**Kansas African American Affairs Commission Meeting Minutes**

**Date:** Friday, October 6, 2023

**Location:** Via Zoom

**Present:**

* Chairman McCormick
* Commissioner McRoy
* Commissioner New
* Commissioner Westbrook till 1:58p
* Executive Director Knoell

**Public attending:**

* N/A

**Meeting called to order:** Chairman McCormick called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone.

**Chairman's Opening Comments:** Chair McCormick expressed concerns about the Commission's bylaws and their impact on the Commission's effectiveness. He suggested the need to adjust the bylaws over time to better align with current challenges and goals. Chair McCormick proposed initiating discussions on this matter and seeking legal department and governor's office input.

Commissioner McRoy supported the idea, emphasizing the need to streamline the bylaws for more efficient operations and pursuing initiatives effectively.

Executive Director ED Knoell reiterated the challenges posed by the current bylaws, indicating support for updating them to better reflect the Commission's current roles and priorities.

Commissioner New echoed the sentiments, emphasizing the importance of updating the bylaws to set a stage for future Commission members.

**Executive Director's Report:**

* Business and Commerce: ED Knoell discussed ongoing conversations with the Department of Commerce regarding the enhancement of black entrepreneurship opportunities in Kansas. She highlighted meetings with black incubators across the state with Lt. Governor Toland and efforts to assess how Commerce could better support black businesses.
* Health: ED Knoell mentioned discussions about preeclampsia, emphasizing the potential for a blood test to detect preeclampsia early, particularly for black women who face health disparities in maternal health outcomes. She highlighted collaboration with various stakeholders to explore implementing the test in Kansas.
* Community Outreach: ED Knoell shared her involvement in a Road-to-Unity Tour, visiting cities in western Kansas to connect with local communities, particularly focusing on outreach to the Black population. This was a collaborative effort with The Community Voice Newspaper in Wichita.
* Upcoming Events: ED Knoell informed the Commission of Representative Mari-Lynn Poskins championing a proclamation related to “Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day”. She also mentioned a sponsorship request from The African American Museum in Wichita for their upcoming Trailblazer fundraiser.

Discussion on Committees: Commissioner New suggested aligning committee focus areas with the Commission's key priorities, such as business, health, and education. She recommended utilizing existing volunteers to participate in these committees, potentially increasing community outreach.

ED Knoell supported the idea of committees, allowing for focused efforts in specific areas and relieving some of her responsibilities. The discussion revolved around creating committees to address key priorities and potentially revising the Commission's bylaws to provide more flexibility in forming committees.

Announcement: Commissioner New announced a prayer breakfast event on October 28th, 2024, commemorating the 70th anniversary of the Brown v. Board of Education decision. Reverend Otis Moss III would be the featured speaker, and the event aimed to bring together the community.

Adjournment: Given that the meeting no longer had a quorum, it was suggested to adjourn while making notes for the topics to be discussed at the next meeting.

Next Meeting: The next meeting would include discussions about the Commission's bylaws, committees, and other relevant topics.

*Meeting minutes prepared by Jonathan McRoy & Stacey Knoell*