

Lisa Vierling

From: patrickatserve@aol.com
Sent: Friday, May 29, 2020 10:48 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: Comments on the Proposed Diversity and Inclusion Initiative

I am writing to express my support of the diversity and inclusion initiative that was recently proposed. This initiative is long overdue in High Point. This type of initiative was begun in neighboring communities years ago and it is inexcusable that we lag so far behind in striving for equity and opportunity.

Racial disparity in accessing and obtaining 'family-sustaining' jobs is endemic in America. It is not just merely due to different educational attainment. A recent Georgetown study found that the median wage for a 'good' job with a bachelor's degree was \$75,000 for whites compared to \$65,000 for African-Americans and Latinos.

COVID-19 is exacerbating this racial disparity. Thirty-five percent of the bottom fifth of earners have lost their jobs and these earners are more likely to be African-American and Latino. The reinforcement of the systemic nature of this disparity is demonstrated by surveys showing 38% of all small business applicants getting Payroll Protection Program loans compared to 12% of minority applicants.

Addressing these systemic inequalities must be done with persistent intentionality. Systemic changes do not magically occur. Local government is ideally situated to take the lead as it is largely funded by its residents who have the right to expect its government to support the community as best as possible. Local government is both a large employer and a large purchaser of services and products. Consequently, there are ample opportunities to support a diversity and inclusion approach to strengthening the community.

I strongly encourage Council to adopt and fund a diversity and inclusive initiative. Do not let the COVID-19 pandemic serve as an excuse for not implementing this initiative that is long overdue.

Sincerely,
Patrick Harman
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