

MINUTES
WORKFORCE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 28, 2007 3:30 P.M.
BEVERLY LIVESAY CONFERENCE ROOM

Present: L. McBean-Clairborne, Chair; L. Roberts; H. Stewart; C. Griep; B. Doling; D. Richardson; C. DeMarco; P. Carey; M. Robertson; L. Holmes; S. Martel Moore

Not Present: Robert DeLuca, Kristina Belanger, Kit Kephart, Kathy Luz Herrera, Anita Fitzpatrick, Marcia Lynch, Constance Thompson

Others Present: Sonja Hicks, Social Services Department; Tim Joseph, Chair of the Legislature; Cathy Covert, Clerk of the Legislature

Guests: Sabrina Johnston, Intern with the Mental Health Clinic and attends the Smith College of Social Work; Steve Gilchrist, Director of Institutional Diversity at Wells College

Call to Order

The meeting opened at 3:30 p.m.

Introductions and Announcements

At this time, introductions were made.

The following announcements were made:

- The Working Group of LGBT Aging is planning a series of salons to view, enjoy and discuss queer movies. At Lifelong on April 13th at 7:00 p.m. the first of the series a movie entitled "Fabulous!" will be featured. *(Lisa Holmes)*
- The first pre-construction program of the Skilled Trade Diversity Council is up and running. There are 16 members attending the classes. In the next four weeks, there will be several individuals hired in such as areas as painters, carpenters, etc. The purpose of the program is to get more women and minorities trained and in project programs. Mr. Richardson spoke about the criteria and requirements necessary and the potential for possible travel to out of town jobs. *(Dave Richardson)*
- Mr. Richardson said his department at Cornell received a grant of \$25,000 from the Ithaca Urban Renewal Agency. It will be used to pay a percentage of a graduate's pay if the contractor's put them on the job. *(Dave Richardson)*
- Talking in Circles on Race and Racism begins next month; if interested contact Audrey Cooper of the Multicultural Resource Center. *(Shawn Martel Moore)*
- March 1 at Southside Center there will be a staff of color celebration for teachers. *(Shawn Martel Moore)*
- There is a new website for the Diversity Consortium (www.diversityconsortium.org). *(Heather Stewart)*
- Mr. Roberts passed around a petition for interested committee members to sign concerning the banning of solitary confinement for prisoners with psychiatric disabilities. *(Larry Roberts)*
- March 15th is the Annual celebration of Women's History month. The Sister Friends event will be held at the Emerson Suites. *(Leslyn McBean-Clairborne)*
- Community Public Forums are being held March 3, 10, and 24th around the County. These forums were organized by the Public Information Advisory Board on behalf of the County Legislature. Members of the public are encouraged to attend to provide input on the 2008 County budget. *(Larry Roberts)*

Acceptance of Minutes

It was MOVED by Mr. Roberts, seconded by Ms. Robertson, and unanimously adopted to accept the minutes of the January 24th meeting as corrected.

Chair's Report

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne spoke about her niece working in a Global Equity and Justice internship program in Washington D.C. and sent her a link to a news broadcast about a study done last month by a young African-American woman similar to the study with children and dolls done by a gentlemen during the 1954 Brown versus Board of Education case. Both studies showed similar results. The children of color when choosing between a black doll or a white doll all preferred the white doll. Some of the reasons provided were that the white dolls were beautiful, stylish, great, etc. When asked which dolls were the bad dolls, they all pointed to the black dolls. Asked which dolls resembled them, most of them reluctantly pointed to the black dolls if they pointed at all. Mrs. McBean-Clairborne said this always renews her energy about why she is doing the work she is doing with this Committee. There is so much more work to be done around self-esteem because of the damage that has already been done by society about what is good and what is bad and seeing everything as black and white. She thanked the members of the Committee and said she appreciates the work that is being done. Once she receives the link to this broadcast, she will have it forwarded to Committee members.

Workforce Violence Prevention Plan

Ms. Stewart said the Workforce Violence Prevention Law goes into effect March 4, 2007. The Department of Personnel along with the Health and Safety Coordinator have been working on developing the Workforce Violence Prevention Plan for Tompkins County. The draft Plan has been reviewed by the County Attorney and will be presented to Departments Heads for comment at their next meeting. A process for implementing the training is being developed and will be incorporated into the Right-to-Know annual training for employees as well as the new employee orientation. Ms. Stewart commented that feedback is welcome but at this time this plan needs to move forward for approval. Ms. Martel Moore said this document can be revised at anytime in the future.

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne asked if the Plan included any reference to workforce violence around discrimination.

Ms. Carey stated that her Department developed a policy last year. One of the areas raised during those discussions with staff was the question of what if it's racially motivated. She feels this is an area that needs to be addressed.

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne requested Committee members to read the Plan and forward any comments to Jackie Thomas of the Personnel Department as requested including a reference to the County's affirmative action policy being added.

Ms. Robertson suggested and Mrs. McBean-Clairborne agreed that this Plan should be discussed at the next meeting and that collective thoughts and comments be reviewed and forwarded to be included in the working document.

Marketing Subcommittee Update

Mr. Roberts briefly updated the Committee on the activities of the Marketing Subcommittee and said it continues to move forward with planning the kick-off event and introducing the logo.

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne said she was asked by Kristina Belanger if she could use the Diversity Logo on the material for the New York State Affirmative Action Conference being held in Ithaca in June. A brief discussion followed and Mr. Roberts stated it was the intent to use the logo anywhere at anytime since it has been adopted the County Legislature and the Committee agreed.

Interim Report

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne spoke about the Interim Report and reminded the Committee how it was developed and that a management team was put together to help develop it until a Diversity Plan was completed. Following a rereading of the Interim Plan, Mrs. McBean-Clairborne said a lot of work has been done and would like to use it as a starting point and build on it in developing it into a Diversity Plan. She will ask that a subcommittee be reconvened to formalize the Plan and then begin to roll it out.

At this time, Ms. Martel Moore provided an overview of the Interim Plan and said the following areas need to be looked at and developed:

- Communications plan
- Benchmarks, achievements, success indicators
- Evaluation process on how well we are doing
- Review of the County's Affirmative Action Plan
- Roles and Responsibilities

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne also stated the need to have a review of affirmative action around hires and have it incorporated into the work of this Committee.

At this time Mrs. McBean-Clairborne asked for guidance on how to proceed and said she would like to have this plan reviewed step by step and to have input from all Committee members. She hopes to have the Plan completed by the end of the summer this year; Ms. Martel Moore said she hoped to have the Plan done by the end of June (Management Team's work).

The management team consisted of the following members:

Patricia Carey
Nancy Zahler
Anita Fitzpatrick
Shawn Martel Moore
Steve Whicher
Lynette Chappell Williams (unable to continue)

Ms. Stewart recalled the previous Public Information Officer, Wendy Skinner, developing a draft communications plan and recommended that be reviewed as a starting point as well.

In response to a question raised concerning the shell plan, Mrs. McBean-Clairborne said the shell plan is no longer on the table and that this Interim Plan will be used as the beginning of development of a Diversity Plan.

In addition to the existing members of the management team, the following Committee members agreed to serve:

- Chantalise DeMarco
- Carol Griep
- Leslyn McBean-Clairborne

There will also be an outreach to other members of the Committee especially community members to see if there is interest in anyone else serving.

Any comments regarding the Interim Plan should be forwarded to Shawn Martel Moore.

2007 Goals

Mrs. McBean-Clairborne commented and briefly reviewed the draft goals and said she received written feedback from Kristina Belanger that offers mostly grammatical changes.

Ms. Carey spoke about her recent experience with the civil service process and the difficulties with it. She asked if this Committee would be interested in including a goal to have a small group to advocate with the State in doing a pilot project in this County to address the constraints of the civil service process. Mrs. McBean-Clairborne said in 1992 the Community Affirmative Action Committee took on this issue and tried to demonstrate for the State that they would have more success in recruiting people and in terms of diversity efforts and numbers (quotas) with a pass or fail system. However, there was no movement or willingness to discuss it. The Committee felt that this is an area that could be addressed and that this would be the group to do handle it. It was suggested that goal no. 2 could be revised to reflect this and that it be a high priority this year.

Ms. Stewart spoke about goal no. 2 and said it is a problem for the Personnel Department to have a library of study guides for individuals to use for studying for civil service exams as the Department loses the ability to test. She reported that there was a situation and the Department was unable to give the exams for a period of time. One suggestion Ms. Stewart offered was if this Committee was interested in purchasing the study guides and making them available in all the libraries. Even if the books were available in another department it is viewed as being unequal treatment for those who are provisional in that department to have access to the books.

Ms. Griep also raised a concern that there are certain positions where study guides are unavailable.

Following a lengthy discussion, the Committee agreed there needs to be a system in place for people to obtain the study guides.

It was MOVED by Ms. Robertson, seconded by Ms. Carey, and unanimously adopted to accept the goals including the suggestions made.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:08 p.m.