

Milwaukee NAACP: Files official discrimination complaint with Milwaukee Equal Rights Commission

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Milwaukee, WI (October 19, 2020) - The Milwaukee NAACP Milwaukee Branch, launched in 1924, is one of the oldest branches in the nation - working in the forefront of the civil rights movement - has submitted a formal complaint with the Equal Rights Commission (ERC) on the basis that the city of Milwaukee has willfully violated the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and has also violated local laws (city ordinance) chapter 355.

The official complaint filed by the NAACP states that the city of Milwaukee has been violated its own local law, specifically, Chapter 355 of the City Code of Ordinances (Community Participation in Development Agreements).

Chapter 355 requires:

- ☐ All persons or entities receiving direct financial assistance for projects approved after August 8, 2009, shall comply with this chapter in the implementation of such projects.
- ☐ At least one (1) quarter (25%) of the appropriate level of participation required or underemployed residents who maintain their permanent residence in zip codes established as high-poverty, as determined by the city clerk on January 1 every three years beginning in 2017, in consultation with the department of administration and based on income guidelines established by the U.S. department of housing and urban development of poverty relief and housing block grant programs.

- Arrange for an independent audit with respect to the resident's preference program to be performed every three (3) years, by a certified accounting firm licensed to perform audits in the state of Wisconsin, or by the city comptroller.
- The Office of Small Business Development, currently overseen by Nikki Purvis, in coordination with the Department of City Development, the Department of Public Works, and the resident's preference program review commission, shall prepare, on or before October 1 of each year.

Fred Royal, President of the NAACP Milwaukee Branch states in the complaint "The NAACP finds this a gross failure of the City and through the Office of the Comptroller and the Department of Administration (DOA) for not ensuring proper monitoring and oversight is conducted according to local law. Regardless of any excuses given, the City is in direct violation of its own local laws which has caused discrimination, directly and as a disparate impact, on African American workers and businesses".

President Royal additionally states "Through the Milwaukee Equal Rights Commission, which is empowered by Chapter 109 of the city code of ordinances to investigate discrimination cases, this is well within their purview of authority. However; the Mayor and so far, the Common Council have not allocated any dollars to the Equal Rights Commission to actually do its job. We are again failing to uphold equal protections and afford equal opportunities under the law."