

EQUAL BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION

June 02, 2020 Meeting Minutes

ITEM	DISCUSSION	ACTION
	<p>Meeting held through conference call.</p> <p>Nancy Briguglio called the meeting to order.</p> <p>There were five commissioners present. Nancy Briguglio suggested to commence the meeting, addressing items on the agenda that did not require a quorum and did not require member votes. All commissioners present on the call were in agreement.</p>	<p>Meeting called to order at 9:10 a.m. without a Quorum</p>
Disparity Study	<p>Discussions and member comments:</p> <p>Mahesh forwarded an email to all the commissioners, which included a draft letter provided by Nancy Briguglio and Roger Barnes. This is a draft letter that these two commissioners are working on for making a recommendation by the EBOC to the County Council recommending a Disparity Study.</p> <p>The commissioners discussed the draft letter and their thoughts and support for a disparity study. Ms. Briguglio stated that it was important that the letter provide a balanced view, to include the pros and cons of such studies.</p> <p>Mr. Barnes mentioned that he has advocated for a study for years and has addressed and shared the anecdotal situations about minority constituents not being getting a fair share of County business.</p>	

Ms. Briguglio mentioned that a study will determine and evaluate whether discrimination in County contracting happens, and could also improve procurement systems, and bring more business opportunities for minority and woman-owned businesses.

Mr. Barnes mentioned that this was a sensitive subject and a study will address and provide an intellectual and analytical approach needed to address any problems found and remedy such problems.

He added that there was lot of anecdotal evidence of disparities in contracting and noted that the State and other jurisdictions have similarly found such historical disparities in their studies. And it makes him question why would Howard County have a different result from such a study, and which makes him believe that there will be significant disparities. He recommended to the commissioners that having a study would shorten the arc of improvement in minority contracting.

Both Ms. Briguglio and Mr. Barnes mentioned that they would like to accomplish in the discussion today the support of fellow commissioners on the draft letter and also their inputs and suggestions for the final letter.

Mr. Alston mentioned that he had no general comments but he 100% supported the letter and it was well thought and well written. He also concurred with Mr. Barnes that both of them had been talking about this for years and the need for it. He fully supports moving forward with the recommendation and the letter.

Dean Hof mentioned that the Office of Purchasing was fully supportive of the initiative and that it will be great if the EBOC moves forward with the letter.

Constance mentioned that she can review the final draft letter, as requested by Ms. Briguglio, after all the commissioners have provided their inputs and suggestions to Ms. Briguglio and Mr. Barnes and after those suggestions have been incorporated in the letter.

Mahesh mentioned that he concurs with the comments made by Dean about the support from the Office of Purchasing for a disparity study recommendation. He confirmed with Ms. Briguglio and Mr. Barnes if they were proposing including the Howard County Public Schools procurement as well as they were addressed too in the draft letter. Ms. Briguglio and Mr. Barnes mentioned that they would like to include the Schools as well. Mr. Barnes mentioned that he was proposing a universal County wide study.

Jason Peay added that he was all for it and it was a step in the right direction. He added that he will review the draft and send across his comments to Ms. Briguglio and Mr. Barnes. He added that if a disparity study is done correctly, the outcome can be positive and will level the playing field for minority businesses and afford them a seat at the table.

Neil Madan mentioned that the letter was an excellent start to get the ball rolling. He added that neighboring jurisdictions have conducted a study and we should definitely also move forward. Howard County should be the market leader for minority participation. The Study will provide something tangible to look at and address any inequity in the system.

	<p>Mr. Madan added that especially given the current situation and circumstances in the Country and with the current news stories about inequity, it was a proper initiative to undertake at this time.</p> <p>Janssen Evelyn stated that he would like to support and echo the comments made. The County is very supportive of diversity and equity and this was a way to put money where your mouth is. He concurred with the comments made by Neil Madan, and mentioned that given the civil unrest presently in the Country, the County is committed to dismantle any systems of inequity. He also added that due to the current situation surrounding the pandemic, with resources being diverted a study might not happen in this fiscal year. The EBOC should move forward with the draft recommendation and make a convincing case for funds to be appropriated in future fiscal years.</p> <p>Vernon Thompson mentioned that it was an initiative that will definitely get support from Economic Development.</p>	
<p>Minutes: April 07, 2020</p>	<p>Another meeting will be scheduled for commissioners to vote on this agenda item.</p>	
<p>Certifications: April 07, 2020 through June 02, 2020</p>	<p>Another meeting will be scheduled for commissioners to vote on this agenda item.</p>	

Adjournment of Meeting at 9:37 am	<p>Motion to adjourn by Nancy Briguglio.</p> <p>A meeting will be scheduled next week to vote on items requiring a quorum.</p> <p>Next regular EBOC Meeting scheduled for August 04, 2020 at 9:00 a.m.</p>	
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EBOC MEMBER ATTENDEES:

1. Roger Barnes (conference call)
2. Nathaniel Alston (conference call)
3. Nancy Briguglio (conference call)
4. Neil Madan (conference call)
5. Jason Peay (conference call)

ABSENT:

1. Shahan Rizvi
2. Sharon Pinder
3. Margaret Kim
4. Cynthia Gula

NON-MEMBER ATTENDEES:

1. Janssen Evelyn (conference call)
2. Dean Hof (conference call)
3. Mahesh Sabnani (conference call)
4. Constance Tucker (conference call)
5. Vernon Thompson (conference call)