

**MINUTES**  
**WORKFORCE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE**  
**JANUARY 23, 2008 3:30 P.M.**  
**BEVERLY LIVESAY CONFERENCE ROOM**

Approved 4/23/08

Present: Leslyn McBean-Clairborne, Chair; Carol Griep; Dave Richardson; Kristina Belanger; Patricia Carey; Betsy Doling; Larry Roberts; Marcia Lynch; Lisa Holmes  
Excused: Anita Fitzpatrick; Chantalise DeMarco, Kathy Luz Herrera, Kit Kephart, Constance Thompson, Shawn Martel Moore  
Guests: Karen Fuller, Carol Chock, Tim Joseph, Bob DeLuca, Satomi Hill

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 3:38 p.m. Mrs. McBean-Clairborne welcomed Carol Chock, District 3 Legislator.

**Addition to Agenda**

Mr. DeLuca's application to the Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Committee was added to the agenda.

**Announcements**

Ms. Belanger reported that State University of New York Upstate Medical University is seeking individuals for the 2008 Summer Internship/Mentoring Program and provided members with written information.

Ms. Belanger announced the Multicultural Resource Center is seeking a half time Diversity and Inclusion Special Projects Coordinator.

Ms. Belanger announced the Martin Luther King, Jr. Art and Poetry Grades K-12 Competition, Reception, and Exhibition would be held February 2, 2008, at the Cornell University Biotech building.

Ms. Belanger announced that the Diversity Consortium is in the process of incorporating and is seeking a not-for-profit attorney to assist with the process. Several suggestions were offered, including contacting Ms. Schlather at the Human Services Coalition.

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne spoke of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Art and Poetry Grades K-12 Competition & Exhibition, noting it will be at 3:00 p.m. She said the work exhibited is from many locations, including William George Agency, Lansing Residential, LACS, etc. Although there is no cost for the event, parking may be difficult. Ms. Belanger said the guest speaker, Gordon Brewster, is a minister who stayed with Martin Luther King's father for a period of time as well as shared in the ministry of Mr. King's church.

Ms. Chock announced that Robert Purcell Auditorium at Cornell University is having a series of films under the heading of The Color of Love. This film and discussion series highlights race and romance.

Mr. Roberts announced the Arthritis and Fibromyalgia Support Group meetings are being held every first and third Tuesday. The group is co-sponsored by the Finger Lakes Independence Center and Lifelong.

Mr. Roberts announced there would be a World of Skills fair taking place on April 10<sup>th</sup> at the Holiday Inn.

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Mrs. McBean-Clairborne announced there would be a Sock-Hop fundraiser at the First Baptist Church on February 8<sup>th</sup>, with the proceeds assisting the Greater Ithaca Activities Center (GIAC) Friday Night Teen Program.

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne announced the GIAC Teen program participants have developed a theatre production entitled "Voice Suspended" regarding the recent school protest. They have performed during Martin Luther King activities and will perform again on February 12<sup>th</sup> at the Kitchen Theatre.

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne announced that the Sister/Friends program would take place March 28<sup>th</sup> at the Clarion and is hoping that the County will have a display table at the event.

Ms. Lynch, arrived at this time [3:40 p.m.].

### **Acceptance of Minutes**

The minutes of the November 28, 2007, were approved as amended by consensus of the committee.

### **Chair's Report**

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne spoke of the downsizing of the Lansing Residential Center and how it may affect employment of some residents. She asked for suggestions of how assistance can be provided and suggested the possibility of the Legislature passing a resolution to reconsider the potential reduction of jobs. Ms. Carey said the reason for the downsizing is that the Center is operating at approximately fifty percent of its capacity (50-60 youth versus 90-100). She noted there is a lengthy process required by the State to undertake the reduction, primarily to a desire to keep potential unemployment down. Ms. Carey has asked the State how many employees may be affected by the downsizing.

Mr. DeLuca indicated a desire to know if the State intends to place affected staff in other State agencies. He suggested the possibility of utilizing them in other area facilities such as the William George residence or with agencies dealing with disabilities.

Mr. Joseph spoke of the difficulties associated with a closure such as this, noting it indicates that a closure of a youth incarceration facility is not negative. Ms. Carey said the Office of Children and Family Services has undergone a shift, recognizing the need for children to have better treatment.

Ms. Carey spoke of the need for additional workers to assist in transitioning from facilities such as the Lansing Residential Center. Presently there are only two workers to cover ten counties. Mr. DeLuca noted there is a trend at the State level to transition more to community-based positions. Mr. Roberts cautioned that closure of some facilities could have an adverse effect on the economics of a community; if so, steps should be taken to minimize the economic impact.

### **Appointment**

By consensus, the committee approved the following reappointments to the Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Committee:

Robert DeLuca – term expires December 31, 2010

### **Level of Community Involvement**

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne spoke of recent events within the community regarding discriminatory employment and service practices, and asked members of the committee their opinion on the level of involvement County government should have.

Members discussed various aspects of the situation, with consensus that it is important to take an active approach in addressing such problems. Mr. Joseph suggested that it could have better outcomes to have individual legislators express concern to the proprietor. Ms. Griep suggested that business owners be invited to join the Committee to allow a better understanding of the Committee's work; she believes it would be more helpful than telling a proprietor how to conduct business. Mrs. McBean-Clairborne said as a responsible elected official, she believes the job entails more than passing budgets and adjusting taxes, that it also requires her to seek ways for intermunicipal planning on how to deal with bias and unjust employers/businesses. Mr. Roberts feels it is important for the elected officials to show leadership and encourage conversations on this subject.

Ms. Chock reviewed the description of the Committee's duties. A discussion followed indicating it is a complex issue. Ms. Doling suggested a portion of the Committee's time be spent regularly discussing the topic. Mrs. McBean-Clairborne said the Human Rights Commission deals with complaints and other issues associated with these problems; she would like to look more globally at how the Committee could have a voice. Ms. Holmes described steps taken by the LGBT working group to bring about awareness of LGBT issues with the aging clientele. Her office provides training opportunities to front-line workers as well as upper-level staff. Although there is a good deal of turnover of staff requiring repeated training, and will not resolve all issues, it is a proactive approach.

Mr. Joseph said what the Legislature could do, and what the Committee could do are different things, yet both appropriate. He said that expressing a concern about a particular situation directly to an employer, asking that the matter be resolved is appropriate. However, he is wary to say a resolution or Legislature involvement with employers is appropriate. Mrs. McBean-Clairborne feels the Legislature has a responsibility to deal with an issue such as this if it is happening within the County. Ms. Chock noted other advisory boards are interacting with employers, noting the Strategic Tourism Planning Board is having discussions with taxi drivers.

The Committee briefly discussed the Local Laws dealing with discrimination, how other governmental departments deal with the public, and that workforce diversity and inclusion training within the County and City of Ithaca are taking place.

### **Diversity Statement**

A brief discussion took place regarding the distribution of the framed diversity statements to County-funded agencies. Consensus was that no special distribution was required, they will receive the statements at meetings attended, or by Legislature, staff, or Committee members.

### **Marketing Team**

The Marketing Team provided a written document outlining the Ideas/Focus/Strategies for 2008. A discussion occurred, during which it was noted that placement of the logo on the website, website development, and the County Corridors message will be completed by the Public Information Office. Mrs. McBean-Clairborne will provide an article on Workforce Diversity and Inclusion for the *County Corridors* next issue. An item on the document was having a presentation in a glass case at the Ithaca Tompkins Regional Airport. Mr. Roberts will contact Mr. Nicholas, Airport Manager, to arrange the display. In addition, key rings will be ordered for distribution at various functions, including "Sister-Friends".

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**Communications Plan**

Ms. Lynch reported there has been a delay on the videotape highlighting the Committee due to the student assigned the task being unavailable. It is hoped to have another student of the advanced class fill in this position to complete the project. Ms. Balanger said she might have an Ithaca College student available for the task if necessary.

**Diversity Plan**

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne reported that she and Ms. Martel-Moore have been working on the language within the plan and is hoping to have the modified draft available prior to the next meeting.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m.