

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

Public Meeting Minutes

Monday, April 3, 2023

Grasonville Community Center

5601 Main Street

Grasonville, Maryland 21638

The following Commissioners were in attendance: Dion Banks, Vice Chair Dr. Edwin T. Johnson, Janice Curtis Greene, Steven X. Lee, Cheryl McLeod, Elinor Thompson, Reggie Turner, 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 host Commissioner Elinor Thompson who gave the formal welcome.

Commissioner Thompson thanked the public and the MCAAHC Commissioners for attending the meeting.

- She shared that the MCAAHC is one of a kind where it preserves Maryland's African American History & Culture.
- Commissioner Thompson took then a moment to recognize all dignitaries, fraternities, sororities and churches that have come to be a part of this gathering.
- The meeting was well attended where there were 130 guests were present.
  - It was standing room only and guests listened in the overflow rooms which included the library area.
  - Commissioner Thompson presented a Power-Point Presentation that included the history of Grasonville Community Center of which the center is situated on today.
    - In 1866 a Freedmen Bureau School stood and was demolished to build in 1924 a Rosenwald School.
      - Commissioner Thompson shared the vetted sources and citations of the original documents that she researched.
      - Ms. Paula Dickerson, President of the Grasonville Community Center, also made a presentation.
      - Ms. Dickerson informed the commission that the center will be submitting a grant application for this 2024 grant round.
        - She also expressed the urgent need of funding to the commission for restoration and expansion in order to re-vitalize and update the center and meet the need to help the community.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Chair Rev. Dr. Tamara England Wilson asked for a motion to be made in accepting the minutes of the February 6, 2023, meeting. Commissioner Cheryl McLeod shared that there was one change under the "Celebrating Women Who Tell Our Stories" section. The leaders name "Erricka Bridgeford" was misspelled. Vice Chair Dr. Edwin T. Johnson accepted the minutes with minor correction. Commissioner Janice Curtis Greene seconded the motion, and the motion was carried.

### **Officer's Reports**

*MCAAHC Chair Rev. Dr. Tamara England Wilson*

*The MCAAHC Handbook*

Chair Rev. Dr. England Wilson shared that the MCAAHC has been working on revising its handbook since October 2022. In doing there were several items that were changed reflecting new directives in the 2023 MCAAHC Handbook.

The following grammatical changes to the MCAAHC Handbook were presented and are looking to be made:

- Page 9 under the African American Heritage Program section the maximum allotted amount has now been raised to \$250,000.
- Page 11 there is verbiage that says that the MCAAHC provides a \$500.00 allotted scholarship for the Maryland Humanities Maryland History Day.
  - Vice Chair Dr. Edwin T. Johnson shared that it was discussed that this award would be named under Commissioner Marilyn Hatza.
    - The History Committee and the MCAAHC Commissioners agreed.
- Page 11 section number 5 now says that the MCAAHC Commissioners will secure permission from the chair of the MCAAHC before representing the MCAAHC.
- Page 13: Committees are responsible for establishing long and short term goals that will be approved by the commission. Rewording
- Page 15 section number 9 the Nomination's Committee will make recommendations on recruiting, governing and vetting MCAAHC Commissioners for the governor approval process.
- Page 19: the entire page area will stay vacant.
  - Chief Financial Officer and new staff will be added. Curator position will stay open. Director of Marketing has the MCAAHC added three times.
  - Control agencies that the MCAAHC must interface with.
- Page 25 will be totally removed where the MCAAHC will no longer interface with GOFA.
- Page 26 the control agencies has been taken out and moved forward.
  - Chair Rev. Dr. Tamara England Wilson asked for a motion to be made in accepting the changes to the MCAAHC Handbook.
    - Vice Chair Dr. Edwin T. Johnson moved on the motion. Commissioner Janice Curtis Greene seconded the motion, and the motion was carried.

#### *60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on the March on Washington*

Chair Wilson shared that the MCAAHC is working with the Caucus of African American Leaders to host the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the March on Washington.

- A reenactment will take place in the city of Annapolis, Maryland.
- The MCAAHC is providing leadership for this affair where residents from all over the State of Maryland will be participating.
- Chair Wilson said that she is serving as the chair with several commissioners serving on various committees.
  - Ms. Jan Lee, Director of Marketing and Communications for the BDM and the MCAAHC, will be chairing a committee on public relations.
  - Executive Director Chanel Johnson will be chairing a mural committee.
- The route has been established where the march will start at the Naval Academy Stadium, flow through down historic Clay Street, and then to the city dock where there will be a brief ceremony at People's Park with a powerful keynote speaker.
- Vice Chair Dr. Johnson is serving over the participants for the affair.
  - There will be an ecumenical service where seven ministers will be speaking regarding the March on Washington and Dr. Martin Luther King's speech.

#### *BDM Harriet Tubman Statue*

- Chair Wilson said that there was vandalism to the Harriet Tubman Statue that is placed outside of the BDM.
- Someone stole the staff off of Harriet Tubman statue of BDM.
- Because of the public's support, the MCAAHC was able to get the staff back.
  - The MCAAHC and the BDM are glad to have it back but are not happy about process of corrective action that will have to take place.
  - The MCAAHC and the BDM met with the sculptor on getting the staff fixed as well as the police regarding the legal process to be taken.
    - The MCAAHC has decided that it will not press charges against the two individuals that were involved.

- ◆ The individuals that were involved were two college students who shared that they were inebriated and didn't realize what they were doing.
- ◆ The MCAAHC Commissioners, being full of grace, decided not to prosecute the individuals but a plan has been developed and put in place where Commissioner Cheryl McLeod will be leading the reconciliation process as well as assisting the staff of the BDM.

### *Director's Report-Executive Director Chanel Johnson*

#### **Director's Report**

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 February and March.

### *BDM Visitation*

#### *BDM Social Media Engagement*

##### *February*

- Facebook: 2,575 Followers (.5%) & 7,532 Reached
- Instagram: 1,870 Followers (+2%)
- YouTube: 167 Subscribers (+1.9%) & 331 Views
- LinkedIn: 91 Followers (+4.6%)
- Website Visitation: 2,304 sessions

##### *March*

- Facebook: 2,587 Followers (.5%) & 16,142 Reached
- Instagram: 1,909 Followers (+2%)
- YouTube: 177 Subscribers (+6%) & 216 Views
- LinkedIn: 93 Followers (+2.2%)
- Website Visitation: 1,392 sessions
- Current Projects:
  - Visit Annapolis promo video for 'The Radical Voice of Blackness Speaks of Resistance and Joy' exhibit
  - Annual Report 2022

### *BDM Facilities & Administration*

- **Maintenance work**-BDM has procured bids for the fixing of the HVAC system in the Mt. Moriah AME church or FY 24.
- **Volunteers:** 4 Volunteers gave a total of 24 hours.
- Space Rentals
  - February 28, 2023: BGE Governor Wes Moore's HBCU President's affair and GOSV Black Leaderships Service Awards Programs.
  - March 6, 2023: Senator Antonio Hayes, 40<sup>th</sup> District Night.
  - March 8, 2023: Baltimore Leadership 40 Conference.
  - March 24, 2023: Senator Cory McCray, Legislative Night.
  - March 31, 2023: Rural Council of Maryland Conference.
    - \$11,400 was raised from these site rental endeavors.

### BDM Media Coverage

- Visit Annapolis Blog (Feb 28, 2023) - 'Top 4 Reasons to Visit, The Radical Voice of Blackness Speaks of Resistance and Joy' <https://www.visitannapolis.org/blog/stories/post/the-radical-voice-of-blackness-speaks-of-resistance-and-joy/>
- WJZ 13 Baltimore/ CBS News - TV and online - 'Stolen staff returned to Harriet Tubman statue in Annapolis' <https://www.cbsnews.com/baltimore/news/stolen-staff-returned-to-harriet-tubman-statue-in-annapolis/>
- Up.St.Art Magazine (Spring 2023) 'Strength in Resistance' <http://upstart-annapolis.com/manifest-strength-in-resistance/>
- TheTravel.com (March 18, 2023) '8 Things To Do In Annapolis: Complete Guide To The Sailing Capital Of America' <https://www.thetravel.com/things-to-do-in-annapolis-complete-guide/>
- Bmore Art - Event Calendar <https://bmoreart.com/event/conversation-with-the-curator-the-radical-voice-of-blackness-speaks-of-resistance-and-joy>

### BDM & Chanel Mentions

- Capital Gazette (November 1, 2022)-"On Maryland's 158<sup>th</sup> anniversary of emancipation, Annapolis recognized as slave port "site of memory" <https://www.capitalgazette.com/news/ac-cn-annapolis-county-has-great-suggestions-for-november/>
  - 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>

### Special Projects

- End of the Year Appeal Development Committee for Marketing and Communications.
- Update Business Cards & Signature Blocks
- Continued Marketing, Communications, and Sponsorship Management for The Radical Voice of Black Speaks of Resistance and Joy Exhibition.
- BDM/MCAAHC Website Merge
- 2022 Annual Report

### Building Report:

- Number of Volunteers: 9
- Total Volunteer hours: 68 hours per month
- Mt. Moriah AME Church compressor repair purchase order has been submitted.
  - Cost for replacement is \$16,000.

### BDM Programming

#### **February 18, 2023, 1:00-2:30 p.m. Artist Talk Part I: The Radical Voice of Blackness Speaks of Resistance and Joy**

- On Saturday, February 18th museum guests enjoyed a panel discussion made up of multiple artists from the museum's current exhibit, *The Radical Voice of Blackness Speaks of Resistance and Joy*.
  - This discussion moderated by guest curator Myrtis Bedolla focused on the inspiration behind the pieces of Devin Allen, Wesley Clark and Chrystal Seawood.

#### **February 23, 2023, 5:00-6:30 p.m. Volunteer Day at Banneker Douglass After School Program**

- On Thursday, February 23rd volunteers from Baltimore Gas & Electric, one of the Museum's program sponsors, joined students, families and BDM staff for an afternoon of art.
  - Attendees participated in an art project led by teaching artist, Nikki Brooks. During their time together volunteers learned more about the students, their lives and afterschool programming activities.

- Both students and adults were able to learn from one another and foster new intergenerational relationships.

**March 10, 2023, 5:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m.: BDM Afterschool Program/Opening Reception: The Cost of Living**

- On Friday, March 10th youth and staff from the BDM afterschool program took a trip to Washington, D.C. to attend the opening of “The Cost of Living”, an art exhibition at the Dupont Underground.
  - This exhibit had a special significance to our young people because it was curated by BDM after school teaching artist, Nikki Brooks.
  - The show will showcase 2D, 3D, audio and visual works that examine how Black women persevere despite the systems that are in place to limit their prosperity.
  - For most of the young people this was their first time attending an art opening.
  - The opportunity gave them something to look forward to as they prepare for their upcoming exhibition at BDM.

**March 18, 2023, 1:00 p.m.-2:30 p.m.: Conversation with the Curator: The Radical Voice of Blackness Speaks of Resistance and Joy**

- On Saturday, March 18th more than 50 guests gathered in Verda Welcome Hall at the Banneker Douglass Museum to hear from the museum’s exhibit guest curator and owner of Galerie Myrtis, Myrtis Bedolla.
  - This conversation, moderated by our very own executive director, Chanel Johnson, took the audience on a personal and professional journey into over 30 years of Myrtis’ life and work.
  - We learned about her experiences as an African American woman art professional, often in white spaces, tips on collecting art, advice on what one should do when trying to get represented by a gallerist and her ground-breaking exhibition at Venice Biennale.
  - Bedolla’s works are currently exhibited at three different spaces throughout Maryland. This event was live streamed and can be viewed on the museum’s YouTube and Facebook pages.

*Upcoming Programming*

**April 13th, 2023- June 8th, 2023:** Banneker-Douglass Museum, in partnership with the Housing Authority of the City of Annapolis and the Annapolis Symphony Orchestra, will introduce youth after school time participants to the world of string instruments through hands on instruction.

**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 for a fun day of education, history and art. Accompanied by HACA staff and BDM teaching artist Nikki Brooks, young people 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 us 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.”

### *MCAAHC Financial Report*

Executive Director Chanel Johnson began the financial report by sharing the MCAAHC’s State Budget Report.

The MCAAHC Finance Committee received \$1.6 million for FY24 budget.

- Director Johnson is working with the Maryland Department of Budget and Management to increase the grade level of the existing BDM staff.
- A request was also placed for funds for the capital depreciation line item and staff salary increases for the FY24 supplemental budget.
- \$3 million has been allotted for ADA and technical upgrades to the BDM.
  - The BDM’s Deep Roots and Rising Water’s Celebrations of Maryland’s African Americans exhibit will finally be updated due to the funds being provided.
  - Special Funds account has grown over \$11,000,
  - The Bancker-Douglass Museum Foundation is preparing to submit a profit-loss statement to the MC AAHC.
  - For FY24 the MCAAHC received \$67,350 due in part from grants from personal funds as well as multiple county and city grants.
  - The annual goal is to raise \$200,000 for the fiscal year.
- Chair Wilson shared that this has been an amazing year where two bills were passed.
  - The MCAAHC’s budget went from \$660,000 to \$1.6 million.
  - The MCAAHC’s African American Heritage Preservation grant went from \$1 million to \$5 million to preserve African American projects.
    - Chair Wilson thanked the MCAAHC Commissioners and the public for their hard work.
  - Half of that goal is taking place with \$100,000 in prospects that has been secured.
    - Two candidates have been interviewed for the Chief Financial Officer position at the BDM.
      - ◆ Final interviews will take place at the BDM with the plans to have the position filled by late April or early May.

### **Committee Reports**

#### *Commissioner Steven X. Lee’s Report*

Commissioner Lee shared that he serves on two committees: the Nomination’s Committee and the Maryland 250 Commission.

#### *Nomination’s Committee:*

- Commissioner Lee said that four names were submitted to the MCAAHC Commissioners.
  - The names of the individuals was submitted by the public as well as the MCAAHC Commissioners.
    - To his surprise, two of the four names were also approved and shared on the governor’s list of new commissioners to be added to the MCAAHC.
      - 11 new commissioners will be added to the MCAAHC.

#### *Maryland 250 Committee:*

- Commissioner Lee has the pleasure of serving on this commission that celebrates Maryland’s 250<sup>th</sup> year history.
  - This is the second year that this commission has been in existence.
  - Commissioner Lee shared that he had some concerns over African American organizations not being included in some of the major projects that the commission is proposing.
    - He was also concerned that the Maryland 250 celebration needed to share a more porter and inclusive look at Maryland’s African American history.
      - Commissioner Lee said that the African American history is only presented as enslavement and enslavement only.

- He said that there is so much more to African American history that needs to be shared.
  - Commissioner Lee admonished all African American organizations to share their history to be a part of this celebration.

*Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Committee Report-Commissioner Commissioner Maya Davis.*

Commissioner Davis shared that the MLTRC had its first retreat on January 27, 2023, at Bowie State University.

The things that were discussed was:

- Public acknowledgement item-representative of the MCAAHC on the MLTRC.
  - It was reaffirmed by the MLTRC that Dr. Fakunle stressed and shared the importance for commissioners to show up and be present at all the public hearings and public meetings.
  - The MLTRC reviewed some of the challenges that affected individuals apart of the MLTRC to commit to this organization.
  - A discussion was also had about learning the commissioner's expertise so that the commissioners can have a very present voice and guidance on certain matters.
- MLTRC's budget for 2023.
  - Initially when the commission was started, there wasn't any funding.
  - An Emit Till Cole Case grant was sought after by MLTRC.
    - \$299,000 was secured for the commission from this grant.
      - To date \$70,000 was used to secure Ms. Stephanie Thompson, the special assistant for the MLTRC as well as funding was used for Heritage Associates an African American research organization.
        - The rest of the funding will go to reconciliation efforts across the state of Maryland.
- MLTRC extension of this commission in 2024.
  - The MLTRC had an extension of this commission to the year 2026 due to a bill proposed Delegate White to have this commission continue to move forward with its work that was affected due to the lag by the pandemic.
    - A hearing regarding this proposal of the bill will take place on February 22nd.
      - If this bill is passed, the final report of the MLTRC must be submitted by December 1, 2025.
      - The sunset of the MLTRC will be June 30, 2026.
- MCAAHC commissioner engagement to this group.
- Outreach for key stake holders was discussed.
  - It was discussed that the MLTRC work with different county coalitions, but it was found out that there are other county groups that contribute significantly to this MLTRC's endeavors.
    - The MLTRC is making recommendations to make amendments to this thought process and have the General Assembly consider these groups.
- Strategic Planning for Commission Meetings-there are three standing committees currently.
- They are the research committee, logistics committee, and the reconciliation committee.
  - The public is welcome to join all committees.
- MLTRC hearings.
  - There were many scheduled hearings that took place in 2022.
  - The MLTRC is looking to schedule hearings for the rest of 2023.
    - One can find more information regarding the hearings by going to the MLTRC website for more updates.
      - Commissioner Davis shared that in 2019, the MCAAHC was written in the bill along with the Maryland State Archives as well as HBCU's to work with the MLTRC in helping to secure and recognize the injustices of lynching's that took place in the State of Maryland.

- Initially, the MLTRC looks at lynching's going back to 1854 to 1933.
  - The MLTRC shared that many people came forth sharing that their family members were lynched in the 1970's – 1980's.
    - The MLTRC has taken a proactive role in making sure that all information like this is properly recognized and secured.
- Chair Wilson made Commissioner Davis the designee for this commission representing the MCAAHC.

#### *History Committee-Commissioner Reggie Turner*

Commissioner Turner shared information that the History Committee hadn't functioned in many years.

- He spoke with Executive Director Chanel Johnson regarding this committee and received background information on the history of this committee.
- Commissioner Turner said that he and Commissioner Elinor Thompson will be meeting to have discussions on rebuilding this committee as well as establishing a mission statement for this committee.
  - He also shared that the committee is accepting the scholarship process that they are working through.
  - Commissioner Turner also said that the History Committee is working with Commissioner Davis to see how they assist with the Pendulum newsletter.
  - Last but not least, he is reaching out to his own community to see how he can get historic preservation advocates to help his local community move forward as well.

#### *BDM Committee-Commissioner Elinor Thompson*

Commissioner Thompson shared that as part of her MCAAHC duties, she has been assigned to the role of being part of the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Grant review panel.

- In addition to this, Commissioner Thompson is also working with the Maryland Historical Trust where her term has been extended for three years with this organization.
  - She is also working with the oversight of cemeteries with the MCAAHC to protect historic sites.
    - Commissioner Thompson made the announcement that the MCAAHC will be having their April 3, 2023, public meeting at the Grasonville Community Center at 5601 Main Street in Grasonville, Maryland.
      - Commissioner Thompson is the host for that meeting.

#### *Carr's Beach Elktonia Beach Report-Commissioner Tony Spencer*

Commissioner Spencer gave a report on Carr's Beach and its rich history.

- He shared that this beach was a part of the Chitterling Circuit for entertainment.
  - Pearl Bailey, the Temptations, Smokey Robinson, James Brown, Ella Fitzgerald, and Sarah Vaughn were a few that were part of this great gathering.
  - Carr's and Sparrow's Beach once was comprised of 188 acres. It has been reduced to 5.6 acres.
  - He shared that he serves as a representative of the MCAAHC for this board where he sits on the Chesapeake Conservancy Board.
  - There are 23 parts of the Chesapeake Bay that are recognized but the committee would like to see that number grow to 30 with the recognition of this beach added to it.
    - Commissioner Spencer shared that he also serves on the Caucus of African American Leaders Maryland Statewide Equity board in Annapolis, Maryland.

Commissioner Janice Curtis Greene

**Theme: Celebrating Women Who Tell Our Stories.**



**Date:** March 31, 2023

**Location:** Banneker-Douglass Museum, 84 Franklin Street, Annapolis, Maryland 21401

- This event for Women’s History Month, spotlights Harriet Tubman the great conductor of the Underground Railroad who fulfills the theme of this program.
  - Because of her mighty works the Harriet Tubman Lifetime Achievement Award was established to recognize powerful women that have followed in the footsteps of great leadership like Harriet Tubman.
    - The event may be in person, live streamed or online.
    - All of this will be determined by the budget that has not been provided at this time.
    - Advertisement for this program can begin.
    - ASL Interpreters will be investigated for this affair.
    - The committee recommended that Ms. Erika Bridgeford, from the Baltimore Peace Movement be the recipient of this award and keynote speaker for this affair.
      - This organization is a peace movement and an anti-violence organization.
        - Women will be able to share their story in different forms of poetry, spoken word, griot, and other forms of presentation.
          - Commissioner McLeod made a motion to accept Ms. Erika Bridgeford as the Lifetime Achievement award recipient.
          - Commissioner Anthony Spencer seconded, and the motion carried.
            - Commissioner McLeod made a motion that the plans for this women’s history month program be accepted with a firm date and time to share with the committee could make friendly amendments and arrangements.
            - Commissioner Herbert Frisby seconded, and the motion carried.

Vice Chair Dr. Johnson took a moment to recognize Chair Rev. Dr. Wilson and Commissioner Janice Curtis Greene for receiving the Herstory Award from the Friends of the Benjamin Banneker Historical Trust and Park as well as the Patapsco River Linx Chapter.

*Emmett Till Alert System-Commissioner Cheryl McLeod*

Commissioner McLeod shared that in response to Commissioner Tony Spencer’s report from the Caucus of African American Leaders that the Emmett Till Alert system, which shares of any potential threat in an area, has been approved to be enacted.

*African American Heritage Preservation Grant-Commissioner Herbert Frisby*

Commissioner Frisby shared that he and Vice Chair Dr. Edwin T. Johnson are co-chairs of the African American Heritage Preservation Grant.

- Up until the recent past, the MCAAHC and the AAHPG Committee were only allowed to give up to \$100,000 in grant funding to historical African American projects in Maryland because the grant was only \$1 million dollars.
- Thanks to the legislator, the grant has been expanded to \$5 million dollars.
  - The grant is for historic preservation and not necessarily for community development.
    - Commissioner Frisby mentioned this since the public meeting was in Howard County and there hasn’t been an applicant from this county yet.

- Commissioner Frisby shared that he and Chair Wilson sit and work on the Board of Directors of the Reginald Lewis Museum.

#### *Commissioner Melvin Kelly's Report*

Commissioner Kelly shared that he became an MCAAHC Commissioner under the leadership of Ted Mack, Chairman Emeritus.

- He shared that he will be leaving on June 30<sup>th</sup> when his term limit time expires.
- Commissioner Kelly said that work has been enlightening as an older person serving on the commission and that he will be turning 86 February 19<sup>th</sup>.
- It made him happy to see young people on the MCAAHC move forward with the charge.

#### *March on Washington 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Report-Vice Chair Dr. Edwin T. Johnson*

Vice Chair Johnson said that there are several MCAAHC Commissioners that will be working with Chair Wilson on the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on the March on Washington.

- He asked that the public mark their calendars for the weekend of August 26<sup>th</sup>.
- There will be a parade that will start at the U.S. Navy Marine Corp Stadium, flow through downtown Annapolis, Maryland and make its way back up to the stadium for programming.
  - Chair Wilson shared that the committee welcomes the public to work on this great affair with them.

#### *Commissioner Dr. Paca's Report*

Commissioner Dr. Paca said that one of the greatest highlights that she shared was seeing Mr. Ted Mack, Chairman Emeritus of the MCAAHC receive the Culvert Prize which is the highest honor that the Maryland Historical Trust bestows to anyone.

- She said that it is rarely given out and that Chairman Ted Mack was the first African American to receive this coveted award.
- In addition to this report, Commissioner Dr. Paca shared that she is from the Eastern Shore where they hosted an exhibition on African American Spirituals at the Cosmos Club in Washington, DC for U.S. Supreme Court Justice, Ms. Kentaji Brown Jackson.
  - This was the first non-classical performance at the Cosmos Club.
  - Thirty individuals came from the Eastern Shore to sing African American Spirituals where the audience stood to their feet throughout the evening applauding.
  - In addition to this, a book called, "A City Called Heaven" was prepared for this affair.

#### *Commissioner Dr. Gill's Report*

Commissioner Dr. Gill gave a report that he looks forward to working with Chair Wilson on the March on Washington program.

Vice Chair Dr. Edwin T. Johnson asked that the MCAAHC Commissioners as well as the public take a moment of silence to observe and acknowledge the life of Tyree Nichols.

#### *New Business*

Chair Wilson gave a report that in 2019 at the Harriet Tubman Cultural Center, the MCAAHC was challenged to become part of a grant ranking and reviewing system based on a request from the secretary of the Maryland Department of Planning.

- The MCAAHC were not in agreement with the system and request that they change their process of how they handle projects and preserve African American sites in the State of Maryland.
- A task force was devised where Commissioner Steven X. Lee sits on this task force on how the State of Maryland looks to make changes in the sharing of state funds.
  - The task force is making sure that the State of Maryland funds are distributed fairly.
    - The initial conversation took place in the Harriet Tubman Cultural Center.

### *Legislative Agenda*

Chair Wilson shared that the MCAAHC has been working on how the commission moves forward this year building on the success that was had last year in securing \$1.6 million for the BDM and \$5 million dollars for the MCAAHC AAHPG establishing the MCAAHC as an independent agency.

- The MCAAHC request is that annually there will be money added each year to these budgets.
  - Historically the BDM has been underfunded in comparison to other cultural institutions.
    - This will ensure that the BDM does not find itself back in the same situation 10 to 15 years from now.
    - There are continuing growing needs with cost and needs going up but not the funding.
    - BDM Staff members have been working in 2 to 3 positions to keep the museum moving forward.
  - Commissioner Melvin Kelly made a motion to approve what needs to be shared and recommended by the planning committee to the State of Maryland legislatures in expansion of finances to the BDM and the MCAAHC.
    - Commissioner Tony Spencer seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Chair Wilson recognized Commissioner Adi Nkwonta whose term with the MCAAHC is coming to an end.

- She thanked her for her expertise, work, and support to the MCAAHC and the BDM.

Chair Wilson also recognized and thanked Ms. Schillica Howard, Curator of the Banneker-Douglass Museum for her great works in producing exhibits for the museum.

- Ms. Howard is pursuing other endeavors where the MCAAHC and the BDM wish her well.

### *Guests Presentation*

The Maryland School of the Deaf Columbia, Maryland campus came to the MCAAHC Public meeting to make a beautiful presentation to the MCAAHC and public.

- A video was shown of the group making their presentation on how Harriet Tubman inspired their lives.
- The Maryland School of the Deaf Columbia, Maryland campus students received the Black History Month contest award for their great works.
  - The students gave a very personal, arousing, presentation before the MCAAHC and the public.
  - The students gave the MCAAHC and the public a very special thank you for their support.

Mr. James Obasiol, a student of the Altholton High School came to the public meeting and gave a very powerful speech on what it takes to achieve world peace.

- He shared that we live in a society that continues to foster equity and inclusion with a historical approach to solving problems to achieve unity.
- Mr. James shared that Howard County is in the top 10 places to live in this country.
- In his speech he shared that across our country segregation is still very prominent.
- Mr. James said that he is a biracial student of black and Asian descent where he has seen and experienced many dynamics because of racism and sexuality.
- He shared that one must disturb marginalized status to have progress.

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 Melvin Kelly 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