develops a regional strategy to determine the current challenges and needs of the local economy. Mr. Setti states that this has of course been aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Setti states that the Council uses an Equity Lens when developing strategies to improve the local economy. The Council also ensures that trainings are available to everyone.
Agenda Item II. **Presentation by Joshua Gunn, President and Chief Executive Officer, Peoria Area Chamber of Commerce and CEO Council.**

Prior to Mr. Gunn’s presentation Councilwoman Moore requests that Commissioners give brief introductions to Mr. Gunn who is new to the area.

Commission Vice Chair McGinty introduces self by name and identifies self as the Director of Quality and Engineering at SC2.

Commissioner Bryson introduces self by name and identifies self as the President of the Tri-County Urban League which provides education, employment, counseling and youth development programming to the Tri-County Area.

Commissioner Brown introduces self by name and identifies self as the founder of Job and Resource Fair working with employers and the workforce to assist in matching workers with employers.

Commissioner Cannon introduces self by name and identifies self as the Executive Director of for a Community Outreach program working with Youth and ex-offenders to provide job readiness skills and employment opportunities.

**Mr. Joshua Gunn introduces himself as the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Peoria Area Chamber of Commerce and CEO Council.**

Mr. Gunn goes on to thank the Commission for the invitation to speak and states that he feels that the nation is at an infliction point. And recognizes the opportunity for Peoria to bounce back from the COVID-19 pandemic and current social injustice.

Mr. Gunn states that he is originally from Durham, North Carolina, and grew up in the area following the exit of Big Tobacco as the primary industry in the area. Mr. Gunn states that his initial career was in the music industry as a hip-hop artist. Mr. Gunn shares that he returned to the Durham area around 2012/2013 when his father fell ill and noticed that the once inclusive and black affluent economy was evaporating. Mr. Gunn shares that this led him to move his focus to the area of Community and Economic Development beginning with music festivals and branching out to creating the “Black Market,” an event that focused on supporting black owned business. Mr. Gunn states that he was tapped for a VP position at the Durham Chamber of Commerce and used that position to work to solve income disparities and other equity issues amongst minorities. Mr. Gunn states that he worked at the Durham Chamber of Commerce for 4 years; where he developed his core values of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Mr. Gunn states that he was attracted to the Peoria area because he saw real challenges relating to equity in the
Mr. Gunn states that the Chamber is a business advocacy organization which helps businesses survive, grow and succeed; retaining and recruiting talent and cultivating and training the next generation of leaders. Mr. Gunn states that the business community, City and County Government, and Community Advocates all play a role in promoting the local economy.

Mr. Gunn states that Peoria is no longer just a “Caterpillar,” town and notes the growing the two area Healthcare Systems play a big role in the local economy.

Mr. Gunn notes the importance of innovation as well.

Mr. Gunn goes on to discuss the CEO Council, which is a 501c3 composed of most large area employers. Mr. Gunn states that the council shares the core values of Diversity, Inclusion and Equity. And goes on to discuss how inclusion in hiring is not enough without talent development and exposing minority youth to career pathways. Mr. Gunn states that through career pathways and training minority youth are connected with area employers.

Mr. Gunn states that he would like to turn over the discussion to the Commissioners for Q & A:

Vice Chair McGinty inquires if the Commission has any questions for Mr. Setti or Mr. Gunn:

Commissioner Carl Holloway inquires as to what the plan is to create smaller, minority and female owned businesses? Commissioner Holloway goes on to clarify that he wants to know how the Chamber plans to engage small businesses.

Mr. Gunn states that he feels it is important to talk with small businesses in order to get their perception of how the Chamber can assist small businesses. Mr. Gunn states that he is still learning what those challenges look like, but the following are good starting points for how the Chamber can assist small businesses: Identifying industry clusters in order to align small businesses and create partnerships and programming for each cluster; Providing scholarships to assist small businesses, and specifically minority owned businesses, with paying the membership dues to join the Chamber to encourage small businesses to become members; Also the Chamber can partner with existing support structures such as the Black Chamber of Commerce and the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Setti states that the Greater Peoria Economic Development Council does not so much focus on small businesses but focuses on Primary Economist, meaning
large businesses that provide services outside the region as the help fuel the local economy to ensure the success of small businesses. Mr. Setti states this is facilitated by creating a robust top tier.

Mr. Setti states that therefore the Council plays a role in innovation in startup to assist small businesses into becoming large businesses bringing factories to the area. Mr. Setti uses Natural Fiber Welding as an example of a local startup. Mr. Setti states that the goal of the Council is to build a Downtown Facility that will ensure that these services, business development and innovation/startup, are available to everyone and are built with diversity and inclusion in mind in order to cater to a broad range of Peorian’s. Mr. Setti states that this will really set the groundwork for starting small companies that will become big companies and ensure that all people have the opportunity to get the jobs created by these ventures.

Commissioner Bryson asks What does diversity and Inclusion effort from The Chamber look like, and what are they focusing on?

Mr. Gunn states that the 1st step The Chamber has taken is adopting diversity as a priority, including diversity from a hiring standpoint. Mr. Gunn states that ultimately the goal is to get community wide racial equity training, because the biggest mistake made is thinking that you understand the issue of equity without education. Mr. Gunn shares that equity is not just hiring more blacks; it is about exposure to careers, training, etc. for minorities. Mr. Gunn also identifies the lack of minorities in leadership positions as a major issue. Mr. Gunn states that while the Chamber does not currently have the capacity to provide community wide racial equity training, the City and County are working on that through the Racial Equity Initiative. Mr. Gunn states that the Chamber does provide racial equity training for member businesses.

Commissioner Bryson goes on to ask, in terms of the CEO council, what is their level of diversity.

Mr. Gunn states that it is very limited, largely white male, and reflective of the lack of diversity within local corporations. Mr. Gunn states that The Council is, however, very dedicated to creating both gender and racial diversity in both its boards and membership.

Mr. Setti states that the Greater Peoria Economic Development Council also faced challenges with diversity, and created a special class of board members called, Community Members to help create primarily racial but also gender diversity on its boards.
Commission Vice Chair McGinty stated that in respect of everyone’s time he would like to wrap up the meeting but request that Mr. Gunn and Mr. Setti’s emails be provided to the Commission for any further questions.

Dr. Muhammad agrees to email out the contact information for Mr. Gunn and Mr. Setti.

**Agenda Item III. Review and Update Chapter 17 Ordinance**

No Action Taken

**VI. Commissioner Reports**

None.

**VII. Unfinished Business for Next Meeting**

None.

**VIII. Community Input**

None.

**IX. Proposed Agenda Item’s for Next Meeting**

1. Review and Update Chapter 17 Ordinance.

**X. Adjournment**

Commission Vice Chair David McGinty called for a motion to adjourn at 5:37 pm. Motion seconded by Commissioner Carl Holloway.

Meeting Adjourned.

Submitted by Amelia Hufeld

Minutes approved by: Name