

ERIE COUNTY DIVERSE ERIE COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
September 7, 2022
1128 State Street, Suite 300, Erie, PA 16501
8:30 AM

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83353784118?pwd=OXZ5MHBneS9EOXJzaGZXQVkrWWIvUT09>
Meeting ID: 833 5378 4118
Passcode: 809673

Commissioners: Gerald Blanks; Adrienne Dixon, Ph.D.; Matthew Harris, Sr.; Tiffany LaVette; Gwendolyn White; Sarah Carter, M.D

Attendees: Tyrone Clark and Marissa Thomas of 3i Networking

1. Call to Order/Roll Call 8:35a.m.

All present

Administration: Gary Lee

Solicitor: Tim Wachter, Esq.

2. Approval of Agenda:

Motion was made by Gwendolyn White and seconded by Matt Harris to approve September 7, 2022; agenda as presented. All commissioners present voted in favor.

3. Hearing of the Public

None

4. Approval of the Minutes of Previous Meetings

Motion was made by Gwendolyn White and seconded by Matt Harris, to approve August 3, 2022, meeting minutes as presented. All commissioners present voted in favor.

5. Presentations

Mr. Tyrone Clark and Ms. Marissa Thomas on behalf of the team at 3i Networking thanked the commission for the opportunity to work with board members on the Generational Impact Grant Initiative. Mr. Clark provided an update of the work done toward the initiative and briefly discussed the elements of the strategic plan that was utilized to successfully evaluate. Assess the 22 grant applications that were submitted. He described the process starting with the fully attended and very successful grant workshops that provided potential

grant applicants assistance in the understanding of the grant guidelines, what to expect on the application, how best to submit supporting documents, and deadline dates. During the workshops, 3i Networking answered questions regarding the process from submission review and final award notification dates.

The preparation for the second round of the grant initiative has begun, with 3i Networking teaming up with Parker Philips to fine tune the plans and processes that will allow the second round will be as smooth as the first.

Mr. Clark concluded by expressing his sincere appreciation for what the commission is doing for the County of Erie, and for the disadvantaged people in the BIPOC community, which from his own experience, “nothing like this has ever happened” using the metaphor/sports analogy “you are hitting this one out of the park!”

6. Report on Chief Administrative Officer – Gary Lee

(a) Operational Matters:

(I) Personnel

Mr. Lee continues to participate in the weekly touchpoints Zoom meetings with 3i Networking on every Wednesday from 2:00 to 3:00 PM. Mr. Lee stated that Chairman Blanks has recused himself from the meetings and the review process due to his organization’s submission of an application.

Mr. Lee again thanked 3i Networking associates for their extremely impressive thoughtfulness put forward during the review process and their professionalism.

(II) Budget

The current overall projected budget is in good financial shape and is operating within our financial parameters.

(III) Media and Presentations

There was good media coverage about the Generational Impact Grant Initiative workshops. Local news outlets helped to get the information out to the public. A total of approximately 75 participants attended the workshops. The most current information is posted on our website and social media platforms.

The press conference held on September 6, 2022, to introduce the Small Business Fund went extremely well, and was well received in the media.

Lisa Adams of Erie News Now has invited Mr. Lee to interview for “The Insider” a segment of the news hour where every week, Lisa Adams takes a closer look at what is happening in the community. Mr. Lee will provide an update on what the Diverse Erie Commission is currently doing and what new opportunities the commission has to help the BIPOC communities in the County of Erie. Referring to the importance of the organization’s efforts to initiate positive, impactful initiatives. The interview will be broadcasted on air this coming weekend.

(IV) Grants Development

There will be a special meeting next week, so the grants review team can provide their recommendations for funding of the Generational Impact Grant awards. Mr. Lee commented on the diligence of the review committee.

The Small Business Fund has been introduced to the community. The fund has \$1.8 Million as a revolving loan fund that will benefit BIPOC owned small businesses in the Erie area.

Mr Lee announced that the grant committee will be creating a mini grant initiative for small businesses within the next 45 days. The details and guidelines of this program are currently being developed by Attorney Wachter and Mr. Lee. They will update the commission in a future meeting with details regarding the application, criteria, allocation of funds, and their recommendations.

Phase 2-the homeownership and educational initiatives are still being discussed with key shareholders. Mr. Lee will meet with Erie Bank and will update the commission at the next board meeting.

(V) Website Development and Branding

Chairman Blanks and Mr. Lee continue to meet weekly with Parker Philips regarding the strategic plan, branding process using the website, social media development, and preparing various Op-Eds. Parker Philips have been good and working very diligently to ensure that we get our message out.

Mr. Lee encourages commissioners to continue to invite their influences, county council person, family, and friends for our website for social media.

Mr. Lee as representative of the Steering Committee continues to meet for brainstorming sessions along with Parker Philips to discuss branding for the Erie Inclusive Growth Framework for

Action. And will be unveiling of the new name for this team. Mr. Lee will update the commission board at a future meeting.

Motion was made by Tiffany LaVette and seconded by Dr. Adrienne Dixon; the report of the Chief Administrative Officer as presented. All commissioners present voted in favor.

7. Reports of Commission Officers

(a) Gerald Blanks – Chair

Mr. Blanks and Mr. Lee met with a new commissioner Brandy Cortes. Mr. Blanks explained that Ms. Cortes has a mental health background and should be a great addition to our team.

Mr. Blanks reminded the commissioners that there are still vacancies that need to be filled.

Sharif El-Mekki is scheduled to speak at the Jefferson Education Society on September 29, 2022. Mr. Blanks expressed his intention to meet with Mr. El-Mekki to further discuss the educational component. Mr. Blanks will update the commissioners at a future meeting.

(b) Tiffany LaVette – Vice Chair

No Report

(c) Matt Harris – Secretary

No report

(d) Sarah Carter, M.D. – Treasurer

No report

8. Reports of Committee Chairpersons

(a) Finance Committee – Sarah Carter, M.D.

Good financial standing.

(b) Personnel Committee – Matt Harris

No report

(c) Executive Committee – Gerald Blanks

Meeting for commission board next Monday at a place to be determined at 7:30 AM regarding the Generational Impact Grant discussion and subsequent funding allotments.

(d) Grants Committee – Tiffany LaVette

The grants review committee will meet September 8th at 7:30AM to sort through the details of the final applicants' proposals, review, and then come up with recommendations.

9. Unfinished business

(a) None

10. New business

(a) None

11. Adjournment

Motion was made by Dr. Adrienne Dixon and seconded by Gwendolyn White, to adjourn the meeting at 9:17AM