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Staff Reporter

Recently, at the Greater Cleveland Partnership (GCP) annual meeting, it was learned that Andrew Jackson, the executive director of the Commission on Economic Inclusion, was no longer in this position.

The Black community became furious after learning this news and began to form a plan to picket both GCP and City Hall to get answers. The Commission on Economic Inclusion, which has accomplished a great deal over the years withJackson, seemed very vague about answering questions.

The decision to make a leadership transition was related entirely to positioning them for the future, not in any way representing a repudiation of current accomplishment by anyone or any organization.

Not only was the Black community in an uproar, it went on to make others upset as well.

According to a May 9, 2012 statement released by Marcia Fudge, “The pre-mature departure of Andrew Jackson from the Commission on Economic Inclusion is a loss to the Greater Cleveland community. Since his arrival at the Commission in 2006, Mr. Jackson has been a positive force for change and development of minority business enterprises that increase the economic vitality and competitiveness of the entire region. In 2011, Jackson was instrumental in developing the proposal that led the U.S. Department of Commerce to open a Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) Business Center in Cleveland. Since its opening in April, 2011, the Center has helped to secure $23 million in contracts and $8 million in financing for its clients.”

Recently the Advisory Board of the Commission on Economic Inclusion shared they will be engaged in a strategy review over the next several months to begin determining its future role in advancing workplace diversity and inclusion initiatives inNortheast Ohio.

The Commission on Economic Inclusion which has accomplished a great deal over the last ten years. And, in addition to their current efforts, they all felt strongly that an additional set of complimentary strategies was timely.

Jackson, who is known throughout the city and is a small business owner himself, has been recognized for his civic and professional accomplishments by *Crain's Cleveland Business, Black Enterprise Magazine, Kaleidoscope Magazine, Consulting Magazine*
, the City of Cleveland, and various other groups.

The Advisory Board is led by Co-chairs, Lyle Ganske (partner-in-charge, Midwest Region, Jones Day), and Eddie Taylor (president, Taylor Oswald). Brian Hall, president and CEO of Innogistics LLC, is serving as the Commission’s interim executive director. One of the keys to moving forward will be the announcement of Andrew Jackson, the Commission’s former executive director, who will provide consulting services to the Advisory Board during the review process.

“Andrew has truly helped the Commission mature over the past five years, and I’m pleased he

has agreed to help us through a transition period for the next several months as we embark on a new strategy plan," said GCP President and CEO Joe Roman. "His knowledge and commitment to the community will be very beneficial to GCP and the Commission."

GCP feels they must do a better job in educating the community about who they are and what they are doing. The joint effort ofJacksonand GCP working together seems to be a step in the right direction.

In Congresswoman Fudge's released statement, she "urges the Greater Cleveland Partnership to maintain that momentum and understand its importance to the minority community as it pursues a new direction for the Commission."

Jackson has been very low key since the announcement, but shared with the Call & Post "I will do all I can to make sure the transition is a smooth one."

The Commission currently offers a wide range of resources, programs and services to its more than 100 corporate members including CEO Briefings, Senior Executive Forums, Diversity Professionals and Chief Procurement Officers groups, an annual diversity survey and benchmark data. It also provides resources and consulting services toNortheast Ohiominority-owned businesses through programs that include the Minority Business Accelerator 2.5+, the Minority Business Accelerator Estimating Room, and the MBE Working Capital Fund, and serves as the operator of the U.S. Department of Commerce Minority Business Center-Cleveland.