Minutes of Kansas African American Affairs Commission meeting on 12/6/2022

Called to order: 1:10 pm

Members Present: Jonathon Westbrook, Dr. Beryl New, Talia Penn, Stacey Knoell, Trent Davis, Dr. Anthony Lewis, Jonathan McRoy

Members Absent: Mark McCormick

Executive Director’s Update: The Lunch and Learns are continuing with increasing success. It would be helpful if individual Commissioners could help distribute and/or advertise the programming on their various social media channels.

Governor Kelly winning a second term will provide a level of stability to the Executive Director position moving forward. Now we can turn our attention to what this Commission can become.

New Business: The lion’s share of the meeting was a discussion surrounding plans for the coming legislative session and year. The consensus is to arrange a meeting with the Black Legislative Caucus to learn what their legislative priorities are and if those are anything the Commission would like to join. There is interest among commissioners to have training on the best practices for engaging with the Kansas Legislature as a whole. An additional focus that the Commission agreed on was to continue to host town hall meetings around the state.

In relation to the Legislative Black Caucus, the question arose – to whom does this Commission hold the greatest alliance? The Commission is a two-way street representing the concerns of the Black community to the Governor’s Office but also representing the Governor’s Office concerns back to the Black community. This is where learning the existing legislative priorities of the Governor and the Black Legislative Caucus and town halls come in.

The discussion was more on the direction of future plans rather than a plan in itself. Commissioner New moved that the items discussed be recorded as an action item that will be discussed again during the January 6th meeting. Commissioner Davis seconded that motion which passed unanimously.

Announcements: Save the Date for Thursday, January 12th for the Governor’s Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. March and Proclamation signing. The time has not been confirmed awaiting the Governor’s exact schedule for that day.

The Black Legislative Day at the Capitol will be Tuesday, February 14th from 10 M – 3 pm at the Kansas Statehouse.

Next Meeting: Friday, January 6th, 1 pm in-person at the Kansas Statehouse.

Meeting Adjourned: 2:10 pm