

I am Lennie Chism, a citizen, a community member of MN since 1988.

I fully in support the continuation of the Council of Black Minnesota; however not in its current form. Not without major changes to Council of Black Minnesota's operation.

From my research, the council was created as the conduit to MN Government and agencies where the numerous Black organizations such as the Urban Leagues, NAACP and many others were less than favorable fulfilling. A legislated solution for persons of African descent who often lacked paid lobbyist and advocates on most issues funded by tax-payers. Minnesotans of African descent now had what other communities have, public policies monitors especially during the legislative session.

Has this been the case?

The late George Ogbonna said, (Lester) Collins did not inform the board of upcoming legislation that would affect black people and was not forthcoming about what he was doing. "People were so disgruntled that they just resigned or walked away, and we did not have a full board to make critical decisions," he said. Star Tribune Article by: RANDY FURST, November 23, 2011

As you ponder the fate of The Council of Black Minnesota, again I say only with process changes. We need to address critical process questions to continue the Council of Black Minnesotans.

Last session I sought to have a term limit placed upon the Executive Director who had led the organization for 24 years with little expected outcomes. I sought out

members of the legislature to introduce term limit legislation, which Sen Hann and Rep Peppin introduced. Why? A necessary step the Council of Black Minnesota's board would not take even in the face of years of community complaints. We need to take that legislation a few steps farther to require term limits on Board members, along with a requirement of board training before appointments. Board appointments are vital to the governing of the Council. Many have viewed as a resume builder, a place for stardom, and now a place to approve Legacy Funds to them.

Additionally we need a process by which the Council of Black Minnesota's board hears from the community they are appointed to serve. Attached is a document that I sought to have introduced into the Board minutes, which was denied. Is the Council of Minnesota a closed group to community input? The board has long held a thought that if not appointed to the board, the community has no input. A community input mechanism if the Council of Black Minnesota is allowed to continue.

In closing, my sense of well being is not predicated on factors extraneous to me. I have no overwhelming need to be well liked. I am where determinism and freewill intersect. However, I do have a need to see the mechanism of government hear from others and myself. I thank the Sunset Committee for hearing my thoughts today.

SPRINGBOARD

Economic Development Corporation

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Star Tribune Article by: **RANDY FURST**, November 23, 2011

"Minnesota's transportation system is a vital part of the state's infrastructure and is essential for a strong and vibrant state economy," said Governor Mark Dayton. "These projects will support thousands of jobs in Minnesota, from the construction workers directly working on the projects to others who work in the support industries for construction. **(MN/DOT spent \$900 Million in 2011)**"

MN Gov Mark Dayton

COBM task of ongoing monitoring of outside state legislation and issues that can impact Black Minnesotans, such as the recent state government shutdown, have fallen by the wayside. COBM internal issues resulting from the recent removal of Lester Collins and Board Membership have decimated the COBM role.

It's about jobs for Black Minnesotans: Black organizations need to change course to become a persuasive voices in the legal assault on racial poverty. The social agenda of sitting at lunch counter has been achieved.

The COBM, a MN tax payer funded state agency, whose primary purpose is to advise the Governor and legislature on the nature and intensity of issues confronting the state's Black populations. The formation of the Council was critical for Black Minnesotans because historically the MN's Black population has been, and continues to be, underrepresented in the legislature with lobbyist and has had little access to the office of the governor or other policy makers. **The COBM was to be the conduit for Black Minnesotans voice in governmental affairs. The COBM must now advocate lawmakers to convince their colleagues to address the economic issues that will make the state more attractive to businesses and manufacturers while encouraging the expansion of existing firms for job in the urban areas. A thriving economy will provide the resources to improve our education system, strengthen tourism and agriculture, protect the environment and generate the jobs needed to sustain our families and provide work for the many young people graduating from our great universities and taking their skills out of the impoverished areas. **THE COBM needs to be a persuasive voice in the legal assault for racial parity, a rainmaker and consensus builder on public policy for all Black Minnesotans regardless of party affiliation.****

Black focused organizations must cooperate to move things forward without compromising their principles. Our disagreements should be policy based. Mayonnaises Sandwiches, Sugar Water, and doing what they got to do to survive. A product of our environment must change.

"And one should bear in mind that there is nothing more difficult to execute, nor more dubious of success, nor more dangerous to administer than to introduce a new order to things; for he who introduces it has all those who profit from the old order as his enemies; and he has only lukewarm allies in all those who might profit from the new." ~Niccolo Machiavelli