

Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture

Public Meeting Minutes
Monday, October 3, 2022

Water's Edge Museum
101 Mill Street
Oxford, Maryland 21654

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

The meeting was called to order at 11:07 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 gave the floor to Vice Chair Dr. Edwin T. Johnson, to share words.

Vice Chair Dr. Johnson welcomed all to the Maryland Commission on African American History & Culture's (MCAAHC) Public Meeting. He shared that he was excited about having the MCAAHC's public meeting at the Water's Edge Museum in Oxford, Maryland.

- Vice Chair Johnson thanked Commissioner Dr. Paca for hosting the meeting and looked forward to the wonderful tour of this great facility.
 - He admonished the public and commissioners to take in all that the museum has to offer with its rich history and artwork.
- Vice Chair Johnson said that the goal of the commission is to reach all four corners of the State of Maryland with representation.
 - He shared the rich history that the MCAAHC was established in 1969.
 - For 50 years the MCAAHC has been preserving, documenting and promoting Maryland's African American History & Culture.
 - The commission's responsibility is to also oversee the Banneker-Douglass Museum as the African American Heritage Preservation Grant program.
 - The MCAAHC is one of 9 sub commissions and the only commission on African American History & Culture.
 - The MCAAHC has become a national model for preserving, promoting and documenting African American history and culture.

Chair Wilson then turned the floor over to Commissioner Dr. Paca the host for the public meeting at the Water's Edge Museum.

Commissioner Dr. Paca welcomed the MCAAHC, "her family" back home to Water's Edge Museum. She took a moment and recognized Ms. Ree Joseph, Managing Director who shared words of welcome, thanks, and shared that they will give a docent guided tour after the public meeting.

Approval of Minutes

Chair Rev. Dr. Tamara England Wilson asked for a motion to be made in accepting the minutes of the August 1, 2022 meeting. Vice Chair Edwin T. Johnson, had one change that needed to be made to his greeting. The item to be changed was on page 1 paragraph 6, the sentence that says, "Dr. Martin David Jenkins, a cutting edge psychologist whose research brought about the concept of the "gifted black child" should have the word "Education" to the word psychologist.

Commissioner Janice Curtis made a motion to accept the minutes with the minor correction. Vice Chair Dr. Edwin T. Johnson seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Director's Report

Mr. LeRonn Herbert, Special Assistant to the MCAAHC, gave a Director's Report on behalf of Ms. Chanel Compton. He greeted the MCAAHC and public and began his report sharing that the reason she was not at the public meeting is that on Saturday, September 17, 2022 Executive Director Compton got married to Mr. Erik Johnson. Words of congratulations and blessings was given towards this union.

Kunta Kinte Celebration

The Kunte Kinte Celebration took place on Saturday, September 24, 2022 at the harbor in downtown Annapolis, Maryland on the city docks.

- This festive occasion is under the direction of Ms. Jan Lee, Director of Marketing and Communications of the BDM.
- Families, friends, political figures, as well as people from all over the world come to enjoy this great celebration of life.
- Five to seven thousand individuals come every yearly to enjoy the culture, customs, food and dance of African, Caribbean, and African American traditions.
 - Mr. Herbert admonished the public to please place the fourth Saturday of September to come and enjoy this great celebration.

BDM Visitation

- The BDM's public engagement has continue to garner a great following.
 - Month of August
 - ☐ August BDM onsite visitation: 763 visitors
 - ☐ August BDM website visitation: 1,327
 - Month of September
 - ☐ September BDM Onsite visitation: 260 visitors

BDM Social Media Engagement

- Facebook: 2056 Likes (+3.5%), 2544 Followers (+4%) & 30,800 reached in our public announcements
- Instagram: 1739 Followers (+1.6%) & 3,140 Reached
- YouTube: 151 Subscribers (+4%)
- LinkedIn: 79 Followers (+54%)

BDM Media Coverage

- Monumental statue Araminta With Rifle And Vèvè was featured in several online publications:
 - Bay Weekly: <https://bayweekly.com/tubman-statue-bigger-than-life/>

- Baltimore Fishbowl: <https://baltimorefishbowl.com/stories/sculpture-of-harriet-tubman-by-baltimores-joyce-j-scott-to-be-displayed-at-banneker-douglas-museum/>
- BmoreArt: <https://bmoreart.com/2022/08/bmorearts-picks-august-30-september-5.html>

The Anne Arundel County Branch of the NAACP featured an article on BDM's 1619 Community Mural Project.

MCAAHC Media Coverage

- Commissioner Janice Curtis Greene was spotlighted as giving a reenactment as Harriet Tubman at Historic Sotterley's Day of Unity and Healing program on August 20, 2022.
 - Commissioners Elinor Thompson and Maya Davis also attended this affair.
- BMore News spotlighted Commissioner Dr. Edwin T. Johnson for becoming the new MCAAHC vice Chair of the commission.

Special Projects and Programs

- Association of African American Museums (AAAM) Conference 2022 Attendance - August 10-12, 2022.
- September International Underground Railroad Month Proclamation Event in Partnership with Maryland Department of Tourism and Visit Annapolis - September 1, 2022.
- National Park Service Network to Freedom Social Media Takeover -Banneker- Douglass Museum Day - September 6, 2022.
- Fall 2022 Marketing & Communications Intern - September - December 2022.

Up Next

- MCAAHC Symposium Promo - October 27-28, 2022.
- Marketing, Communications, and Sponsorship Management for "*The Radical Voice of Blackness Speaks of Resistance and Joy*" Exhibition - November 10, 2022.
- MCAAHC Fall 2022 *Pendulum* Newsletter Promotion.
- Spring 2023 Marketing & Communications and Development Internship Opportunities.

Renovations to the Banneker-Douglass Museum-A Wonderful Work in Progress from September to October 2022

- 403 hours of labor given to this project.
- 31 days of construction and renovations have taken place thus far.
- 21 technicians have steadily worked hard in the church.
- 12 technicians removed the old carpet and particle boards off of the original Mt. Moriah AME Church floors.
- 9 technicians removed any existing debris off of the floors to prepare for sanding and finishing.
- 4 technicians sanded and stained both Verda Welcome Freeman Hall and Herbert Frisby Hall.
- 2 technicians secured the shoe molding around the columns in the church, the perimeter of the church and are preparing the molding for the pulpit stage area.
 - New state of the art lighting and sound system to be placed hopefully by the end of the year.

Great Happenings with the BDM

- *Marquee signage has now been place on Main Street in downtown, Annapolis designating where the BDM is located around the circle.*
- *Marquee signage with a QR Code at the Visitor's Center on West Street in Annapolis shares information and history about the BDM.*

Officer's Reports

MCAAHC Chair Rev. Dr. Tamara England Wilson

Chair Rev. Dr. England Wilson gave her report where she shared that in terms of the legislative session, the commission is working with a consultant to update the MCAAHC's handbook as well as to develop an operational manual.

- She shared that there is an increase in the MCAAHC's funding and that there are operational things that needs to be addressed due to the commission's independence and increased funding.
- The MCAAHC is also working to have all materials regarding the commission's hand book and operational manual to be in compliance.
- The commission will be working with a consultant at the end of October with the thought process of having all materials completed by the end of the year.
- An email went out sharing the great news of bill HRNR8971.
 - Chair Wilson thanked the MCAAHC Commissioners for their coordinated efforts in sending materials of support to their constituents of their respective city and counties.
 - The National Council on African American History and Culture is spearheaded by the Honorable Congressman Kweisi Mfume and the Honorable Senator Ben Cardin.
 - Chair Wilson said that often the MCAAHC shares that the commission is one of nine commissions and are the only premiere African American history and culture commission the United States, but the information is not shared abroad as the model.
 - Congressman Mfume introduced this bill to establish a 12 member council that is appointed by President Biden as well as confirmed by the Senate.
 - Individuals will serve a three to five year term.
 - ☐ Congressman Mfume already has 36 supporters from the House.
 - ☐ Senator Cardin has introduced this initiative to the Senate and is rallying supporters.
 - ☐ This work is taking place now so that many supporters will be in place to move forward with this bill in 2023.
 - This council will move forward with its initiatives to support: education, museums, as well as to shape national policies.
 - Congressman Mfume asked if the MCAAHC would unanimously support this bill.
- Chair Rev. Dr. Tamara England Wilson asked for a motion to support the Bill HRNR8971.
 - Commissioner H. Russell Frisby made a motion to accept the bill with support. The MCAAHC Commissioner's unanimously seconded the motion and the motion carried.

State of Maryland Ethics Report and MCAAHC Commissioner Attendance

- Chair Wilson had Mr. LeRonn Herbert to share information regarding the commission's ethics form and attendance to the MCAAHC's public meetings.
 - Mr. Herbert shared that it is imperative every year that the MCAAHC Commissioners fill out the State of Maryland Ethics forms.
 - This form shares that each commissioner is compliant with State of Maryland Government, its governing rules and allows there to be tremendous transparency of the commissioners to the State of Maryland public.
 - If one does not fill out the forms, the State of Maryland Governments says that they cannot serve as a commissioner.
 - Mr. Herbert also shared that he will be keeping a record of attendance of each commissioner attending the public meetings.

- In order for an MCAAHC Commissioner to remain compliant, the commissioner can only miss 50% of the 6 meetings held during the fiscal year.
 - ▣ Chair Wilson can excuse a commissioner and that won't count against their attendance record.
 - ▣ He will keep the Chair and the MCAAHC Commissioners posted if they are not compliant with this process.
- Chair Wilson said that moving forward in the future, Mr. Herbert will be keeping track of the attendance for the MCAAHC to make sure no commissioner is in danger of being disbarred.
 - ▣ Commissioner Anthony Spencer asked if there were allowances for a commissioner to join the meeting via Zoom or some social media platform.
 - ▣ Chair Wilson said that it is imperative that all MCAAHC Commissioners present to share a unified effort that all commissioners are present showing representation of their jurisdiction.

Chair Wilson reported that the MCAAHC was very successful as well as celebrate this great milestone in getting additional funding for the BDM, the AAHPG Program as well as to secure the MCAAHC and BDM's independence.

- The funding will be released on July 1, 2023.
- Now that the MCAAHC is in the door in getting funding, Chair Wilson shared that she have talked to several legislators and Executive Director Compton about incrementally getting additional funding to match what other State of Maryland Agencies.
 - She was asking if the MCAAHC Commissioners support this endeavor.
 - Commissioner Frisby said that this is a standard practice that agencies of the State of Maryland pursue every year.
 - Vice Chair Dr. Johnson said that the request that we are now receiving for funding should have been given many years ago.
 - ▣ If one looks in terms of progression, the MCAAHC would be in a difference place now.
 - Mathematically and physically the MCAAHC is still trying to catch up.
 - Vice Chair Dr. Johnson said that the commission cannot stop at this level but needs to move forward so that an anchor is not placed with what is received now and find that the BDM and the MCAAHC is stuck in the same place again.
 - Commissioner Frisby said that the MCAAHC may want to request for a bond bill to be provided to go along with the capital budget.

Expansion of the Governance Committee

Chair Wilson shared that she, Vice Chair Dr. Johnson and Executive Director Compton spoke about the expansion of the Governance committee.

- To date, the Governance Committee consists of these three leaders that advise and prepare for the public meetings and affairs that pertain to information for the MCAAHC.
- What Chair Wilson would like to do is to include the chairs of the PR Committee, BDM Committee, and Finance Committee.
 - This will help to shape the direction of the committees as well as a better view where the MCAAHC is going.

- Vice Chair Dr. Johnson, made a motion that the MCAAHC expand the Governance Committee to include the chairs and co-chairs. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tony Spencer and the motion carried.

MCAAHC Vice Chair Dr. Edwin T. Johnson & Commissioner Herbert Frisby-Administration and Finance Committee

Vice Chair Dr. Edwin T. Johnson shared that the FY 2022 financial goal of the MCAAHC is to raise \$200,000.

- To date, the MCAAHC has raised \$25,000 which is against the goal of the first quarter that ended on September 30th.
- The second quarter's goal is to raise \$75,000 by December 31st.
- There is \$65,000 to raise by the deadline.
 - Chair Wilson shared that the We Rise Development Committee will be having a signature event on Wednesday, November 9th with the MCAAHC's Corporate Sponsors and prospects to thank them for their donations and support.
 - Chair Wilson shared that this will be the commission's third year raising \$200,000 for the MCAAHC Campaign.
 - She asked the MCAAHC that if the commissioners are connected to corporations or businesses to please ask them for a \$5,000 donation or more as well as to sponsor a great event to support this significant cause.

Committee Reports

BDM Committee-Commissioner Commissioner Janice Curtis Greene

Commissioner Janice Curtis Greene, Vice Chair of the BDM Committee said that she is so happy to report on the work of this committee.

Commissioner Greene shared that the BDM Committee is preparing for the 2022 BDM/MCAAHC Symposium

Theme: The Pursuit of Organizational Health, Healing and Wholeness in the African American Community

Date: Thursday and Friday, October 27th and 28th.

Location: Historic Morgan State University

In keeping with the Mission of the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture, our 2022 symposium is in partnership with Mr. Lou Diggs Center for Race & Justice as well as the Benjamin Quarles Humanities and Social Justice Institute.

- Commissioner Greene thanked Mr. LeRonn Herbert in working with Sodexo Caterers in getting the catering cost of the food lowered to meet the budget; Ms. Jan Lee for meeting with the two organizations joining the symposium, developing flier as well as managing the registration; and Commissioner Cheryl McLeod and Commissioner Adi Nkwonta to make sure that things continually move forward and that all the goals are met for the success of this conference.
 - Commissioner Greene gave Vice Chair Dr. Edwin T. Johnson a very hearty thanks for providing the opportunity to have the symposium as well as creating the great partnerships with Morgan State University and the various organizations that came without any cost.
 - A complete report of the layout of the two day symposium will be sent soon to the MCAAHC as well as to the public.
 - Chair Wilson admonished the MCAAHC Commissioners to please follow and share the announcements and information that is shared on the various BDM social media accounts.

African American Heritage Preservation's Grant, Commissioner H. Russell Frisby, Jr.

Commissioner Frisby gave a comprehensive report that the MCAAHC has received 49 applications.

- He shared that it was a tough year being that there were \$5 million worth of grant requests that superseded the \$2 million amount of the grant money offered.
- The candidates had strong, detailed, applications more than times seen in the past.
- The questions the committee took into consideration was:
 - Are the candidates, that applied for the grant, speaking of preserving African American history and culture of Maryland?
 - Many of the applications dealt with community development rather than preservation.
 - Locality-Is the MCAAHC reaching the four corners of the State of Maryland?
 - Political Support-have the candidates supported the MCAAHC in the present and or past?

Commissioner Frisby thanked: Co-Chair Vice Chair Dr. Johnson, Commissioner Cheryl McLeod and Commissioner Anthony Spencer and Mr. LeRonn Herbert for their work and support on the AAHPG Committee.

- Vice Chair Dr. Johnson made a motion that the MCAAHC continue the discussion as well as take a final vote on the AAHPG candidates in a closed meeting session after the public meeting. Commissioner Frisby seconded and the motion carried.

MCAAHC Individual Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Steven X. Lee's

Commissioner Lee shared that he has the pleasure to serve on the G50 Semisequin centennial Commission.

- He shared that he always asks for African American organizations to consider helping by providing educational program to be shared.]
 - Funding is being developed for this area of promotion and economical development of the community.
- On Saturday, July 2, 2022, Commissioners Cheryl McLeod, and Janice Curtis Greene attended Commissioner Steven X. Lee's book signing and Barnes & Noble in Ellicott City.
- *The book: The Story of Mr. Thomas Carney: A Maryland Patriot of the American Revolutionary War* was well received.

Commissioner Maya Davis

Commissioner Maya Davis reported that the PR Committee is working on drafting a questionnaire for the MCAAHC in determining who their audience is as well as how the MCAAHC would like to be represented.

- Commissioner Davis thanked Chair Wilson for speaking at the Riverdale House Museum where Commissioner Davis serves as the executive director there.

Commissioner Davis also reported that the Maryland Truth, Lynching, Truth, and Reconciliation Commission will be having three hearings that will take place.

- This will happen on October 12th in City Hall in Annapolis, Maryland for Anne Arundel County, October 22nd in Salisbury and October 22nd Princess Anne.

Commissioner Anthony Spencer

Commissioner Spencer thanked Executive Director Chanel Compton and the MCAAHC for allowing him to be on the Elktonia Beach Commission in Anne Arundel County.

- Elktonia Beach was the last 5 acres of the 80 acres of Carr's and Sparrow's Beach.
- Elktonia Beach is being preserved and recognized.
- A house on the beach is looking to be preserved as well.
- Mr. Joel Dunn, from the Chesapeake Conservancy helped in providing funding for this endeavor.

Commissioner Dr. Barbara Paca

Commissioner Dr. Paca shared that she admired the work that Commissioner Lee was doing and that the Water's Edge Museum on the Eastern Shore was the first to honor black families in the country.

- The museum has won many national awards.
- This is also a national documented stop of the Middle Passage on the right hand side of the Chesapeake Bay.
 - Commissioner Dr. Barbara Paca shared that the museum has an initiative called the Maryland Spiritual Initiatives, where the Maryland Historical Trust shared to take all of the wonderful properties that have been restored and reactivate them through spirituals.
 - A non-classical concert took place with the Maryland Spiritual singing at the Cosmos Club in Washington, DC.
 - This was only performance to take place in the grand ballroom there.
 - There were 30 individuals who attended the concert, including Mr. Eddie and Sylvia Brown, White House dignitaries and more.
 - Commissioner Dr. Paca shared that the members of the Basil Church also performed for Harriet Tubman Day.

New Business Vice Chair Dr. Edwin T. Johnson

Chair Wilson gave room for Vice Chair Dr. Johnson to share two items for new business on the commission's agenda. Vice Chair Dr. Johnson said that he has been drumming up support of the museum committee to look into the changing of the Banneker-Douglass Museum to the Banneker-Douglass-Tubman Museum.

- The committee would like to also see that Harriet Tubman be recognized for her contributions to the State of Maryland and the country at large.
- Vice Chair Dr. Johnson shared that throughout our Civil Rights History women have not been spotlighted and or included for their contributions.
- Vice Chair Dr. Johnson made a motion that the MCAAHC consider having an Ad Hoc Commission to be devised to consider changing the name of the Banneker-Douglass Museum and making it the Banneker-Douglass-Tubman Museum to be inclusive of Harriet Tubman and to correct the omission on women on the State of Maryland's Museum of African American History & Culture.
 - The MCAAHC body all seconded the motion and the motion carried.
 - Chair Wilson asked that Vice Chair Dr. Johnson give a report on the endeavors of the Ad Hoc committee at the December 5, 2022 MCAAHC Public Meeting.

Vice Chair Dr. Johnson said that he was excited to hear about Mr. Herbert's report on the Kunta Kinte Celebration but was disappointed that Commissioner Cheryl McLeod had to utilize her own funds to pay for various materials to creatively repurpose, promote as well as to market the MCAAHC and the BDM.

- He shared that in the spirit of how the MCAAHC wants to present itself as an independent agency of the State of Maryland and the work that it does, Vice Chair Dr. Johnson feels that there needs to be an effort to make sure that we are represented appropriately in public spaces.
- Vice Chair Dr. Johnson is looking for interest in the MCAAHC having its own tent, signs, blazers, ties, bow ties and various other promotional materials that the MCAAHC Commissioners are branded the same way.
 - He shared that he would like for Commissioner Cheryl McLeod to spearhead this group with Ms. Jan Lee and other MCAAHC Commissioners that would like to be a part of this endeavor.

Dr. Kara Hunt, Director of Education for the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (MCR).

Dr. Hunt came to the MCAAHC to share the wealthy resources that the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights has.

- In 1927 the MCR started out as the Interracial Commission on Maryland, then in 1943 called the Commission Designed to Study Problems Against Color People, in 1948 it was named the Governor's Commission on Problems Affecting Negro Population, 1951 the Commission on Interracial Problems and Relations, 1969 the Commission on Human Relations, and then in 2011 it was named the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights.

She shared that brings her expertise and passion affords her the opportunity to go throughout the State of Maryland to provide training on civil rights issues concerning the law, investigations, history, law enforcement, systemic and structural discrimination, as well as to address the issues of inequality.

- All of this is done through Title 20 of the State Annotated Code which gives Dr. Hunt and the MCR to address discrimination on the job, housing, health services, non-commercial discrimination as well.
- The goal is to have the State of Maryland Free from any type of discrimination as well as to promote a healthy environment of respect and understanding throughout the State of Maryland.
- In addition to her position at the MCR, she is a foodie and travels to various African American sites across the United States.
- To learn more about the MCR, one can go to their website at: <https://mccr.maryland.gov/Pages/Contact-Us.aspx>

The Emmett Till Alert System

Mr. Carl Snowden, Executive Director of the Caucus of African American Leaders have developed the Emmett Till Alert System that shares information with Civil Rights Groups, NAACP, Maryland Association of Black Journalist as well as the MCAAHC to support and receive this information to protect generations of African Americans in Maryland.

Commissioner Cheryl McLeod made a motion that the MCAAHC, as a body, accepts this process as more information is made available. It was seconded by Vice Chair Dr. Edwin T. Johnson and the motion carried.

Chair Wilson then called for and made a motion to adjourn the MCAAHC Public meeting. Vice Chair Dr. Edwin T. Johnson seconded, and the motion carried.

The public meeting was adjourned at 1:36 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

LeRonn Herbert, Special Assistant