

# Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) Business Advisory Committee October 2021 Meeting Summary

## Attendance

**Members**      **Present** (12) Jason Doo, Samuel Gebru, Vicki Gray, Angela Hofmann, Marcus Johnson-Smith, Jaswinder Kaur, Kimberly Massenburg, Allentza Michel, Erinn Pearson, Jennie Song, LaTonya Smith-Winston, Zina Thompson

**Absent** (1) Nephtaliem McCrary

**City staff (5)**      David Corbie, Iram Farooq, Lisa Hemmerle, Jonathan Lee, Pardis Saffari (CDD)

**Others**              1 member of the public

## Welcome & Introductions

David Corbie (DC) the virtual meeting at 4:00 PM by welcoming members of the BIPOC Business Advisory Committee and staff. Committee members went around and introduced themselves, their business, and one idea/goal that they would like to see the Committee address this year.

Ideas included:

- More city sponsored events for BIPOC businesses, such as the Black Business Month Kick-Off Event
- More business-to-business collaboration, support for growing businesses
- More/better outreach to BIPOC businesses
- Understand the survey results and what business owners need
- Learn/contribute to the community
- Develop new relationships
- Wayfinding help for businesses, including how to open and business, navigate the system, and make connections
- Make more opportunities for businesses to grow into brick-and-mortar locations
- Learn from the community and uplift the Black and Brown business community
- Improve city contracting and procurement for BIPOC-owned businesses
- Increase the betterment of Black and Brown businesses
- How to create growth for BIPOC businesses and arts & culture organizations while maintaining affordability

DC polled the group and Mondays at 4:00 p.m. will be the monthly meeting date moving forward. Committee members also shared that they would like agenda materials two-weeks prior to the meeting to have time to review and discuss.

## Meeting Discussion: BIPOC Business Survey

PS presented the first action for the Committee – conducting a citywide BIPOC business survey. Committee agreed that the goal of the survey is to understand how many BIPOC businesses are in Cambridge, demographic make up the businesses, understand gaps in services, what’s working and what’s not, what are their needs as they grow and sustain their business post-pandemic. PS presented the draft survey questions, as well as new questions that were added based on Committee feedback.

Committee discussed ideas for revising the survey, including:

- Making sure there are not too many questions
- Make the survey in a platform that is accessible
- Make sure the survey is easier to fill out by reducing the number of open-ended answers. Make sure there are more yes/no or multiple-choice questions, and add an “other” an option so we can capture ideas we missed
- Add the length of time it will take to fill out the survey
- Look into offering an incentive to take the survey
- Ask questions around why a business may not have applied to COVID relief funding

Committee discussed outreach ideas, including:

- Making the survey available in multiple languages
- Outreach to business associations, business certificate, license, and permit holders, residential groups, community centers such as the Margaret Fuller House, tenant associations, Just-A-Start, Cambridge Housing Authority, and elected officials.
- Provide everyone with a social media tool kit to help promote the survey
- Keep the survey open for four (4) weeks, with weekly reminders.

Staff will circulate a draft survey to Committee members to review in the next week, including recommended survey languages

## Future meeting topics

Committee members discussed possible future meeting topics, including:

- City’s small business programs and demographic information
- Access to capital – where money comes from and engaging with the City’s local banks
- Conversation on the State’s services and programs
- Presentation on the new Retail and Home Occupations Zoning Changes
- Procurement efforts and an update on the City’s Disparity Study
- Childcare needs for business owners and employees
- Possible marketing efforts for uplifting BIPOC businesses

## Public comment

None.

Meeting adjourned at 5:04 PM