1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Approval of (regular/special) minutes of the last meeting
4. Approval of Agenda
5. Reports of Officers, Boards and Committees
6. New Business
   a. Childcare Presentation
      i. Kristin Buhl-Lepisto, Executive Director, Kalamazoo County Ready 4s
      ii. April Goodwin, Executive Director, Southwest Child Care Resources
      iii. Michael Evans, Executive Director, Kalamazoo Literacy Council
      iv. Nicole Blum, Early Learning Program Manager, YWCA
7. Unfinished Business (unfinished or pending matters)
   a. Set aside update
8. Miscellaneous
9. Public Comments—General
Adjournment
CITY OF KALAMAZOO
Regular Meeting
SHARED PROSPERITY KALAMAZOO (SPK) ORGANIZING COMMITTEE
1:00 pm
September 14, 2021
Virtual Meeting

Members Present: Don Cooney, Ben Damerow, Alyssa Stewart, Kym Hollars, Carol McGlinn, Jonathan Pulley, Cyekeia Lee, John Oliver, *Brenda Hughes

Members Absent: Patrese Griffin, Bobby Hopewell

*Joined after Roll Call was taken

City Staff: Kevin Ford, Shared Prosperity Kalamazoo Coordinator; Dorla Bonner, Diversity Equity and Inclusion Director; Laura Lam; Deputy City Manager

Call to Order

Roll Call

Mr. Ford conducted roll call of the organizing committee and determined quorum existed.

A motion to excuse absent members was made by Dr. Cooney and seconded by Ms. Lee. A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed.

Approval of (regular/special) minutes of the last meeting

Ms. McGlinn asked if there were any comments/changes.

A motion was made by Ms. Stewart to approve the minutes of July 12, 2021 as presented, seconded by Mr. Oliver. A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed.

Ms. McGlinn welcomed Mr. Oliver to the SPK Organizing Committee.

Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Dr. Cooney to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Mr. Damerow. A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed.

Reports of Officers, Boards and Committees

None.
New Business

ALICE

Mr. Ford stated that he is discussing a partnership with The Kalamazoo Promise, Mr. Damerow and Ms. Lee around a potential city-wide Workforce Development Strategy to achieve the goal of stronger, economically-secure families. This includes ALICE households, which would make this a 2Gen project, in line with what has been discussed. Mr. Ford stated that ALICE has been a priority population since the 2018 plan, but this Committee has not yet honed in on that as much as we should have. Mr. Ford stated that he feels it is time to re-visit this and view it through a 2Gen lens. This is also a big part of what Ms. Stewart does with United Way. Mr. Oliver asked for clarity regarding ALICE. Mr. Ford explained that ALICE is an acronym for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed. It includes people who are within the poverty level (federal guidelines) but also includes people who earn income that places them out of public supports but not enough to cover cost of living elements. Ms. Stewart said that she would send Mr. Oliver the PowerPoint that was presented earlier this year to the committee.

Ms. McGlinn stated that we have talked about the 2Gen approach and the ALICE portion could give us a focus, data-driven method of impact (to show how many ALICE households are affected). This would tie everything together for the work coming ahead. Mr. Ford affirmed that this was discussed at an Executive Committee meeting. The ALICE website gives concrete numbers of how many ALICE households are in our core neighborhoods. With that, we can isolate and do some real data-driven work around that.

Dr. Cooney asked for clarification regarding the plan. Mr. Ford stated that we are in discussion about this with The Kalamazoo Promise and Mr. Damerow. Mr. Damerow stated that this was work that was started pre-pandemic. This is like what was going on in Austin when they did the site visit…a full community workforce development plan which got everyone on the same page as to where they are as a community and set goals on how to get there over the next five years. It would be developing something like that here in Kalamazoo. Ms. Lee stated that the Promise wants to ensure that good jobs are available and keep graduates & employees here in Kalamazoo.

Ms. McGlinn stated that we will be able to see if our efforts are able to move the needle of ALICE households.

Dr. Cooney affirmed this idea. Mr. Ford stated that this is still in the early stages. They are being strategic about stakeholders and early adopters. Mr. Ford affirmed that he would keep everyone up to date. Ms. McClinn stated that we are bringing this to the Committee to make sure that this is a course of action that we would want to move forward with. Dr. Cooney asked if there were recommendations by the United Way about what to do with ALICE families. Ms. Stewart stated that it makes sense to be thoughtful about the practical side of ALICE. Ensuring strong wages,
employment, job readiness and job training are all critical strategies. The United Way and The UpJohn Institute are working with partners in New Jersey about a concept called an ALICE-friendly workplace that helps employers think about strategies to support ALICE workers and structuring policy, procedure, and practice to support them. All the budget line items have supports that can be done via nonprofit and/or public policy like transportation, housing. New and existing strategies are needed in these line-item categories. Ms. Stewart stated that this is a complex issue, but wages are key. At the end of the day, increased wages are the most sustainable way for households get out of the budget.

Ms. McGlinn stated that education is critical to all of this. Educating both our kids and our adults who need extra help. She affirms that jobs and housing are important but does not want to lose the education piece. Ms. Stewart stated that this would be where the 2Gen piece would come in. For example, families having access to childcare has education and income outcomes. A 2Gen support in supporting ALICE will have that impact.

Ms. Lee affirmed that the education piece is important across the spectrum and the 2Gen piece will be beneficial for all members in the household.

Mr. Pulley asked if community stakeholders were aware of ALICE in conjunction with the larger issues and did, they have input into this? Being able to build up capacity for communities to advocate for themselves is important along with the other aspects. These are complex issues that have interconnection. Mr. Pulley clarified that he wants to know if this is part of the conversation for them and what recommendations community stakeholders have? Mr. Ford stated that folks are acutely aware of this. Our strategic plans including neighborhood plans and Imagine Kalamazoo were derived from community input, so the demand for filling in these gaps come from the community. Mr. Ford affirmed that the plans are taken from the community and there is also the opportunity to refine these by hearing from the community further. Mr. Pulley affirmed that closing the feedback loop is what he had wondered about. Ms. Lee stated that therefore we have representation on this Committee from the neighborhoods to add their feedback. Ms. McGlinn affirmed that getting input from the core neighborhoods is critical.

Mr. Oliver asked if there was a tiered approach to what demographics would be approached first? Ms. Stewart stated that they do know that certain demographic groups are disproportionately living below the ALICE threshold. Those groups include: Households headed by people under 25, Black households, Hispanic and Latin Households. Based on state-wide trends, single, female households are the most disproportionately affected. This could assist us in determining what demographic to approach first. Ms. McGlinn stated that this has not yet been addressed. If the Committee chooses to go down this road, that is part of the work that needs to be done.

Dr. Cooney stated that this is a great initiative, and we have experts in this area. Dr. Cooney stated that we could come up with preliminary proposals.
SPK OC Retreat

Mr. Ford stated that Mr. Pulley and Mr. Oliver are new members. Last year, there was an Organizing Committee Retreat in March of 2020. The Executive Committee discussed the idea of having a retreat. Last time, there was a heavy focus on team development and SPK developments. Considering the recent FFE announcement and COVID-challenges, it would be good to have a time to re-assess where we are at. Per the City Attorney, this would fall under the Open Meetings Act. For the remainder of this year, we would have to meet virtually, so an in-person retreat would not happen until next year.

Ms. McGlinn stated that they were hoping to have the retreat right away, but this is not possible now. She stated that getting prepared for the next round of grants is an important next step. She asked what the timeline would be for that? Mr. Ford stated that we need to wait and see what the results of the next FFE budget ask are. Ms. Lam stated that this is part of the budget process and the draft budget is usually out by December 1st. In January, the City Commission considers the full budget and approves it.

Ms. Stewart asked if the SPK changed their approach (by centering around ALICE) would this affect the resources to SPK? Could there be advocacy for more or different resources if we did so prior to the budget process? Mr. Ford stated that it is good to engage overall as part of marketing and branding. Mr. Ford stated that he will follow up with Ms. Stewart offline. Dr. Cooney stated that we should come up with a plan and submit it as this would be a great service to the City. It would be good to put this in front of the Commission as they do their budget deliberations. Ms. McGlinn stated that this follows what we have done in the past, but goes even further. This Committee has been, historically, broad in process. Mr. Ford stated that a document to explain where we are at with milestones and highlights for the year with goals for next year would be beneficial to the City Commission and the public. He stated that he will put together a draft of this. Ms. Stewart affirmed the importance of the evolution of what has been done, what we have learned would be helpful for both this committee and the public.

Ms. Hughes stated that, for historical comparison, it would be good to have a report from each of the rounds.

Unfinished Business (unfinished or pending matters)

1. None

Miscellaneous

Dr. Cooney stated that many of the items that we are talking about today, including childcare, are on the table in Congress right now. We should be advocating for the passage of the Family Act, which would give us the resources that are so badly needed.
Mr. Pulley asked when in-person meetings would begin. Mr. Ford confirmed that, for the remainder of this year, meetings will be virtual. An update will be provided at the beginning of next year.

Public Comments—General
No public comments at this time.

Adjournment
The meeting was adjourned at 12:35 p.m.