

CITY OF KALAMAZOO
Regular Meeting
SHARED PROSPERITY KALAMAZOO (SPK) ORGANIZING COMMITTEE
12:30 pm
May 1, 2023

Members Present: *Don Cooney, Patrese Griffin, Bobby Hopewell, Alyssa Stewart, John Oliver, Brenda Hughes

Members Absent: Ben Damerow, Carol McGlinn, Kym Hollars

City Staff: Kevin Ford, Shared Prosperity Kalamazoo Coordinator, Jared Chambers, CPED Business Specialist, Jaime Marsman, Community Investment Administrative Assistant

*** Arrived after roll call**

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 12:31 p.m.

Roll Call

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

A motion was made by Brenda Hughes, to excuse the absent members, seconded by Patrese Griffin. A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed.

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

A motion was made by Alyssa Stewart, to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Brenda Hughes. A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed.

Approval of Agenda

Bobby Hopewell asked if there were any changes to the agenda. No changes or concerns were raised.

Reports of Officers, Boards and Committees

None.

New Business

- a. CPED Economic Development Staff – Jared Chambers, CPED Business Specialist

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Kevin Ford stated that he is on the Economic Development Team, a division of CPED. Jared Chambers has been with the city for 10 years and recently came into the role of Business Specialist. He focuses primarily on the cannabis industry. Jared Chambers' work will also be connected with SPK.

Jared Chambers introduced himself. He stated that his role ties into the SPK with the cannabis businesses and the ordinance for social equity. He has been working to connect cannabis businesses with organizations and individuals to better serve the SPK businesses.

Jared Chambers shared some of his background and work history. He started at the City in 2012 and has worked in Wastewater, Code Inspection and Zoning Inspection (4 years). Jared Chambers stated that his main focus is the cannabis businesses and their annual renewal requirements. He also assists business owners and potential business owners with processes with the City (permitting, planning, etc) to help guide them through the entire process.

Jared Chambers shared that he is working on an RFP for a Cannabis Chamber and also assisting with ordinance revisions, etc. He noted that there are many requirements for cannabis businesses in their renewal process, especially in terms of social equity.

John Oliver asked what social equity looks like in the cannabis industry. Jared Chambers stated that this includes workforce development, especially hiring from the SPK neighborhoods, monetary donations to organizations, college tuition reimbursement, food drives, and clothes drives.

Brenda Hughes questioned whether social equity also included ownership. Jared Chambers explained that the City is working with cannabis businesses to develop programs and the possible chamber to assist with that in the future. Brenda Hughes encouraged him to visit neighborhood association meetings to learn more about economic development opportunities.

The cannabis industry and the opportunity for the BIPOC population was discussed.

Kevin Ford noted that access to capital is a barrier, especially as the cannabis industry is federally illegal which limits loan availability. Kevin Ford shared how the history of marijuana prohibition affects the need for social equity. The concept of utilizing resources, both volunteers and financial, from cannabis organizations were discussed. Many businesses/non-profits are hesitant to accept funds/assistance from cannabis businesses. There are cannabis firms that are very interested in having career fairs, etc. There are many different ways to be involved in the supply chain of the cannabis industry. John Oliver stated that the Promise can be used for any certified program, which includes programs in the Cannabis industry. He noted that destigmatizing the industry is important for the cannabis industry as a whole.

John Oliver asked how organizations can get on a list to receive what the cannabis businesses would like to donate. Jared Chambers stated that, currently, they are encouraged to reach out to cannabis businesses, however, in the future, the Cannabis Chamber will be a hub for all cannabis businesses in the city to create these types of relationships and make connections.

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Bobby Hopewell thanked Jared for his work.

b. SPK Coordinator Updates – Kevin Ford

Kevin Ford thanked Jared Chambers for coming to the Board meeting. He noted that the new Neighborhood Business and Special Projects Coordinator is starting today.

Kevin Ford shared that the SPK Coordinator role is evolving into more economic development. Kevin Ford noted that he will be focusing on neighborhood-based workforce development. He will also be assisting businesses in addressing challenges.

An Economic Development Strategy RFP will go out soon. Kevin Ford will also assist with Capacity Building Funding.

Kevin Ford noted that FFE funds may not be available for aspirational projects for the next couple of years. Kevin Ford stated that he will also be looking at different funding sources to carry out the work of SPK and will work in coordination with the new grant writer.

Kevin Ford noted that folks that are interested in becoming a member of the SPK Board can apply directly through the City's website. One application has come through and the applicant was present during the meeting today. Bobby Hopewell noted that the Nomination Committee consisting of Patrese Griffin, Don Cooney and Alyssa Stewart, would also need to meet with the applicant. It was clarified that the application process was open on a rolling basis. Bobby Hopewell stated that all applications should go to the Nominating Committee.

c. City report card – Bobby

Bobby Hopewell stated that while the City has done well reporting on FFE activities, what is the report card on prosperity? He noted that \$1 million in funds have been spent and suggested that a date needs to be established for identifying what the measurables are. Don Cooney affirmed the need for increased communication. What has been done? What did we set out to do? Alyssa Stewart noted that there is data available regarding the conditions in the city but we may be missing metrics of city engagement. Don Cooney stated that the units of measurement need to be identified. Kevin Ford stated that workforce development could be a leading indicator. Alyssa Stewart stated that new ALICE data has just been released.

Old Business (unfinished or pending matters)

a. Upjohn Community Data System – Val Gipper

Kevin Ford introduced Val Gipper from the Upjohn Foundation. Val Gipper is a relatively new member of the Upjohn Staff, reporting to Lee Adams. She noted that the Community Data System has been moved from the research side to the community side of Upjohn. Val Gipper stated that this has an immense amount of possibility. Val Gipper stated that since this work has begun in 2019 there have been two large research projects that have evaluated intervention work

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in Kalamazoo. She stated that they are seeking to operationalize this tool to make it more accessible for leaders to use in making decisions.

Bobby Hopewell stated that it is unclear what we are supposed to get and when. What is the plan? How are we getting there? Val Gipper stated that she feels that the teams have struggled to find ways to make good use of each other. She feels that the team would be open to having more connections with the roots of this project.

Bobby Hopewell stated that the question is what is the deliverable and when will it be delivered? Val Gipper stated that there is room for growth and opportunities for better, enhanced communication on both sides. Kevin Ford discussed leading and lagging measures. Kevin Ford reminded the group that the City does not run programs but donates to organizations that do.

Val Gipper stated that they have K-12 info readily available without any additional data-sharing agreements.

Bobby Hopewell suggested a subgroup to work on how we are going to move this forward with the Institute. Bobby Hopewell suggested the following subgroup participants: John Oliver, Alyssa Stewart. Don Cooney stated that he would also like to be part of this group. John Oliver shared concerns about being a member of this subgroup.

It was discussed whether the phases as previously shared were on schedule. The complications of sharing/User agreements were discussed and the challenges of goal achievement.

Don Cooney asked about the dashboard and whether that was still the goal. Val Gipper affirmed that this was the goal, however, the sharing agreements were a barrier to this as well. Val Gipper stated that they would like to build stronger relationships with the organizations that they support before the dashboard can be created.

Brenda Hughes questioned what we have received from the \$1 million that was invested. Kevin Ford stated that these funds were for the creation of the data system and the site visits. There has been one site visit.

Val Gipper stated that programmatic evaluation is going forward. Two large research studies have been completed that show that we are moving the needle. Communities in Schools is assisting with student success.

Val Gipper stated that she would welcome the involvement of a sub-committee or a less formal meeting. Bobby Hopewell stated that he believes a meeting is important for evaluating where we are and where we are going.

Kevin thanked Val Gipper for attending and sharing the good work that they were doing. Don Cooney thanked Val Gipper for their good work and stated that there has been some confusion in the past regarding this. Val Gipper stated that she appreciated the opportunity to update the group.

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b. Member term limits – Kevin Ford

It was noted that Don Cooney, Carol McGlinn, Ben Damerow, Brenda Hughes, John Oliver, and Patrese Griffin have been renewed for three-year terms.

Miscellaneous

Bobby Hopewell stated that this Board is responsible for and the guardian of shared prosperity in this City. He stated that this Board needs to be connected to all areas of SPK in the City. He noted that we need to be able to tell the story of the prosperity work that is being done in the city. He stated that he will work with the Coordinator to continue to gather data.

John Oliver stated that he would join the Data System Sub-Committee.

Public Comments—General

None.

Adjournment

Bobby Hopewell adjourned the meeting at 1:47 p.m.