

Minority Business Initiative Advisory Board
November Meeting Minutes
Thursday, November 21st, 2024
1:00 PM – 2:30 PM
Remotely Held by Teams Meeting Software
Hartford CT, Connecticut

Attendance

Board Members Present: Howard Hill, Avery Gaddis, Roberta Hoskie and Doug McCrory,

Quorum: NO

DECD Staff Present: Deputy Commissioner Paul O. Robertson, George Norfleet, Sheila Hummel, Alvetta Spencer, and Kerron Vernon

Welcome and Introductions:

Howard Hill welcomed the group and opened the meeting at 1:09 p.m.

Minutes:

No quorum to approve October meeting minutes.

Key Discussions:

Disparity Study:

1. Status Update:

- The disparity study has been complete since May 2024.
- Key findings confirm long-standing disparities in economic opportunities for Black, Brown, and female entrepreneurs in Connecticut.
- The administration has delayed releasing the study results, citing potential embarrassment over the findings.

2. Next Steps:

- Senator McCrory plans to work with the administration to release the study publicly.
- The findings will be instrumental for crafting targeted equity and inclusion strategies.

Strategic Planning and Target Agencies:

1. High-Value Targets:

- Agencies to engage include:
 - **Department of Administrative Services (DAS)**
 - **Department of Transportation (DOT)**
 - **Department of Banking**
 - **Office of Health Strategy**
 - **Department of Insurance**
 - **Department of Housing**

2. Goals:

- Establish partnerships with these agencies to advocate for equitable opportunities in contracting, employment, and resource allocation.
- Act as a strategic partner (not merely a watchdog) to advance equity initiatives.

3. Action Plan:

- Develop a tentative schedule for engaging target agencies, starting with DAS and DOT.
 - Deputy Commissioner Paul Robertson and Avery Gaddis will collaborate to outline a list of agencies and key contacts for future discussions.
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Facilitated Conversation:

1. Preparation:

- Plans to approve and schedule a facilitated discussion were delayed due to a lack of quorum.
 - An email vote will be conducted to finalize the facilitation process.
 - The conversation will include comparisons between the disparity study and prior strategic plans, particularly regarding business participation in various industries.
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Decisions and Action Items:

1. Short-Term Goals:

- Schedule agency outreach to begin discussions on equity initiatives.
- Integrate disparity study findings with existing plans to enhance strategic focus.

2. Upcoming Meetings:

- Avery Gaddis and Paul Robertson will coordinate outreach to initial target agencies.
 - Senator McCrory will provide updates on the disparity study timeline and share further insights during the next meeting.
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Closing:

- Meeting adjourned at approximately 1:26 PM.