

## **Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture**

Public Meeting Minutes

Monday, August 1, 2022

Morgan State University  
Jenkins Hall Behavioral and Social Sciences Center, Room #100  
1600 Havenwood Road  
Baltimore, Maryland 21218

The following Commissioners were in attendance: Maya Davis, Dr. Walter Gill, Vice Chair Dr. Edwin T. Johnson, Janice Curtis Greene, Cheryl McLeod, Dr. Barbara Paca, Torrey Snow, Elinor Thompson, Reggie Turner, and Tamara E. Wilson.

The meeting was called to order at 11:22 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, the host of the public meeting.

Vice Chair Dr. Johnson welcomed all to the Maryland Commission on African American History & Culture's (MCAAHC) Public Meeting.

He shared this public meeting was very important to him.

- First, the public meeting is being held in a building named after Dr. Martin David Jenkins, a cutting edge psychologist whose research brought about the concept of the "gifted black child."
  - Dr. Jenkins spent much of his work disproving that black children had low IQ scores.
- Second, the building is considered the "hallowed ground" because Morgan students going back to 1947 had "sit down protests" that spoke against the injustices of people of color.
  - The second building on Morgan State's campus, the Northwood Shopping Center, is known as the place where students from Goucher College, Coppin State University, and Johns Hopkins University collectively agitated against racism.
    - Agitation that was seen in February 1960 in North Carolina AT&T as well as other places in the south responded based off of the rich history of what was done at Morgan State University.
    - Vice Chair Johnson gave room for Dean M'bare N'gom, Ph.D. to share words and address the public.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Chair Rev. Dr. Tamara England Wilson asked for a motion to be made in accepting the minutes of the June 4, 2022 meeting. Commissioner Janice Curtis agreed made a motion to accept the minutes. Vice Chair Dr. Edwin T. Johnson seconded the motion and the motion carried.

### **Director's Report**

Ms. Chanel Compton gave greetings and shared that she is the Executive Director of the Banneker-Douglass Museum (BDM) and the MCAAHC. She took a moment to recognize BDM staff: Ms. Jan Lee, Director of Marketing and Communication's as well as Mr. LeRonn Herbert, BDM Administrative Manager and Special Assistant for the Maryland Commission on African American History & Culture that were present at this meeting.

Director Compton shared that she will be giving her report on June through September activities.

- **BDM Visitation**

- The BDM social media engagement has begun to develop a great following.
  - Month of June
    - 📄 June BDM's website visitation was: 1,070 followers.
    - 📄 June onsite visitation was: 615 visitors.
    - 📄 Facebook: 1,986 likes (up 1.3%); 2,444 followers and 12,765 individuals reached.
    - 📄 Instagram: 1,711 followers (up 2%)
    - 📄 LinkedIn: 51 Followers; 562 Post impressions
  - Month of July
    - 📄 July BDM's website visitation was: 938 followers (as of 7/22).
    - 📄 July onsite visitation was: 738 visitors.

- **Special Projects**

- 2021 and 2020 Annual Reports posted.
- Summer 2022 Marketing and Communications Intern.
- Spring Appeal/We Rise FY22 Development Committee Marketing and Communications
- Association of African American Museums (AAAM) Conference Attendance
- National Park Service Network to Freedom Social Media Takeover: Banneker-Douglass Museum Day-Scheduled September 6<sup>th</sup>.
- BDM Website Merge.

- **Up Next**

- Marketing, Communications, and Sponsorship Management for *The Radical Voice of Blackness Speaks of Resistance and Joy* Exhibition.
  - MCAAHC Summer 2022 Pendulum Promotion.
  - Fall Marketing & Communications Internship Opportunity.
- The 1619 Project: A Public Mural will take place at the Banneker-Douglass Museum, Saturday, June 11, 2022 from 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
- Juneteenth Parade-Downtown Annapolis, Maryland, Saturday, June 18<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 p.m.
- Severn Community Guardians: "A Paint and Sip with Civic Leaders and Community Members," Saturday, June 18<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
- The Cherry Hill Festival, Monday, July 4, 2022 from 1:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m.
- Marshall Learning Center Youth Program Sessions, July 21<sup>st</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>, and 28<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

- **Upcoming Programs**

- August 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>: Association of African American Museums (AAAM) 44<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference
- September 1<sup>st</sup>: Governor's Proclamation Underground Railroad Month
- September 24<sup>th</sup>: The Kunta Kinte Heritage Festival at Annapolis City Dock
- October 27<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup>: Annual MCAAHC Symposium at Morgan State University
- September-May 2022: Eastport Terrace "Lifting Our Voice" After School Program

- **Acquisitions**

- *Papers of Cynthia Carter*: BDM received two containers of archival materials from Alderwoman Cynthia Abney Carter, the first Black woman elected to the Annapolis City Council.
  - The materials primarily document her work with the 2008 presidential campaign for Barack Obama in Maryland.
- *King Johnson Memorial Soil Jar*: “A soil collection jar from the site of the last known lynching in the State of Maryland, of Mr. King Johnson on December 25, 1911.
  - The jar was collected on December 11, 2021 in conjunction with the National Memorial for Peace and Justice, also known as the National Lynching Memorial in Montgomery, Alabama.
  - There is also a plaque title, “Never Again” describing the jar and book “By the Equal Justice Initiative” about the history of lynching’s in America.
- **Administrative and Building Report**
  - Two volunteers gave a total of 38 hours of their time.
  - The compressor for the Mt. Moriah AME Church part of the museum is in the process of getting fixed.
    - Purchase orders are being prepared by the Governor’s Office of Finance & Administration.
    - MasterCare Floor Restoration has been contract to restore or replace the pine wood flooring in Verda Welcome Hall.
- **Upcoming Exhibits**
  - *The Radical Voice of Blackness Speaks of Resistance and Joy*-Dates: November 10, 2022-September 30, 2023.
- **Annual Appeal**
  - \$200,000 raised which allowed the MCAAHC to make its campaign goal!

## Officer’s Reports

*MCAAHC Chair Rev. Dr. Tamara England Wilson*

Chair Rev. Dr. England Wilson took a moment to welcome Dr. Walter Gill, new MCAAHC. She thanked him for his consideration in working with the MCAAHC in this organization’s sacred space.

Chair Wilson began her report sharing that when she was established as chair of the MCAAHC three years ago, collectively, the commission was working on stabilizing its vision as well as bringing more visibility to the MCAAHC.

Chair Wilson said that the:

- MCAAHC wanted to resolve some conflict that was brought on by external factors.
- Has created an environment where all commissioners felt appreciated, valued, and committed to the work.
- Strengthen the capacity to do the work of the culture of philanthropy.
- Is honored to say that the MCAAHC has conquered these things.
  - Chair Wilson said that her vision is that as the commission continues to move forward that she wants to continue to help pave the way for the next MCAAHC administration that will take place in June 2023.

## *Legislative Accomplishments*

Chair Wilson said that the:

- MCAAHC independence has been secured where the MCAAHC is independent in the State of Maryland Governmental system.
- \$1.6 million has been awarded in the commission's budget.
- \$5 million has been allotted for the African American Heritage Preservation Grant.
- \$3 million has been allotted for the commission to do capital repairs at the Banneker-Douglass Museum (BDM).
  - Chair Wilson shared that, somethings out of the commission's control, didn't happen.
    - Some people dropped the ball and it was not on the MCAAHC's end.
    - All of the funds that have been established for the MCAAHC and the BDM will not go into effect until year 2024.
      - While this was disappointing, Chair Wilson said that this is still a win knowing that these funds will be appropriated to the commission and the museum.
        - The MCAAHC has continued to express their disappointment about now having these funds available to move forward with the various initiatives of the BDM and the MCAAHC.
        - Chair Wilson asked the MCAAHC Commissioners that if they have any strategies that can be used in this upcoming legislative year, please let her know.

#### *Commissioners Chairing MCAAHC Committees*

Chair Wilson took a moment to share the various leaders of the MCAAHC that will be chairing the following committees.

**Public Relations Committee:** Chair Commissioner Maya Davis; Vice Chair: Commissioner Torrey Snow.

**BDM Committees:** Chair Commissioner Janice Curtis Greene; Vice Chair: Commissioner Adi Nkwonta.

**Finance Committee:** Chair, Vice Chair Edwin T. Johnson; Vice Chair: H. Russell Frisby.

**Historical Committee:** Chair, Commissioner Reggie Turner; Vice Chair: Commissioner Elinor Thompson.

#### *African American Heritage Preservation's Grant*

Chair Wilson gave a report that the MCAAHC has received 49 applications.

- Maryland Historical Trust is going through the threshold review.
- All 49 applications are eligible and are being sent to the AAHPG Committee via email by Friday, August 5, 2022.
- The AAHPG Committee will collectively review these applications by Monday, August 29, 2022.

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

Vice Chair Dr. Edwin T. Johnson shared that he is very excited about the new changes that have already taken on the MCAAHC website.

- He shared that he is very deliberate about showing the direct link between giving and showing how they are helping to fulfill the needs of providing opportunities for the great various programs and events that commission provides.
- People often give money but are not sure where it goes but by showing the fruit of their support, this tends to bring forth more giving.
- Vice Chair Johnson said that what the commission does with programming at the BDM educates and helps to dispel false information that is presented on so many platforms including social media.

- o What the MCAAHC and the BDM provided is very vital to the public, state, the country and the world.
- o Museums provide concrete irrefutable information.

## **Committee Reports**

### *Public Relations Committee-Commissioner Maya Davis*

Commissioner Maya Davis reported that the committee met on Thursday, July 21, 2022. Those that were in attendance were Commissioner Davis, Commissioner Anthony Spencer, Commissioner Elinor Thompson, Commissioner Marilyn Hatza as well as Commissioner Lopez Matthews who just finished his term.

A discussion was had at this meeting to change the time of the PR Committee meeting to 8:30 p.m. every third Thursday to maintain great retention.

It was also shared that the PR Committee:

- Is working with Jan Lee, BDM Director of Marketing on the MCAAHC's website.
- Collaborating with Chair Rev. Dr. Wilson on the succession plan of the committee where Commissioner Torrey Snow will now serve as Vice President of the PR Committee.
  - o Commissioner Snow has a wealth of knowledge in public relations, communications as well as expertise in helping with the changes to the MCAAHC website.
    - The plan is to make the MCAAHC more visible to the public.
- The Pendulum Newsletter will come out quarterly right after the PR Committee meeting.
  - o The newsletter will focus on key dates.
- The PR Committee will be working with Jan Lee on getting certain access to Word Press from the State of Maryland IT Department.
  - o MCAAHC minutes and agendas will be provided by LeRonn Herbert and added to the commission's website as well.
  - o Vice Chair Dr. Johnson asked that some African American Heritage Preservation Grant Awardees be spotlighted and shared on the commission's website.
    - This will help to encourage and inspired new candidates to be recipients of this grant.

### *BDM Committee-Commissioner Edwin T. Johnson and Commissioner Janice Curtis Greene*

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

- She said that now that Commissioner Dr. Edwin T. Johnson is now the vice chair of the MCAAHC.
- Commissioner Adi Nkwonta will take on the role of being the vice chair of the BDM Committee.
- The other members of this committee are: Commissioner Dr. Barbara Paca, Commissioner Cheryl McLeod, Commissioner Maya Davis for postings of materials to the MCAAHC website, Commissioner Melvin Kelly for special projects as well as Executive Director Chanel Compton and the BDM Staff.

### *2022 BDM/MCAAHC Symposium*

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

**Date:** Thursday and Friday, October 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Location:** Historic Morgan State University

In keeping with the Mission of the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture, our 2022 symposium will focus on providing technical support, professional development, leadership and capacity building

training for our community partners, non-profits leaders, museum directors and staff and Maryland citizens and visitors.

- This conference will be held in conjunction with Mr. Lou Diggs Center for Race & Justice.
- Morgan State University was the first HBCU to offer a liberal arts degree as shared by Commissioner Edwin T. Johnson.
  - This conference will focus on individuals understanding the work of the MCAAHC as well as leaders of non-profits finding out to apply for the AAHPG.
  - Guest speakers include: Dr. Natasha Pratt Harris from Morgan State University, Author, Scholar and Chair of the Louis Diggs Center for Race & Justice.
    - She will start the conference off with a joint session for youth and adults on how to survive the criminal justice system.
    - Commissioner Elinor Thompson has agreed to teach on preserving African American Cemeteries.
    - Mr. Robert Bull, from The Compass Group, will give a presentation on fundraising.
    - The youth will be taking a tour of historic Morgan State University learning its rich history.
    - There will be a break for lunch with box lunches provided.
    - A capacity building workshop will take place by Commissioner Reggie Turner.
    - Commissioner Adi Nkwonta and medical staff will lead the youth in participating in workshops in opportunities of working in the medical field.
    - In the morning, Commissioners McLeod and Janice Curtis Greene will provide a great ice breaker.
    - Executive Director Omar Eaton Martinez, from the Association Alliance of African American Museums will be presenting at this affair.
    - Civil Rights and its roots in Maryland as well as the significance of Morgan State University Civil Rights movement will be taught by the Honorable Retired Judge Thomas G. Turner who was a part of this movement.
    - Executive Director Compton will lead a workshop on the AAHPG.
    - Chair Wilson led a session on public advocacy.
    - Ms. Patti Morgan, Esquire on Maryland non-profit will lead an afternoon session on, “How to Start a Non-Profit Organization in the State of Maryland.”
    - Ms. Kelly Gainer, from the Genesis Group, will be giving a presentation on “Creating and Establishing a Strategic Plan in Maintaining and Preserving African American Sites in Maryland.”
    - Dr. Strong E. Kyle Milton “How to Maintain Healthy and Positive Relationships for Our Young People” presentation will be given for our youth.
    - Commissioner Cheryl McLeod will be leading a workshop on “How to Protect African American Initiatives” as well as focusing on anti-bullying measures.
    - This two day conference is free, open to the public but one must register.

### *Marshall Learning Center*

Commissioners McLeod and Greene presented workshops and hands-on activities at the Marshall Learning Center Day Camp, July 28 and 27 respectively.

- The guest speaker was the Honorable Tom Gene Curtis, retired Baltimore Administrative Law Judge and Activist on racial justice for all races.
- He held a workshop on the Civil Rights Movement in Baltimore, Discrimination Practices in the United States throughout the years against not just African Americans, but various different minorities and the power of peaceful protests.
- Commissioner Greene shared that this workshop pointed out that it is just as important that our Latin brothers and sisters know that their rights are protected too.
- Commissioner Greene also led the hands-on activity to have each student make their own protest sign about an issue about which they feel deeply. The signs varied from Women’s Rights to Gun Control.
- Commissioner McLeod led a great protest sign making activity.

### *Commissioner Steven X. Lee's Book Signing*

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.

### **MCAAHC Individual Commissioner Reports**

#### *Cherry Hill Waterfront Festival-Commissioner Cheryl McLeod*

Commissioner Cheryl A. McLeod gave this report that On July 4, 2022, the MCAAHC/BDM hosted a booth at the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Cherry Hill Festival from 1:00 p.m.-9:30 p.m.

- *Festival Theme: "Honoring Freedom Seekers."*
  - It was also called the Maryland African American Culture move where information was shared from the Maryland Office of Tourism, the MCAAHC, the BDM-Black History 365, Harriet Tubman Visitor's Center, the National Park Service as well as other cultural institutions.
- *There were 3,500 attendees.*
- *Volunteers & Commissioners/Staff* who helped:
  - Commissioners Cheryl McLeod, Adi Nkwonta & family, Janice Greene (as Harriet Tubman), Executive Director Chanel Compton, Ms. Janis Hagey (friend, from Prince George's County) Ms. Janet DeShields (friend, from Howard County.)
- *MCAAHC/BDM* partnered with MD Tourism and the National Park Service Harriet Tubman Visitor's Center.
  - Each group provided brochures, information booklets, etc. to distribute.
  - We self-identified as "The MD African American Cultural Booth."
  - We did not disappoint.
- *The Cultural Booth* included:
  - Brochures & Guides were provided from the Maryland Office of Tourism, the Harriet Tubman
  - A light hearted game allowed participants to learn about African American Heritage, Spin the Wheel game and pick a prize.
- *Small prizes focusing on Black History/Heritage*
  - Bookmarks, pencils, stickers, pocket planners, take-home arts and crafts, take-home poster activity & bubbles were given.
- *1619 Project Book*
  - The 1619 book was a "special prize" on the spin wheel.
  - Ten out of twelve winners did not know about the book and what it represented.
    - This provided great moments and opportunities to share information and stories.

#### *Takeaways*

- The BDM Committee welcomes the visibility of more Commissioners to attend and participate.
- Non-Commission volunteers bring insight and energy.
- Branding for the MCAAHC/BDM is needed.
- Small useful giveaways should be standards with branding.
- Everyone wants to have FUN!

#### *Commissioner Elinor Thompson*

Commissioner Elinor Thompson said that she has been working with numerous churches and organizations in the area.

- She has traveled from Anne Arundel County to St. Charles, Calvert and St. Mary's County to name a few.
- Commissioner Thompson is working with Ms. Linda Paez on the Hall Family and Goshen Farms history there.
- She also has been working on spreading the word on the African American Heritage Preservation to places in Southern Anne Arundel County as well as promoting the programs, activities and work of the MCAAHC.
  - Commissioner Thompson said that many places didn't know about the AAHPG offering there.

#### *Vice Chair Dr. Edwin T. Johnson*

Vice Chair Dr. Johnson shared that he is working on an HBCU projects for Maryland Public Television.

There are two documentaries being released; they are: "Becoming Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman Visions of Freedom."

- It will be brought to Morgan State University on Wednesday, September 7<sup>th</sup> at 5 p.m.
- Executive Director Compton did the cover art for the Harriet Tubman program.

#### *Commissioner Janice Curtis Greene*

Commissioner Green gave a report that she will be working with Director Jan Lee in playing the role of Harriet Tubman at the Kunta Kinte Festival as well as will be in Salisbury playing Harriet Tubman at the Maryland States Arts Council apprenticeship program to train a young lady in the art of black story telling.

#### *Commissioner Maya Davis*

Commissioner Maya Davis shared that there will be three Maryland Lynching and Truth Reconciliation fall public hearings on October 8<sup>th</sup>, October 22<sup>nd</sup> in Anne Arundel County, and November 5<sup>th</sup> in Somerset and Wicomico County.

- Commissioner Davis said that Commissioner Cheryl McLeod and Commissioner Janice Curtis Greene have been very supportive of this organization and work.
- On Saturday, August 20<sup>th</sup>, she and Commissioner Greene will be participating at the "Day of Remembrance Ceremony" of enslaved people that lived at Historic Sotterley in St. Mary's County.
- Commissioner Davis asked that Chair Dr. Wilson or a designee attend as well as speak on the panel of the "Echoes of the Enslaved" program at the Riverdale House Museum.
  - This a two day program that will take place on Friday, September 16<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, September 17<sup>th</sup> that will focus on descendants, genealogy, health, and wellness.
  - The weekend will include a Friday evening panel discussion featuring: Tina Wyatt (a descendant of Harriet Tubman), Rev. Jerome Plummer-Fowler (a descendant of an individual enslaved at Riversdale), and Dr. Joan M.E. Gaither (noted documentary story quilter).
    - The program will be moderated by Joe McGill of the Slave Dwelling Project.
    - At 8 p.m., a bonfire conversation circle will take place.
- Saturday's program will feature a festival style celebration of family and community.

#### *Commissioner Reggie Turner*

Commissioner Reggie Turner shared that the historic cabinet on 17 North Jonathan Street in Hagerstown, Maryland has been slated to be sold.

- The goal was to return the cabin to home ownership and that goal is being met.

#### *Commissioner Dr. Barbara Paca*

Commissioner Dr. Barbara Paca shared that the Maryland Spiritual Initiative, from the Salisbury area, will be performing spirituals at the National Folks Festival on August 28<sup>th</sup>.

- A non-classical concert will take place with the Maryland Spiritual Initiatives on September 12 at the National Museum of African American History and Culture's Museum.
- There will be an exhibit displayed in Washington College Starr's Center that is focusing on African American spirituality on the Eastern Shore.
  - A lecture will be given by Ms. Candace Henry, Executive Director of the Water's Edge Museum about the arrival of the first blacks coming from Jamestown in 1619 as well as great history featuring the Hill Community and other African American communities on the Eastern Shore.



Chair Wilson then called for a motion to adjourn the MCAAHC Public meeting. Vice Chair Dr. Edwin T. Johnson moved that a motion be made to adjourn the public meeting. Commissioner McLeod seconded and the motion carried.

The public meeting was adjourned at 1:42 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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LeRonn Herbert, Special Assistant