



CUYAHOGA COUNTY CITIZENS' ADVISORY COUNCIL ON EQUITY
Friday, September 25, 2020

I. Call to Order

Nailah K. Byrd called the meeting to order at 10:04am.

II. Roll Call

Members Caruso, Ross, Sims, Ruiz, Taylor, Gullett, Grimes, Caviness, Harris, Peirce Lee, and McShepard present as roll called by Nailah K. Byrd.

Members Mockabee, Sydnor, Chalker, and Stokes also joined the meeting.

Member Contreras was absent from the meeting.

III. Moment of Silence and Reflection

Members reflected on the death of Sha-Asia Washington, an African American woman who died during childbirth at a Brooklyn, NY hospital.

IV. Public Comment

Public comment submitted by Reverend Reegie Bunch and read into the record. Reverend Bunch provided background about himself and his work. He requested to work with the CACE members. Ms. Byrd attempted to contact Mr. Bunch to acknowledge his correspondence, but was unfortunately unable to reach him at the email address provided.

Ms. Byrd was forwarded an email from Councilman Dale Miller. The email was from Caitlin Johnson, who authored an article for a publication titled "The Land". In the article, Ms. Johnson questions the constitutionality of the Mayor's Court in Bratenahl and the ACLU's work on the topic. Ms. Johnson references an ACLU report released in April of 2019 titled "Off the Record: Profiteering and Misconduct in Ohio's Mayor's Courts" which found a substantial portion of Ohio's Mayor's Courts operate in ways that prioritize money over justice. Ms. Byrd advised the Councilmembers her office would send a copy of the article and the report.

V. Message from County Executive

County Executive Budish stated he is looking forward to hearing recommendations from the CACE. He further advised County Government cannot do everything the CACE recommends, but this should not limit their recommendations.



Executive Budish further explained, in his capacity as County Executive, he can influence and bring together others outside of County Government to help implement recommendations outside parameters of County purview.

VI. Update/Message from Chair

Chair Taylor explained the CACE will soon begin to delve into the work. True assignments and accountability will be determined. Chair Taylor wants the CACE to “see as much as they can”. He asked the Councilmembers if anyone had any feelings about progress or lack of progress or involvement or lack of involvement.

Member Sydnor advised community members reached out asking her to get involved. She suggested the CACE provide additional opportunities for citizens to offer input or involvement.

VII. Message from County Councilwoman Shontel Brown

Councilwoman Brown represents Cuyahoga County District 9. She is also the Chair of County Council Human Resources, Appointments, and Equity Committee and the Executive Director of Cuyahoga County Democratic Party. She was formerly a Warrensville Heights City Council Member. She stated she wants the CACE to provide recommendations to make real, immediate, and impactful changes. She cautioned the members to be transparent and prepared to face harsh and ugly truths from an inherited system deeply rooted in racism with implicit bias. She explained a “Monopoly” scenario in regard to racial oppression over the years.

Member Sims wants the CACE to expand economic development beyond business owners to fast food workers/health care workers/janitors. The CACE should make a commitment to the “regular employees” who show up to work every day.

Discussion ensued on the County’s Community Benefit’s Agreement (CBA). Chair Taylor asked Councilwoman Brown the status of the CBA.

Councilwoman Brown advised Council put together the CBA five years ago and are at the point where they should receive the results from the original agreement soon.

Executive Budish confirmed a disparity study was conducted in 2014 and results were received in 2015. Those results confirmed disparities did exist. The report provided recommendations the County could not implement due to legal restrictions. Executive Budish explained the County is waiting for the results of the most recent disparity study. If the results of the most recent study show there are still disparities, County government will be allowed to do more and put “teeth” into the legislation.

Member Chalker asked Councilwoman Brown to distribute her opening statements to the Council Members. Councilwoman Brown’s remarks will be sent to Clerk Byrd and Chair Taylor for distribution.

Member Stokes advised the work of the Council should also assist ex-offenders.



Member Ruiz asked where the accountability is when the average person is mistreated by the County through employment practices or contracts?”

Chair Taylor explained the CACE does not have any enforcement powers.

Councilwoman Brown urged the CACE to be bold and aggressive with ideas to address these issues and create a policy to help these workers. She stated changes don't come from government; they come to government.

VIII. Unfinished Business

a. Governance Discussion

i. Bylaws

Chair Taylor asked the CACE to review the bylaws for any additions or revisions before he entertained a motion to approve. He deferred discussion of a vice chair to the next meeting.

Member Grimes advised the legislation does not give a lot of room to narrow the scope of the work.

Member Sims would like to use the community as a voice to find out what is needed. She explained the CACE should reach out to the community and work backwards from there with goals.

Chair Taylor asked if the CACE was compliant in Article II of the bylaws in terms of composition of 9-15 citizens on the CACE.

Ms. Byrd advised 15 members were appointed by Executive Budish in compliance with wording in the legislation and 2 were appointed by Council, making the total number 9-17 members.

Member McShepard pointed out some overlap in language.

Assistant Law Director Awatef Assad advised the wording is directly from the legislation.

Ms. Byrd offered to minimize and combine overlapping sections.

Member McShepard inquired about the wording regarding 9-15 members when 17 members are in the CACE.

Executive Budish advised the legislation was amended to add two County resident members appointed by Council in addition to the 9-15 members appointed by the Executive.

Assistant Law Director Assad will clarify the language.



Member McShepard expressed concern regarding the use of different terms for the CACE in the bylaws. He would like one consistent term used. The members agreed on CACE.

Assistant Law Director Assad will make the change to reflect the term CACE consistently throughout the bylaws.

Member McShepard inquired if the legislation mandated eight regular meetings per year as reflected on page five of the bylaws.

The County Executive and Councilwoman Brown both advised that no such mandate exists.

Ms. Byrd offered to change the language to “quarterly.”

Members McShepard and Lee expressed concern regarding the language to give CACE Councilmembers only 24 hours’ notice before a special meeting. The members agreed to change the language to provide 48 hours’ notice.

Member Gullett expressed concern regarding the language surrounding healthcare in the bylaws. She argued the language should state “health” rather than healthcare. She encouraged the CACE to use the term “health” instead of healthcare during discussions, even if the language cannot change.

Member Gullett further expressed concern regarding the electronic/telephonic quorum section in accordance with the Ohio Sunshine Law statute.

Chair Taylor advised there will not be a vote today on the Bylaws.

b. Subcommittee Assignments

The topic was tabled until later in the agenda.

c. Coordination with Similar Equity Groups

Chair Taylor asked Ms. Byrd to send out the spreadsheet regarding similar working groups to the CACE Councilmembers and instructed the Councilmembers to respond back to Chair Taylor, Ms. Black, and Ms. Byrd with any comments.

IX. New Business a. Subcommittee Chair Reports

i. Communications Subcommittee

Subcommittee Chair Harris provided an update on the subcommittee meeting held the previous week. Stephanie Hicks Thompson, Senior Marketing and Communications Officer for the Cleveland Foundation was in attendance for that meeting and provided details regarding the Cleveland Foundation’s Common Ground community conversation platform.



Subcommittee Chair Harris also discussed the following: the number of participants (600), the number of events (3 one-hour facilitated Zoom meeting events), the format of the meetings, and the resources needed to facilitate the meetings. She requested CACE Councilmembers serve as facilitators and recruit scribes.

Subcommittee Chair Harris proposed Monday, October 19th and Saturday, October 24th for the dates of the discussions. Ms. Byrd recommended a survey be distributed to determine the CACE members availability prior to finalizing dates. The Cleveland Foundation will offer structure, guidance, training, and social media promotion. Additional partners for consideration include Neighborhood Connections, CSU Urban Affairs, Policy Bridge, and the Cleveland Library. The subcommittee requested a budget of about \$1,000. Ms. Harris also suggested potential questions to pose to the community during the discussions.

Member Ruiz notified the CACE Dean Anglin at CSU offered his support.

ii. Ad Hoc Subcommittee

Ad Hoc Subcommittee members Mockabee, McShepard, and Taylor provided an update.

Member McShepard advised the subcommittee took the nine topic areas outlined as focus areas in the legislation and grouped the topic areas into four themes: Criminal Justice, Health and Wellness, Economic Opportunity, and Equitable Quality of Life. He recommends forming subcommittees for each of the four themes.

Member Mockabee shared the subcommittee has a plan to begin to interview various high-level individuals within the County within the four major theme areas to develop perspectives and input to develop recommendations. The names of the prospective interviewees were read on the record. Ms. Byrd stated the list would be distributed to the members electronically.

Member Chalker inquired about the inclusion of interviewees within the Juvenile Justice System. This group will be represented.

Councilwoman Brown advised the timeline is narrow but intentional so as not to lose the momentum.

Members discussed their satisfaction with the work of the subcommittees.

Member Caviness inquired about feasibility of having County employees participate in Common Ground events.

Executive Budish and Ms. Byrd agreed County employees could participate.

b. Update from Dr. Peter Hovmand re Systems Mapping



Dr. Hovmand further discussed the plan for system mapping. He would like to create a Core Modeling Team that would meet every two weeks. Chair Taylor offered to be a part of the team and requested Member Lee join him.

Chair Taylor asked Dr. Hovmand when the CACE would be provided an update. Dr. Hovmand advised he and the Core Modeling Team could provide something during the next meeting.

c. Public Engagement Opportunities

Chair Taylor advised CACE Councilmembers will provide updates to County Council. Ms. Byrd and her staff will work with County Council's staff to schedule the updates.

d. Update on Report Drafting and Reporting to County Council/County Executive

Chair Taylor and Ms. Byrd will handle next steps and assignments for report drafting. Chair Taylor asked the members to tell him which subcommittees they would have interest in joining.

X. Next meeting

A doodle poll will be distributed for the next meeting date.

XI. Adjournment

Member Mockabee advised the CACE to keep the resolution as their guiding post around the work in their committees.

Member McShepard recommend the members read Caste by Isabel Wilkerson. Member Sydnor recommended a Podcast with Oprah outlining the book.

County Executive thanked the CACE members for their commitment.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:58am.