



**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR  
COMMISSION ON MINORITY AFFAIRS**

**Meeting Minutes**

A meeting of the Commission on Minority Affairs was held on Monday, August 20, 2018 at 9:33 am. Pursuant to public notice: Via video conference call between all locations: 1) Nevada State Business Center, 3300 W. Sahara Ave, Suite 425, Las Vegas, Nevada 89102, 2) Nevada Department of Business and Industry, 1830 College Pkwy, Suite 100, Carson City, NV 89706, and 3) Conference call: Carson City: 775-687-0999, Las Vegas: 702-486-5260, Participant's Collaboration Code: 64575.

**1. COMMISSION BUSINESS**

- A. Chair Commissioner Rhodes-Ford called the meeting to order at 9:33 am.
- B. Present: Chair Berna Rhodes-Ford Esq. (person), C. Williams (person), C. Azam (person), C. Chaney (person), C. Conine (phone), C. Y. Flores (phone), C. M. Flores (phone), C. Patel-Ghai (person), C. Stidhum (person), and Secretary Emily Ku, Management Analyst for the Commission on Minority Affairs (person).
- B.1. Public Attendance: Deputy Director Marcel Schaerer, Kathleen Taylor, Jane Lee (phone)
- C. Commissioners Absent: none

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT**

N/A

**3. COMMISSION BUSINESS DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION BY THE COMMISSION.**

- A. Approval of July 16, 2018 meeting minutes (for discussion and possible action) – C. Williams moved approval of the minutes for the July 16, 2018 meeting. C. Stidhum seconded. The motion carried.
- B. Subcommittee Updates (for discussion and possible action).

**1. Education**

C. M. Flores spoke with the Management Analyst on how we can get the Commission more involved in Education issues, such as bringing in education organizations and seeing what we can get involved with on some education bill to address equity issues.

C. Patel-Ghai is meeting with Communities in Schools in Nevada later this week and is coincidentally located in her office building. She is going to learn about their outreach programs, how the Commission can help, and information that we can share and vice-versa. C. Rhodes-Ford commented that the Management Analyst should feel free to let Commissioners know which events/meetings she is interested in attending. M.A. Ku suggested that all Commissioners should coordinate meetings through her so we do not risk having multiple Commissioners contacting the same organization. C. Azam asked if it was okay if he talks with an organization as part of his job and reports back. C. Rhodes-Ford said yes, we understand that sometimes it is organic and the opportunity presents itself. That is different from

setting up meetings in advance; those should be coordinated with the Management Analyst.

## 2. Health

C. Y. Flores has a few updates. A new Nevada law on curbing opioid abuse went into effect January 1<sup>st</sup> of this year. C. Y. Flores believes the streamlining of processes has improved and is helping to reduce overdoses. She is going to forward a flowchart and gives a good outline on how providers should prescribe controlled substances. Prescribers need to be mindful on the amount, the types, and the patients. Florida has recently enacted strict laws on opioid prescription and can only prescribe 3 days worth of the opioids at a time. In Nevada, it is 14 days because of the low ratio of providers to the population, and scheduling a follow-up appointment is difficult. All providers need to enroll in the prescription monitoring program (PMP) so they can run background checks on patients. Patients now have to sign a controlled substance agreement, which is an acknowledgement by both the provider and the patient of the rules that need to be followed to receive the prescription.

Since the legalization of marijuana, C. Y. Flores said there has been an increase in DUIs in Washoe County. She does not know the statistics for Clark County but it is a telling story. In 2016, there were 560 DUI related incidents involving marijuana in Washoe County, and in 2017 it jumped up to 852. The reality is just because it is legal does not mean it is safe. It is no different from the discussion we have with alcohol or tobacco use. We know that they are not safe and not to take in too much. We definitely need to educate our community about the dangers, and there needs to be more data on this. For every one joint a person may smoke, it is the equivalent of 10 regular cigarettes. So if someone gets diagnosed with COPD or emphysema in 10 years smoking by a pack per day, with marijuana, it is going to be a lot sooner.

M.A. Ku attended an Urban League mixer to introduce herself to the organization and to learn more about the different social services that they manage. M.A. Ku also attended the last Nevada Minority Health and Equity Coalition meeting. They are having their inaugural summit on October 4, and M.A. Ku is helping with the planning committee to organize the event. They are going to have a panel of legislators during lunch and invited Dr. Atkinson, dean of the UNLV medical school, either to moderate or give the keynote. They have been hosting listening session to get feedback from the community for their legislative agenda. The event is called A Call to Action: Equity of Care through Education, Inclusion, and Advocacy.

## 3. Housing

C. Chaney met with the regional representative Doris Dupont from the Neighborhood Assistance Corporation of America, and they had a summit here at the Convention Center. Their primary goal is to build strong and healthy neighborhoods in rural and urban areas. They have a local office, which had not been generating a lot of information, so we are looking at ways to enhance that. Also, C. Chaney and M.A. Ku met with Nevada Affordable Housing Assistance Corporation (NAHAC) and learned that they had given all \$36 million for the down payment assistance program and are waiting for approval to disperse an additional \$14 million.

## 4. Workforce Development

C. Stidhum spoke with C. Azam about the Workforce Development Subcommittee. He will be working the North and C. Stidhum will be focusing on the South. He made some connections with the Sierra Nevada Job Corps. C. Stidhum would like to focus on career fairs, depending on the age/sector that is being solicited. She would like to host a booth at the Nevada Contractor's Association Career Day, which will be on October 5 at UNLV. They are targeting middle school through college, and we could still have

a presence and target the high school/college. She is also planning to attend the Governor’s Workforce Development Board meeting at on October 23 if her schedule allows. C. Stidhum welcomes other ideas from Commissioners on the direction of the Workforce Development subcommittee. C. Rhodes-Ford thinks that the real issue is getting the information out to the community once we find out about the job fairs. C. Stidhum would like to know the details when they are in the planning stages, so she can get the information out to the community in a timely manner. She also wants to get involved with other resource agencies like Dress for Success where we could send them to so they can be ready for interviews. They also may not be resume ready, so we need to find those partner organizations and connect them to the community. We also need a way to follow-up with them as well.

C. Rhodes-Ford said Commissioners should compile names and organizations to add to the new listserv, so we can get the information out to the right people.

There was discussion on if a database of minority job applicants existed for employers. No one knew of one, and C. Rhodes-Ford said that she just forwards it on to her groups, but that only hits a very small segment of the population. C. Williams thinks there are regulations that stop employers from creating such a database that would not be EEOC compliant. C. Azam suggested contacting individual employers to see if they have a diversity plan in place, work with the Chambers to develop a pool of candidates, and what can we do to help improve that. Start with an awareness campaign with an entity that already has a plan in place. C. Azam said the unemployment rate in Reno is 3.3%, which means there are not many candidates out there. He saw a large presence of minorities at the Sierra Nevada Job Corps. He wants to learn what problems they are seeing and how to solve it. C. Azam also attended a career fair at Panasonic in partnership in Tesla, and instead of holding just one job fair, they have a recruiting center. You take several tests and if you qualify, they will interview the applicant the same day and even offer a job on the spot.

C. Rhodes-Ford said that many large companies have supplier diversity initiatives already, and they figured out the way around the legal issues. This will take a lot of thought, so we can continue to work on that. It would make sense to work with the Chambers but it would be an administrative burden on them to maintain a database. C. Azam offered to set up a meeting with the Reno Chamber and see what mechanisms are already in place that can be utilized.

## 5. Economic Development

C. Patel-Ghai and M.A. Ku attended the Indian Chamber event, and representatives from the PHD Chamber in India were present, who were in town for a convention. The event covered how Indian companies can do businesses here, and vice-versa, how Nevadan companies can export to India. The focus was renewable energy. India has legislation to increase its renewable energy target by 2022. She reached out to Bindi Parikh, the Secretary, for a one-page summary to send it out to businesses. C. Patel-Ghai also met with Stephanie Ortiz with the Women’s Chamber in Las Vegas and connected her with some other contacts. Ms. Ortiz said she was not aware of all the available certifications and only found out about them by going to the chamber events, which costs money. There are many businesses unable to take time to attend or afford the event. How do we get the information out to the public for those who cannot attend and which certifications are best for certain companies? C. Rhodes-Ford said struggling businesses can apply for PUC (Public Utilities Commission) certification and NDOT DBE, which are both free. C. Patel-Ghai said the subcommittee also attended the NDOT panel, and C. Williams posed the question, “How do diversity and certification play a role in current local projects for which you are responsible?” Several companies were there including Martin-Harris, Andersen Excavating, Aggregate Industries, and PENTA—most of those do participate in diversity programs and all acknowledged the importance of diversity programs. Andersen received a project by being part of the DBE program. Martin-Harris talked about SB1, which is actually the small business requirement, not necessarily

diversity, but they said that played a big role in the LVCVA project—they also have a diversity portion of that project as well that they put out on their own. Aggregate Industries has diversity participation goals on all their projects. PENTA highly recommends nationally-recognized certification because it is going to be needed for a plethora of upcoming opportunities. They were hinting that it will be the expectation moving forward.

C. Patel-Ghai and the M.A. Ku attended the Latin Chamber event La Oportunidad at the Boulevard Mall. The Commission had a table there and Deputy Director Schaerer was there as well. It was well attended and our table did get quite a bit of foot traffic. We gave out many Road Map handouts of how to start a business and about housing as well.

C. Williams attended the McCarran Disparity Study debriefing with M.A. Ku and introduced the Commission to those who were there. There is a severe disparity in the use of minority businesses that it can be labeled as discrimination. C. Williams asked about the ability to create set aside for DBEs in particular, and the response was that it was illegal for them to set aside funds based on race. C. Williams did some additional research, and found a clause on the Federal Transit Administration website that says “except in limited and extreme circumstances to redress egregious instances of discrimination.” It references another website, and it says, “You may not set-aside contracts for DBEs on DOT-assisted contracts subject to this part, except that, in limited and extreme circumstances, you may use set-asides when no other method could be reasonably expected to redress egregious instances of discrimination.” C. Williams asked if this is something the Commission would like to discuss. They did not have to have a public debrief on their disparity report, but they seem open to having a discussion and figuring out how to address it. They might be open to listening to the information we have, and they seem to be a receptive group. C. Rhodes-Ford said it might be helpful to schedule a meeting with Senator Atkinson and maybe LCB to see what we can do on a broader state level. They could not force other companies to have set-asides because a disparity study had not been conducted. Therefore, legally you cannot require any percentages or set-asides on a state level. There may be additional traction from the other transportation agencies such as NDOT and RTC; McCarran just happened to be the first one releasing their report.

M.A. Ku gave an overview of the Road Map for small businesses produced by Business and Industry.

## 6. Legislative

C. Williams said the Legislative subcommittee will meet monthly to discuss topics and then bring them to the Commission for a decision. Our goals for this year to submit a BDR and testify on a bill. She also met with the Urban Chamber to learn about their legislative goals. They are leaning towards a youth focus, with an entrepreneurial and educational push for the youth. M.A. Ku put together testimony for short-term lending. M.A. Ku gave some background on the testimony and how it does not have suggest any specific legislative changes, but that payday lending disproportionately affects the minority community. C. Williams suggested that we table this for a larger discussion and think about these issues further. Other areas of interest from the Commission include: adding value to ESB certification, predatory lending, funding for the Commission, and DBE set-asides.

## 7. Community Liaison

C. Azam met with Reno Police Chief Jason Soto, and they both agreed that awareness and data is important. They are collecting data on how legal marijuana has changed their calls and DUIs. Police Chief Soto said that the majority of domestic abuse calls in the last year are associated with alcohol, not marijuana. He also said that body cameras are positively viewed by the police force. They undergo trainings on how to deal with minorities. C. Azam also plans to talk with some retired police officers.

C. Azam asked for clarification on the word “minorities” because there are ethnic, religious, and sexual orientation minorities. C. Rhodes-Ford responded that we are an ethnicity-based commission.

C. Rhodes-Ford and M.A. Ku attended the Sheriff’s Asian American Advisory Council. Sheriff Lombardo was there and numerous police officers present. She spoke with Captain Scott about the African American Advisory Council, and he said interest faded and it dissolved. C. Rhodes-Ford saw the great community support at the Asian American Advisory Council and that it needs to be replicated for other communities. It was a great way to interact positively with law enforcement. M.A. Ku will set up a meeting with Captain Scott and see if there is anything we can do to reinvigorate that committee.

M.A. Ku attended the Nevada Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights panel. Captain Scott also spoke at the event on the alternative incarceration pilot program for low-level non-violent offenders and for those with mental illness. They are trying to shift people away from incarceration, which then frees officers up to focus on violent crime. A cultural paradigm shift needs to change as well.

#### C. Management Analyst update (for discussion and possible action)

M.A. Ku attended the Friends of India event for India Independence Day. There were around 300 people there, and met the FBI Community Outreach Specialist there. She is open to meeting with us. M.A. Ku also attended the EEOC Sexual Harassment seminar and had speakers from EEOC, NERC (Nevada Equal Rights Commission), and UNLV. They spoke mainly about data and trends that are happening in the workplace and mentioned that sexual harassment is well documented, but there is very little data on racial/ethnic harassment. M.A. Ku spoke with Dr. Guthrie at UNLV about how we can collect more data on ethnic harassment in the workplace and perhaps partner with the UNLV School of Public Affairs.

- Upcoming events available for sign up – the Northwest Police Command invited us to have a booth at their Tour of the World event on Tues, Sept 4<sup>th</sup> from 4-8pm at Centennial Hills Park. It’s a meet and greet with the police but they are also having vendors and food trucks. C. Flores expressed interested in hosting a booth.
- Sept 20 – Committed to Our Business Event from 8:30-1pm – we will share a booth there with Business and Industry. Clark County is organizing the event and it will be at the Convention Center. It is an annual event and a great opportunity for businesses to meet with procurement departments. C. Williams will be a panelist there.
- Oct. 14 – ACDC (Asian Community Development Council) is holding a health and citizenship fair on Oct. 14 at the Rio. C. Flores expressed interested in hosting a booth since M.A. Ku will be out of town.
- Oct. 18 – Governor’s Conference at the Rio. We will share a booth there with Business and Industry. C. Williams and C. Stidhum will have booths there, C. Patel-Ghai will be attending, and C. Flores expressed interest. Please let M.A. Ku know by the end of the week if you would like a complimentary ticket.

1. Budget update – C. Rhodes-Ford and C. Williams had a meeting with M.A. Ku and now has a better grasp of the budget. M.A. Ku is hoping she will can get a meeting with Fiscal in September to change her work program and discuss the budget at the next meeting.
  2. New Counsel – The Administrative Law Judge at Business and Industry, Gary Mathews, will be our counsel and attend our future meetings. He used to be a Deputy Attorney General in Reno for a number of years so he is well versed in open meeting law.
  3. Listserv – M.A. Ku created a listserv for the Commission. C. Berna-Rhodes suggested sending an introductory email to organization heads. We would love to know who in your organization would like to receive this information and please forward the listserv to them. It may also require some phone calls to let them know about this information resource for the minority community. We have access to information and we want to make sure we get the information out.
- D. Strategic Plan – this has been tabled and will be first item on the agenda next meeting.
- E. Policy and Procedures – this has been tabled for next meeting. C. Conine suggests changing “inform and engage” to “inform Nevadans and engage” because we are trying to inform everybody. M.A. Ku will make the change and recirculate.
- F. New Business – Deputy Director Schaerer stressed the importance of data collection. It would be nice if the Commission becomes a hub of basic data pertaining to the minority community. It’s not about quantity but quality of data, and if that could be packaged into infographics, it would create a strong leg for the Commission. Regarding workforce development, you can check with Workforce Connections (South) and Nevada Works (North). Regarding certifications, that is in the Road Map, as well as a lot of other information.
- C. Williams asked if there was any possibility of changing the day/time of future meetings. C. Rhodes-Ford said we can check everyone’s availability. M.A. Ku said if we make a change, then it will go into effect next year.

#### 4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Kathleen Taylor with the Nevada Business Women’s Center said that she can help facilitate meetings with agencies for certifications. Regarding predatory lending, they see clients who have been affected, which has also affected their business.

Ms. Jane Lee commented that it was a well-run meeting and a pleasure to attend and learn.

#### 5. ADJOURNMENT

- Meeting adjourned at 11:11am
- Next Meeting: Monday, September 17, 2018 at 9:30am