

Transparency, Engagement, and Communication Committee

Chaired by Mayor Pro Tempore Holmes

Committee Members: Holmes, Cook, Harman, and Moore

November 20, 2024 –9:00 a.m.

High Point Municipal Building

211 S. Hamilton Street

3rd Floor, Council Chambers

Transparency, Engagement, and Communications - Chair Michael Holmes

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Holmes called the Transparency, Engagement, and Communication Committee to order at 9:00 a.m. and stated all Committee Members were present.

Present: Chair Michael Holmes, Committee Member Cook, Committee Member Harman, and Committee Member Moore

2024-434 Citizens Academy Update

Staff will present information on the formation of a Citizens Academy for City residents.

Carla Huggins, Lead Fellow, presented the item. She spoke on the Citizens Academy initiative and mentioned the other municipalities that have Citizens Academies. She talked about the similarities between the High Point Citizen's Police Academy and the Citizens Academy. She provided an overview of the 8-week program and indicated it would be open to all residents 18 and over and that 20 people would be selected for the first cohort. She noted that the graduates would be recognized at a future Council meeting upon completion of the program.

She spoke on the session titles, the departments featured, as well as an overview of the topics that would be covered, including events and programming, city administration structure and history, divisions, plans and past, present and future projects.

She explained the benefits of the program, including education, advancement, and transparency, and hoped that the program attendees would later serve in a public capacity, like on city boards and commissions. She noted that this would help to create a pool of applicants who understood the workings of city government.

Chair Holmes expressed his excitement for the upcoming program.

In response to Council Member Moore, Ms. Huggins said that they had just started compiling information. She stated that the City of High Point used to have a Citizens Academy and pointed to the Citizens Police Academy as another example of this sort of initiative. She said they would promote the program both digitally and at in-person events. Council Member Moore suggested reaching out to students in the education system for potential candidates.

In response to Chair Holmes question regarding evaluation and selection criteria, Ms. Huggins said they were still working out the details. She spoke on the process in Lexington and other municipalities and said they hoped to encourage diversity in age, race, and geographic location.

In response to Council Member Cook, Ms. Huggins said the funds were already in budget and that the cost had been estimated at approximately \$3000. She said the budget items consisted mainly of food, with other allocations for items like certificates and pins for completion of the program. She said she hoped they could provide access to the academy curriculum materials for the public.

Chair Holmes thanked her for the presentation.

2024-434**Disparity Study and MWBE Program Update**

Staff will provide an update on the MWBE Program and Disparity Study.

Cynthia Barnes, MWBE Coordinator, gave a presentation outlining where they were regarding the disparity study. She indicated she would address some of the questions raised at the last Disparity Study and MWBE Program Update.

She talked about the activity part of the process and noted that they were currently in the last two phases of the study process. She said the private sector analysis portion of the draft was completed and that they should receive the last of the data chapters before the holidays. She said they were getting close to the last ten percent of the disparity study process and that she would provide an update on the draft recommendations at the beginning of 2025.

Ms. Barnes spoke on the public engagement component of the process and noted that it included an online survey and two virtual public meetings, as well as focus groups.

She gave an update on the MWBE Program and said it included preliminary adjustments to the existing program that had been in place for several years. She emphasized the need to incorporate recent legislative changes.

She spoke on the partnership with Thrive HP 2.0, training programs, and some of the events she has attended to help spread the word about the program.

She said she had performed document reviews for solicitation documents and spoke on the enhanced language on bid documents to include updated language.

In response to Council Member Moore, Ms. Barnes said the changes in the documents are to make it easier to track MWBE-owned businesses.

She outlined the media outreach process and showed some of the initiatives that were being undertaken to promote the program, including ads, print media at events, and website enhancements. She spoke on some events she had attended, including the recent Piedmont Triad Minority/Women Development (MED) Week Summit.

Council Member Cook spoke about attending the MED Week Summit and how great it was to see High Point represented.

In response to Council Member Moore, Ms. Barnes said the outreach was crossing state lines and said they had several people attend the outreach events from South Carolina, Virginia, Florida and other states.

Ms. Barnes spoke on the strategic partnerships involved in the project.

She outlined some of the next steps, including working with the Information Technology department on utilization statistics and an update on the Disparity Study in February of 2025.

In response to Council Member Harman, Ms. Barnes explained the process of reviewing bid solicitations.

Chair Holmes thanked Ms. Barnes for the update and said he appreciated all of the hard work on the project.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Transparency, Engagement, and Communication Committee, the meeting adjourned at 9:48 a.m.

Michael Holmes, Chairman

Attest:

Alison Glynn, Deputy City Clerk