

RACIALLY DIVERSE INTERVIEW PANELS

CITY OF GAINESVILLE
OFFICE OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

BACKGROUND

- ▶ EQUAL OPPORTUNITY COMMITTEE MEETING (JANUARY 2014)
 - 2012–2013 Hiring Report presented
 - Non-supervisory level – 68% white and 32% minorities
 - Supervisory level – 85% white and 15% minorities
 - As a result, the EO Director submitted five recommendations:
 - 1) Continue Workplan training with hiring managers;
 - 2) Continue PRAF protocols;
 - 3) Continue aggressive recruitment strategies, including hiring diversity recruiter
 - 4) Interview all internal candidates meeting minimum qualifications; and,
 - 5) **Create racially diverse panels for all interviews at supervisory level and above**

BACKGROUND

- ▶ CITY COMMISSION MEETING (MARCH 6, 2014)
 - EO Director presented Affirmative Action Plan & the 2012–2013 Hiring Report presented
 - EO Director advised CC that City Attorney opposed recommendations 4 & 5.
 - CC took following action:
 - “Request written recommendations from the City Attorney’s Office and other Charter Officers regarding the annual hiring report recommendations”

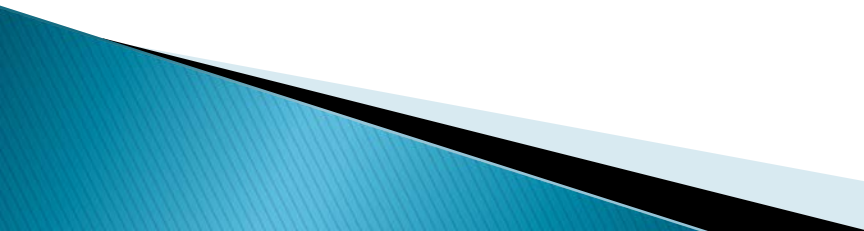
BACKGROUND

- ▶ **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY COMMITTEE MEETING
(MARCH 11, 2014)**
 - **EO Director modified recommendation:**
 - **“Substitute the racially diverse hiring panel recommendation, and require that the EO Director (in his discretion) appoint a member of his staff (including himself) to serve on the interview/hiring panels for all supervisors and above positions.)”**
 - **EO Committee took the following action:**
 - **“(1) Approve in concept of having the EO Director or a member of his staff serve on hiring panels for the position of supervisor level or above; and, (2) continue to pursue this in a manner he sees most appropriate, including, if necessary, bringing to the CC for review, including a change of rules and adoption of recommendation requiring diverse hiring panels.”**

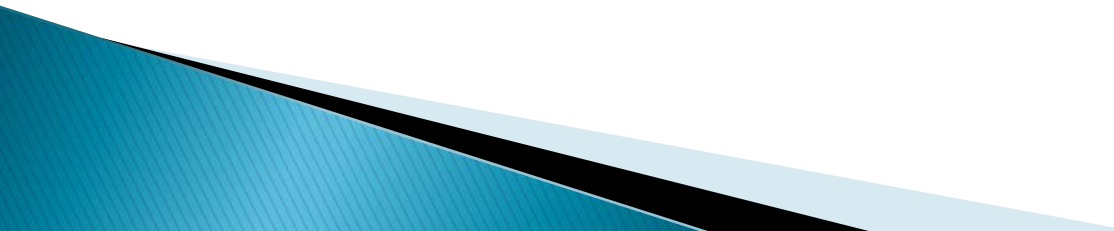
BACKGROUND

- ▶ CITY COMMISSION MEETING (APRIL 17, 2014)
 - After City Commission discussion, the EO Director reinstated his recommendation for the establishment of racially diverse interview panels when recruiting at supervisory level or above.
 - A motion was made regarding the above, but was modified and the word “*racially*” was removed.
 - Thus, the CC approved the following:
 - Motion: Interview at least 3–7 internal candidates and establish diverse panels for supervisory position interviews.
 - A motion was made by Commissioner Hinson–Rawls, seconded by Commissioner Chase, that this matter be approved, as shown above.

BACKGROUND

- ▶ CITY COMMISSION MEETING (JANUARY 15, 2015)
 - The EO Director made a recommendation to the CC that it reconsider the use of the word “racial” when referring to interview panels.
 - CC directed the EO Director to resend the information regarding diverse interview panels.
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REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION(s)

- ▶ It is always a good practice to ensure that all those involved in the interview process are trained on diversity and cultural issues as well as on unconscious bias.
 - ▶ It is always a best practice that the interview panels reflect the diversity of the workforce and the community.
 - ▶ Ensuring that the interview panels contain people from diverse backgrounds and ethnicities will make candidates more comfortable with and responsive to a diverse panel.
 - ▶ Diverse panelists may be better able to represent the organization's commitment to diverse recruitment.
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WHAT OTHER ORGANIZATIONS ARE DOING

- ▶ Many local and state governments, school boards and state universities employ the use of diverse interview panels:
 - **MANATEE COUNTY**– *“procedures for selecting applicants will be reviewed, evaluated, and revised as necessary to ensure that they are administered by interview panels with diverse membership, where possible.”*
 - **CITY OF ARLINGTON, VA**– *“Interview panels should be a reflection of the diversity of the workforce and should have representation of those groups for which there are employment related goals.”*
 - **WASHINGTON STATE**– *“establish diverse interview hiring panels; assure applicant pools have representatives of affected groups as members before accessing recruitment referrals and certifications.”*

WHAT OTHER ORGANIZATIONS ARE DOING

- **CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS MINN-** *“engage a diverse job interview panel, and brief its members regarding the appropriate interviews structure...”*
- **CITY OF JACKSONVILLE-** *“it is the practice of the organization to encourage the use of diverse interview panels, however, specifying “racially diverse” interview panels is not a practice.”*
- **CITY OF TALLAHASSEE -** *“even though there is no guidance in writing, the City culture is very cognizant of the need for diversity.”*

WHAT OTHER ORGANIZATIONS ARE DOING

- **MARION COUNTY** – *“interview panels will consist of two or more panel members. Each panel shall have diversity representation when feasible.”*
- **MIAMI/DADE COUNTY**– *“the practice is that an interview panel must consist of at least 3 people with, at least one male, at least one female, and at least one member being African-American, at least one member being Hispanic, and at least one member being white.”*
- **SHIPPENSBURG UNIVERSITY**– *“the faculty search committee is selected by the Department and must include a racial/ethnic minority; must include a woman; and, should include a person who has demonstrated a commitment to diversity.”*

CONCLUSIONS

- ▶ After a review of the legal memorandum submitted by the City Attorney, I am left with two questions:
 - (1) Is it illegal to require that interview panels be racially diverse; and,
 - (2) If so, then why are some governmental entities allowing this practice.

It is because the law only acts as a floor of what we show do and Gainesville has always reached to the ceiling. Gainesville has always led the way in fairness, equity and diversity and this will serve as another example of progressive leadership.

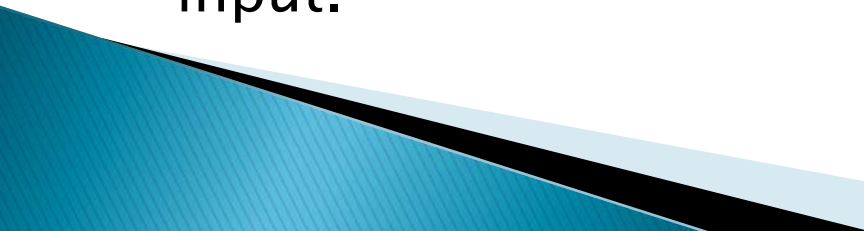
CONCLUSIONS

- ▶ It is true that, “the City is not under a consent decree and does not maintain an affirmative action plan whereby race or any other protected characteristic is taken into consideration in making hiring decisions.”
 - Even though we are not being made to take this action, creating racially diverse interview panels would not change the way the City makes hiring decisions, it would, to the contrary, enhance the process by leveling the playing field as is the intent of an affirmative action plan as well as a racially diverse interview panel, “*good faith efforts*”.

CONCLUSIONS

- ▶ The City of Gainesville has always been on the cutting edge and aspired to do more, we have never settled for mediocrity.
- ▶ If a non-diverse interview panel would not impede a fair & equitable interview process, then would not a racially diverse interview panel (all-inclusive) have an even greater positive affect, since we all agree, *that diversity in the workplace is invaluable and a critical goal of the city.*
 - In recommending racially diverse interview panels, this includes non-whites as well as whites. No group of individuals are left out of the “racially diverse” interview panel.
 - Regardless of who sits on the panel the City’s hiring policy will still be to “hire the most qualified applicant for the job” and not base the hiring on race or any other protected characteristic.

CONCLUSIONS

- ▶ Diversity is not just a "good idea", it is a business imperative if you want to stay competitive, innovative and secure a larger market share.
 - ▶ It is well-entrenched in research that like people give high scores to like people, so making panels racially diverse, would even the playing field.
 - ▶ Since we hire competent employees in our workforce, there would not be a downside to using them to serve on panels because research also shows that individuals feel empowered and included when asked to provide input.
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RECOMMENDATION(s)

- ▶ In 2013–2014 the hiring report shows that the disparity at the supervisory level & above continues to exist as it relates to the hiring of whites versus minorities.
 - Non-supervisory level – 56% white and 44% minorities
 - Supervisory level – 79% white and 21% minorities
- ▶ Therefore, if it is not illegal to use racially diverse interview panels; then it is recommended that:
 - The City Commission adopt a policy using racially diverse interview panels for supervisory and higher positions.