

Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) Business Advisory Committee November 2023 Meeting Summary

Attendance

Members **Present (8)** Angela Hofmann, Margaret Pimentel, Jennie Song, Keisha Greaves, Vicki Gray, Zina Thompson, Jason Doo, Erinn Pearson

Absent (3) Nephtaliem McCrary, Jaswinder Kaur, Sukia Akiba

City staff **Present (2)** Allyson Allen, Tyrone Fells (CDD)

Others

Welcome & Introductions

Allyson Allen (AA) opened the virtual meeting at 4:00 PM by welcoming members of the BIPOC Business Advisory Committee. Committee members went around and introduced themselves and their businesses.

Discussion

Supplier Diversity Fair Reflections

AA reviewed the Supplier Diversity Fair Reflections slide deck sharing outcomes of the reverse vendor fair held at MIT on October 17, 2023 with 21 buyers from 13 various large institutions/companies and 80 vendors from 72 small businesses. The data available from the event registrations showed that more than 75% of the vendors in attendances were certified and more than half had won bids in the past.

Vendor attendees acknowledged a desire for more support in accessing capital and buyers and marketing for contracts which aligns with EOD efforts to prepare diverse vendors prior to the event. EOD held four marketing workshops leading up to the Supplier Diversity Fair including two sessions regarding developing a capabilities statement to share with buyers. This session was the most attended.

Most of the vendor attendees came from outside of Cambridge – any future efforts will double-down on educating and recruiting businesses from Cambridge. Vendors offering consulting services were the largest category in attendance and included Marketing, event planning, design, health and wellness, real estate and property management, staffing, sustainability, photography/video production and marketing.

Buyers represented higher education including MIT, Harvard, Emerson and Suffolk; local governments including Cambridge, the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority and Newton; and the Cambridge Health Alliance, Takeda and the MBTA. The top goods and services procured were construction/utilities, food and hospitality, and marketing.

A survey of attendees was conducted and largely described satisfaction with the event and almost everyone surveyed expressed a desire to participate again in the future. Suggested improvements for the future include better signage and nametags and more information on the structure of the event.

Committee members celebrated the success of the event and encouraged future efforts.

Committee Role

Prior to this meeting, Tyrone Fells (TF) spoke with each committee member about their thoughts about the role of the committee and ways to encourage more participation to make our work more meaningful. TF shared all the feedback

shared with him during those conversations. Members want more engagement, not less. We explored ways to make participation more accessible including various schedules and structures to make more impact.

Committee members desire to be ambassadors of outreach, information and resources. They appreciate guest speakers and learning about city news, programs and opportunities and want more opportunities to learn from each other. Members want to keep meeting on a regular schedule and desire more opportunities to meet in person or at least hybrid. Committee members were adamant about the importance of the committee and committed to serving the community.

We agreed to find more opportunities to involve committee members as ambassadors of information.

Other Committee Items

None

Public comment

None

Meeting adjourned at 5:30 PM.