

Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture

Public Meeting Minutes

Monday, June 5, 2023

Banneker-Douglass Museum
84 Franklin Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The following Commissioners were in attendance: Maya Davis, H. Russell Frisby, Vice Chair Dr. Edwin T. Johnson, Janice Curtis Greene, Wali Gill, Melvin Kelly, Steven X. Lee, Cheryl McLeod, Dr. Barbara Paca, Elinor Thompson, and Tamara E. Wilson.

The meeting was called to order at 11:17 a.m. by Chair Rev. Dr. Tamara England Wilson.

Proof of Public Notice

Accepted by general consensus.

Welcome

Chair Rev. Dr. Tamara England Wilson thanked the public for attending the public meeting and then turned the floor over to Vice Chair Dr. Edwin T. Johnson who gave the formal welcome.

Vice Chair Johnson gave a hearty good morning, thanked the public and the MCAAHC Commissioners for attending the meeting.

- He shared that this was the month of June where he and the MCAAHC Commissioners are excited about the Juneteenth celebrations taking place across the State of Maryland.
- Vice Chair Johnson said that this meeting is the last fiscal meeting for the MCAAHC's year and was glad that the public could join in the historic meeting.
 - If one cannot attend some of the MCAAHC's public meetings, Vice Chair Johnson said that there are many programs and events that the commission will be hosting throughout the year that all can feel free to attend.
 - Vice Chair Johnson then turned the floor over to Executive Director Chanel Johnson.

Executive Director Chanel Johnson shared that this is not only the last meeting for the MCAAHC for this fiscal year but that there are several MCAAHC Commissioners whose terms are ending the month of June.

- She took the moment to recognize Commissioners: Melvin Kelly, Commissioner Cheryl McLeod, Mayor Kaycee Muniyeneh, Adi Nkwonta, Anthony Spencer, and Commissioner Lee who have significantly served the public and commission for two terms or more.
 - Executive Director Johnson gave them room to share words and then presented gifts to each leader to thank them for their years of service to the public, the BDM staff, the MCAAHC, the governor and the great State of Maryland.

Officer's Reports

MCAAHC Chair Rev. Dr. Tamara England Wilson

Chair Rev. Dr. England Wilson said that this will be her final report being given as the chair of the MCAAHC.

Chair Wilson gave an overview of the work that she has done with the MCAAHC.

- She was appointed to the commission in 2013 by Governor Martin O'Malley.
- Served under three incredible leaders: Chair Emeritus Ted Mack, Chair Emeritus Lyndra "nee Pratt" Marshall and Chair Emeritus Dale Glenwood Green.
 - It was serving as vice chair, under the powerful leadership of Chair Emeritus Dale Green, that she was able to see and understand the mission of the MCAAHC.
 - From there, she was able to watch Chair Emeritus Green navigate through difficult waters with the intent and cohesiveness of keeping the commission from mounting external forces that were rising against it.

- It was Chair Emeritus Green’s successful navigational, leadership that built a firm foundation that Chair Wilson was able to stand on.
 - She took a moment to thank Chair Emeritus Green publicly.
- The theme, for the retreat, that year was: “If you want to go fast go alone but if you want to grow strong, let’s work together” helped pave the way for her success as chair.
- Chair Wilson said that her work was three fold:
 - To stabilize the work of the MCAAHC that was started by Chair Green.
 - Increase the visibility of the commission around the State of Maryland.
 - Increase funding support.
- She shared that she had three fold strategic plan which was to:
 - Create a culture where the MCAAHC Commissioners were valued and needed.
 - Enhance the programs of the Banneker-Douglass Museum by strengthening its capacity and increasing state funding.
 - Develop philanthropy that would support the needs of this great institution’s work.
 - Chair Wilson said with great happiness that, “The vision has materialized.”
 - She and the MCAAHC commissioners worked with Delegate Shaneka Henson in getting the MCAAHC’s independence under the executive branch in State of Maryland Government.
 - In working with the BDM staff, Banneker-Douglass Museum Foundation, and auxiliaries:
 - Partnerships increased.
 - Visitation grew in the BDM as well as virtually.
 - Programming became amplified.
 - Exhibitions have been expanded tremendously.
 - The MCAAHC has been represented on key task forces, board’s events and other missions in government and private sectors.
 - Commissioners are making huge relevancy in cultural diversity and historic accuracy.
 - In working with Delegate Shaneka Henson, key leaders of the Legislative Black Caucus, and key network partnerships, the MCAAHC was able to increase the financial appropriation was increased by \$1 million dollars.
 - Additional staff is able to be hired.
 - Competitive salaries are now being offered and are comparable to other museum professionals.
 - These additional funds allow for additional programming and training.
- Chair Wilson also shared the MCAAHC was able to secure a long overdue \$3 million dollars for capital and repairs to the historic Banneker-Douglass Museum.
 - Beyond this, the MCAAHC’s African American Historic Preservation Grant was increased by \$4 million dollars.
 - A strong donor pool was created where over \$500,000 was raised in four years.
 - Lastly, it is through the work of Senator Verda Freeman Welcome whose vision and charge to preserve Maryland’s African American History & Culture that allows the commission to continue to move forward in the spirit of excellence.

Director’s Report-Executive Director Chanel Johnson

Executive Director Chanel Johnson shared that she has the pleasure of serving as the executive director over the MCAAHC and the BDM. She also said that along with the MCAAHC she oversees the African American Heritage Preservation Grant.

Director Johnson took a moment to recognize the BDM staff and shared her Director’s Report for the months of April and May.

The Banneker-Douglass Museum is entering its peak summer season with Juneteenth festivities and summer programming to engage families and audiences.

- From family reunions to summer festivals, BDM programs and exhibits will inspire and engage audiences of all ages and backgrounds.
- During the spring season, the Banneker-Douglass Museum focused on grant writing, onboarding new staff, programming and planning for FY2024.

Highlights for April and May include:

AAHPP Grant Workshops

MCAAHC and the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) collaborated to lead in-person, virtual grant orientation-question & answer sessions.

- Executive Director Johnson said that there has been an increase in attendees due to the tremendous level of outreach and grant funding available in FY2024.

Maryland History Day

In tribute to the life and legacy of Commissioner Marilyn Hatza, the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture named and sponsored the African American heritage award in her honor.

- The awardees included “42’s Frontier” Category: Junior Group Exhibit Student: Blaine Pendergraft; Jackson Widdoes; Mason Knott; Matthew Woods School: The Tome School.
- Other awardees were: Cecil County Teacher: Amy Roose with “The Expansion of Hip-Hop” Category; Senior Group Documentary Student: Cortez Washington, Jr, and The Sean Quarthey School: Loyola Blakefield; and Baltimore County Teacher: Samuel Manelski.

Fundraising

The MCAAHC raised \$24,000 and applied for \$126,500 in grant funding in support of FY2024 initiatives.

New Hired at the BDM

Ms. Shelly Holland hails from Maryland’s Board of Elections where she brings extensive experience in state accounting and fiscal management.

- Shelly is one of 7 new hires that the commission and museum will make this summer.

April & May -Visitation & Engagement

- April & May Facebook: 2,575 Followers (+1%) & 11,398 Reached
- Reached Instagram: 1,870 Followers (+1%) 1,331 Reached
- YouTube: 179 Subscribers (+1%) & 238 Views
- LinkedIn: 114 Followers (+1.2%) & 27 Page Views
- Website Visitations (BDM & MCAAHC): 3,630
- Onsite Visitation: 1,146 visitors
- **Total Reach: 17,770**

Media Coverage

- Radio advertisement spots on Radio One Baltimore and DC radio stations are taking place in partnership with Visit Annapolis & Anne Arundel County.
 - Promo video for sponsored ads on social media are being developed.
 - Facebook Live to be scheduled in June for Juneteenth in Annapolis promo.
- *Did You Know Annapolis Arts Day is on June 10th?* (May 21, 2023)
<https://www.eyeonannapolis.net/2023/05/did-you-know-annapolis-arts-day-is-on-june-10th/>

- *Patrice Drago: May celebrations provide artistic inspiration in Anne Arundel County* (May 5, 2023) - print and online - <https://www.capitalgazette.com/lifestyles/ac-cn-drago-may-gallery-column-20230505-pxd2u6cvhrcvjlo7a3m2hocyey-story.html>

Facilities & Administration

Maintenance work-BDM has procured bids for the replacement of the HVAC system in the Mt. Moriah AME church for FY 24.

- **BDM Volunteers:** 4 Volunteers gave a total of 18 hours.

VISITATION

Visitor Groups	April
Other Group Visits	We Care and Friends, Housing Authority of Annapolis and the Annapolis Elementary School.
Individual Visitors	528 visitors
BDM Events	Pretty Girl Academy, and GOSV Black Leaderships Service Awards Programs
Total Visitation	528 visitors

Visitor Groups	May
Other Group Visits	Providence Center, OBI, Thurgood Marshall Middle School, H.D. Gunston School, and the Woodson Senior High School.
Individual Visitors	548 Visitors
Total Visitation	618 visitors

Collections and Exhibits

Art Recovery and Reconciliation Meeting

On January 25th, the v  v  , or staff, of the monumental Harriet Tubman statue, *Araminta with Rifle and V  v  * (2017), was returned to the Banneker-Douglass Museum.

- Commissioner Cheryl McLeod is leading a reconciliation meeting with the individuals who stole the staff and the victims.

Art Purchase

BDM applied for a grant with the Anne Arundel Arts Council to purchase the Harriet Tubman statue.

- Goya has committed to a \$50,000 match and to collaborate with the museum on raising remaining funds.
- This program was streamed and can be viewed on the museum’s YouTube and Facebook pages.

Upcoming Programming

April 13, 2023- June 8th, 2023: The Banneker-Douglass Museum, in partnership with the Housing Authority of the City of Annapolis and the Annapolis Symphony Orchestra, will introduce a youth after school time program.

- These youth will be participants in learning the world of string instruments through hands on instruction and music lessons.

April 22, 2023: Banneker Douglass Museum Program Day at The National Portrait Gallery-Participants in BDM’s afterschool program will attend The National Portrait Gallery, in Washington, DC, for a fun day of education, history, and art.

- Accompanied by the Housing Authority Community Association staff and BDM teaching artist Nikki Brooks, the youth will explore current exhibitions including: “I Dream a World: Selections from Brian Lanker’s Portraits of Remarkable Black Women (Part II). “
 - The objective of this trip is to expose participants to culture outside of their own communities and provide inspiration for this final art project.

June 17, 2023: Juneteenth Youth Art Exhibition- Youth participants of the BDM afterschool program will exhibit their work as a culminating event to their semester-long instruction with teaching artist Nikki Brooks.

July 15, 2023: Radical Voices of Blackness: Artist Talk Pt. II- Join the BDM for part two of a panel discussion with selected exhibiting artists from the current exhibition, *The Radical Voice of Blackness Speaks of Resistance and Joy*.

- Panel discussion moderated by Myrtis Bedolla, exhibit guest curator and renowned owner of Galerie Myrtis.

August 26, 2023: Annapolis’ “March on Washington”- In commemoration of the 60th Anniversary of the March on Washington, the Caucus of African American Leaders (CAAL) is planning a two-day community event, which will include a reenactment of the March and program Saturday, August 26, 2023, followed by a worship service Sunday, August 27, 2023.

- The theme for this event is: “Commemorate, Educate, and Activate.”

UPCOMING PUBLIC PROGRAMS & EVENTS

Program	
<p><i>June 17, 2023</i></p> <p>Juneteenth Youth Art Exhibition & Annapolis Juneteenth Parade</p>	<p>Join us for a celebration of creativity and expression! Over the past several months, our dedicated young artists have honed their skills and explored their passions through a variety of mediums, from painting and drawing to photography and mixed media, led by teaching artist Nikki Brooks.</p> <p>At the exhibit, you’ll have the chance to view the stunning works of art created by our talented students, meet the artists, and learn about their inspirations and creative processes. This event is free and open to the public. Please bring your friends and family to enjoy a day of art, inspiration, and celebration! Breakfast will be served. Immediately following our program, please join us as we march in the Annapolis Juneteenth Parade.</p>
<p><i>August 26, 2023</i></p> <p>Annapolis’ “March on Washington”</p>	<p>In commemoration of the 60th Anniversary of the March on Washington, the Caucus of African American Leaders (CAAL) is planning a two-day community event, which will include a reenactment of the March and program Saturday, August 26, 2023, followed by a worship service Sunday, August 27, 2023. The theme for this event is: “Commemorate, Educate, and Activate.”</p>

Upcoming Events:

MCAAHC Donor’s Affair: Tuesday, June 13, 2023

Time: 6:00 p.m. -8:00 p.m.

Location: Banneker-Douglass Museum

Activity: Celebrate our FY2023 donors at a Juneteenth themed occasion.

MCAAHC Retreat

Friday, August 4, 2023

Time: 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Location: Morgan State University

Earl S. Richardson Library

Special Presentations

Madame Adrienne Jones, Speaker of the House

Madame Adrienne Jones, Speaker of the House came to the MCAAHC to give a special presentation.

- She came to the last public meeting of Chair Wilson thanking her for her time, support, and exceptional leadership management skills.
- Madame Jones recognized Chair Wilson's tenure of being with the MCAAHC since 2015.
- Madame Jones then shared that in 2010 she developed a bill that established the inception of the AAHPG.
 - She then decided that the grant, in conjunction with the Maryland Historical Trust, needed to be assigned to the MCAAHC who would study, cherish and study preserving Maryland's African American History and Culture.
 - Under Chair Wilson's leadership, the MCAAHC was able to secure \$12 million in grants and awarded 150 capital grant projects in the State of Maryland.
 - Despite their efforts, Madame Jones and Chair Wilson saw the need for more projects to be served around the state.
 - In partnership with Chair Wilson and the MCAAHC, Madame Jones and the State of Maryland legislators agreed that funding go from \$1 million dollars to \$5 million.
 - This ensures that more site and communities connected to our history will be preserved for generations to come.
- Madame Jones shared that it is moments like this that she looks forward to celebrating Chair Wilson's success.
 - She presented Chair Wilson with a citation recognizing her leadership to the MCAAHC as well as to the residents of the State of Maryland.

Delegate Shaneka Henson, District 30 for Anne Arundel County

Delegate Henson came to the MCAAHC to thank Chair Wilson for all of her, support, care, and leadership on all of the cultural resources throughout the State of Maryland.

- She gave praise to Chair Wilson for advancing the African American of Maryland's culture work in finding ways to expand the culture's capacity, as well as leaving the commission better than she found it.
 - Delegate Henson thanked Chair Wilson for being a true leader.
 - She also thanked Chair Wilson for moving forward with the charge of having the MCAAHC be independent with its work in the State of Maryland where the commission and its work will continue to grow and not be affected by the influence of the various chief leaders that will govern the State of Maryland in future years to come.
 - Delegate Henson also said that Chair Wilson and the MCAAHC have not only been a great resource to the State of Maryland but also to the City of Annapolis, Maryland.
 - A governor's citation was then presented to Chair Wilson.

Senator Cory McCray, 45th District, Baltimore City

Executive Director Chanel Johnson presented a governor's citation from Senator Cory McCray thanking Chair Wilson for all of her concerted efforts in not only preserving Maryland's African American history but also preserving Baltimore City's African American history for eight years as an MCAAHC Commissioner and leader.

MCAAHC Presentation by Vice Chair Edwin T. Johnson and Executive Director Chanel Johnson

Vice Chair Dr. Edwin T. Johnson and Executive Director Chanel Johnson, on behalf of the MCAAHC Commissioners, presented a specially made gavel plaque in recognition of Chair Wilson's years of service to the MCAAHC.

Senator Benjamin Brooks, District 10, Baltimore County

Mr. Ben Laird, from Senator Benjamin Brooks' office, presented a citation on behalf of her leadership and service being the commissioner that represented Baltimore County.

Dr. Carl Snowden, Civil Rights Activist and President of the Caucus of African American Leaders

Dr. Snowden shared words that there were men and women that came to the historic Mt. Moriah African Methodist Episcopal Church that paved the way where the MCAAHC meeting was taking place.

- He shared that it is important for all of us to preserve our history and that our children know their history.
- He said that Dr. Wilson has done something important; she has preserved our history.
- Dr. Snowden said that he has met people that are scholars, have degrees in education but, when he asks them a particular question, they cannot answer it.
 - The questions was: "Who is the first person to bring blended families to our White House?"
 - Most people tend to think that is was Vice President Kamala Harris marrying a white man blending the family.
 - Dr. Snowden shared that is actually was Richard Mentor Johnson, ninth Vice President of the United States of America who married a black woman.
 - Vice President Johnson served under President Martin Van Buren but they lost the election because Vice President Johnson had a black wife.
 - Julia Chinn the wife of Vice President Johnson was erased from the history books because she was a black wife.
 - Dr. Snowden said that he used this example to share how important it is that we preserve our history so that if anyone wants to take it, we know it.
- Dr. Snowden shared that there was a new award created by the Caucus of African American Leaders called: "The Governor Wes Moore Leadership Award."
 - This award is given to people that make a difference in the State of Maryland and our communities.
 - Dr. Carl Snowden presented this award to Chair Wilson as the second recipient of this coveted award for outstanding leadership in preserving African American history and culture.
 - Chair Wilson thanked the State of Maryland Executive Legislative Leadership, Anne Arundel County Executive Legislative Leadership, Baltimore County Executive Legislative Leadership and the MCAAHC Commissioners for their love, gifts, and many acts of kindness.

Committee Reports

Vice Chair Dr. Edwin T. Johnson

Vice Chair Dr. Johnson shared that Executive Director Chanel Johnson has already covered most of his report in her Director's Report.

- The only new information that he was glad to share is that it is official that a new chief financial officer will be on-boarded soon to the Banneker-Douglass Museum.

African American Heritage Preservation Grant-Commissioner Steven X. Lee

Commissioner Steven X. Lee spoke on behalf of the AAHPG Committee to the MCAAHC and public regarding a proposal of considering having funding for not only capital projects but funding programs and operational needs.

- Commissioner Lee said that now that the MCAAHC has a significant increase in the AAHPG from \$1 million to \$5 million, it would be great if there is some funding that could be provided to help African American organizations be conceptually funded in many capacities.
- Chair Wilson said that she spoke with Madame Adrienne Jones, the Speaker of the House who shared that something like this could be done but it must go before the legislature for a vote during the State of Maryland's Legislative Sessions.

- Chair Wilson asked that the MCAAHC consider that a motion be made to take part of the MCAAHC's capital fund increase to be considered for funding programs and operational uses to be brought before the State of Maryland legislative body during the legislative session.
 - Commissioner H. Russell Frisby agrees with the MCAAHC in considering some funding to go towards this area but felt that the MCAAHC needs to focus on defining the programs that would receive this type of provision.
 - Chair Wilson and some of the MCAAHC Commissioners felt that it would be best if things weren't capped with conditions to see what is being asked to be considered by the MCAAHC.
- Chair Wilson entertained a motion on how the MCAAHC would determine how to present the potential opportunity to share some of the AAHPG for program funding and organizational support.
 - The motion was moved by Commissioner Elinor Thompson.
 - It was seconded by Commissioner Melvin Kelly and the motion carried.
 - A majority of the MCAAHC Commissioners agree, however Commissioner Frisby abstained due to the need for specifications in determining how other organizations may benefit from the process in receiving these funds.

Commissioner Janice Curtis Greene and Commissioner Cheryl McLeod

Commissioner Greene shared that she is currently the Banneker-Douglass Museum chair.

- She shared that there are two major programs coming up for the year they are the Black Symposium and the Harriet Tubman History Award program.
- The Black Symposium will take place at Morgan State University in the month of October.
 - The conference will feature speakers and workshops during this one day affair.
 - More detailed information is to come in the near future.
- The Harriet Tubman History award celebration was to take place at Chamber's Park and the Mt. Olive AME Church in Annapolis, Maryland.
 - This program was chaired by Commissioner Cheryl McLeod.
 - Commissioner Greene passed the mic to Commissioner McLeod who shared words regarding this program.
 - Commissioner McLeod said that this program was supposed to have taken place on June 1st but due to an all wide City of Annapolis power outage the date has been moved to the month of July with a date to be secured soon.
 - Commissioner McLeod shared that when this event takes place, she will no longer be an MCAAHC Commissioner but will serve in the capacity as a volunteer doing outreach for this affair.
 - She would like for the BDM Committee as well as the MCAAHC to keep this program back at Chamber's Park and the Mt. Olive AME Church so that it stays in the community.
 - Commissioner Greene shared that Ms. Breonna Taylor's 30th birthday is today June 5th where a cake has been prepared for the guests of the public meeting.
 - Commissioner McLeod also shared that cultural relevancy is important where she is leaving a gift of African \$1 coin for all of her MCAAHC Commissioners.
 - In addition, Commissioner McLeod has a coin of Maya Angelou for all of the female commissioners to enjoy.
 - Executive Director Chanel Johnson shared that First Lady Dawn Moore will be at the Banneker-Douglass Museum on Saturday, June 17th for its Juneteenth affair.

Voting for Chair & Vice Chair Positions

Chair Wilson turned the floor over to Commissioner Janice Curtis Greene, MCAAHC Opens Meeting's Act representative who governed the process for the nominations of the MCAAHC's Chair and Vice Chair positions.

- She thanked Chair Wilson and Vice Chair Dr. Edwin T. Johnson for their work serving as leaders of the MCAAHC.

Voting for the Chair Position

Commissioner Janice Curtis Greene asked are there any nominations for the Vice Chair Position.

- Commissioner H. Russell Frisby nominated Commissioner Edwin T. Johnson for the Chair position.
- It was seconded by Commissioner Elinor Thompson.
 - Commissioner Edwin T. Johnson, humbly, accepted the nomination.
 - There weren't any other nominations.
 - The floor was closed for nominations.
 - All MCAAHC Commissioners unanimously voted for Commissioner Dr. Edwin T. Johnson to serve as the new Vice Chair of the MCAAHC.
 - Commissioner Dr. Edwin T. Johnson now serves as the Chair of the MCAAHC for a year.

Voting for the Vice Chair Position

Commissioner Janice Curtis Greene asked are there any nominations for the Vice Chair Position.

- Chair Dr. Edwin T. Johnson nominated Commissioner Maya Davis for the Chair position.
- It was seconded by Commissioner Steven X. Lee.
 - Commissioner Maya Davis, humbly, accepted the nomination.
 - There weren't any other nominations.
 - The floor was closed for nominations.
 - All MCAAHC Commissioners unanimously voted for Commissioner Maya Davis to serve as the new Vice Chair of the MCAAHC.
 - Commissioner Maya Davis now serves as the Chair of the MCAAHC for a year.

Chair Wilson then called for, the last time, a motion to adjourn the MCAAHC Public meeting. New Chair Dr. Edwin T. Johnson moved that a motion be made to adjourn the public meeting. Commissioner Melvin Kelly seconded, and the motion carried.

The public meeting was adjourned at 1:38 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

LeRonn Herbert, Special Assistant