

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

Public Teleconferencing Meeting Minutes

Monday, December 7, 2020

The following Commissioners were in attendance: Iris Leigh Barnes, Maya Davis, Vice Chair H. Russell Frisby, Janice Curtis Greene, Marilyn Hatza, Edwin T. Johnson, Melvin Kelly, Steven X. Lee, Lopez Matthews, The Honorable Kweisi Mfume, Kayce Munyeneh, Adi Nkwonta, Cheryl McLeod, Barbara Paca, Anthony Spencer, Torrey Snow, Elinor Thompson, Reggie Turner, and Tamara E. Wilson.

The meeting was called to order at 11:08 a.m. by Chair Rev. Dr. Tamara England Wilson.

### **Proof of Public Notice**

Accepted by general consensus.

**Welcome** - Chair Rev. Dr. Tamara England Wilson

Motion to accept the revised agenda - Commissioner Anthony Spencer

Commissioner Elinor Thompson seconded

Motion carried

### **Approval of the Minutes** - Chair Wilson

Minutes from the past MCAAHC public meetings have been captured in video form with captions. Moving forward, there will be abbreviated minutes that will be produced by LeRonn Herbert, Special Assistant and submitted for the commissioner's review and approval.

Minutes from the December 7, 2020 public meeting will be approved at the February 1, 2021 MCAAHC meeting.

### **Presentation - Dr. Sherita Golden, Vice President of Diversity Inclusion & Health Equity, Johns Hopkins Medicine**

Updated information on COVID-19, vaccines, and therapies available since her last presentation to the Commission:

- COVID-19 records have hit an all-time high of 200,000 cases and 240,000 deaths in the United States
- 25% of African Americans have been affected
- If blacks were dying at the same rate of white Americans, only 21 African Americans would be living today
- There are emerging therapies and vaccines
- Pfizer presented an emergency use request to the Food and Drug Administration on December 10<sup>th</sup> and Moderna's emergency use request will be heard on December 17<sup>th</sup>
- African Americans must trust the vaccination process even though historically they have been used as experiments from slavery to the post-Civil War era.
- Johns Hopkins has a research settings office that preserves the rights of all individuals where one can sign an informed consent for any testing for COVID-19 or any procedures can stop the process at any time. This gives a person the right of choice, by laws instituted, of whether they would like to move forward with a medical process or not.
- The process called, "Operation Warp Speed", sounds quick, but the methodology of handling the process has been done with diligent care. The Department of Human Resources, the Department of Defense as well as the private sector came together to provide funding to execute a very focused, and immediate development of a vaccination trial in three phases.
- The proposed vaccine is two-doses. It's not clear that the vaccine works where one can receive a shot like the flu nor do they know if the vaccine stops one from getting COVID-19 at all.
- There is a MRA protein in the vaccine that does not evoke the virus but helps to stop the virus. This was developed 10 years ago for the public that helps in emergency situations.

Chair Wilson asked that Commissioner Greene meet with her and Executive Director Compton on how the commission will disseminate COVID information to the public.

## **Officer Reports**

### *MCAAHC Chair Rev. Dr. Tamara England Wilson*

- The Maryland Lynching Truth & Reconciliation Commission (MLTRC) has:
  - Rewritten the joint statement on racism.
  - The press conference scheduled for Friday, December 4th was canceled due to COVID-19 restrictions
  - Chair Wilson Executive Director Compton; Marketing Director Robert James; Dr. Funalke, Chair of the MLTRC and the State of Maryland's Staff Attorney met and decided to shift the statement into an OP ED and Director James will work with them to get the message published and to develop a full plan of how to present the racism initiative for 2021.
  - Encouraged the public to give their thoughts or ideas in furthering this message .
- The MCAAHC Retreat held Saturday, November 7th was a success.
- The Maryland Heritage Areas Authority - As a result of the letter that was submitted on behalf of the MCAAHC in reference to equity in funding of African American heritage sites throughout the State of Maryland a work group was developed to help resolve the inequity. Chair Wilson, Executive Director Compton and Commissioner Steven X. Lee serves on that work group.
- The Chesapeake Mapping Advisory Committee - As a member of this committee, she will assist by connecting the researchers with the community in Kent, Calvert, and Somerset.

### *MCAAHC Vice Chair Herbert Frisby-Administration and Finance Committee*

Vice Chair Frisby reported the following in acquiring grants and presented the following information:

- The commission and the BDM raised approximately a total of \$125,00 in grants.
- The BDM was awarded the Maryland Historic Trust Historic Preservation grant - \$50,000 for the second year and the Anne Arundel County Arts Council grant - \$44,000. This will be used to hire a Curator of Collections.
- The Banneker-Douglass Museum Foundation is applying for the State of Maryland Capital Funds through the State of Maryland legislature for upgrades to various areas of the BDM.
- Issued a challenge to Commissioners to give \$51 for Giving Tuesday in honor of the Commission's 51 years of existence; Chair Wilson and the MCAAHC Commissioners agreed to give this nominal amount.

## **Director's Report**

### *Executive Director Chanel Compton*

- The MCAAHC Black Vote Symposium, in the month October, garnered an all-time high of 9,964 visitors and received several awards for its great production.
- A joint partnership was formulated from the symposium with the Maryland Hall for the Creative Arts called, "The Art of Activism." Several African American Artists shared their talent by painting Black Lives Matter banners. One banner will be installed outside of the BDM and the others at Maryland Hall. A program featuring Commissioner Tony Spencer and Director Compton will be held at Maryland Hall on Friday, January 8th.
- The BDM hopes to reopen in January or February. In preparation for this Mr. Herbert is working with the Governor's Office on Finance and Administration to secure a new COVID-19 cleaning contract.
- The BDM received the Anne Arundel County Community Foundation Collaborator's Award (\$2,500 grant) for our work with community partner, Future History Now, on the Breonna Taylor mural and other partner collaborations on the Black Vote History programs.

- The MCAAHC Retreat focused on three key areas that will be implemented into the 2021 programs:
  - 1) internal and external anti-racism training for the MCAAHC Commissioners,
  - 2) supporting the University of Maryland Medical Center's COVID-19 and health initiatives,
  - 3) building commission service-museum partnerships through enhanced interactive virtual web space to engage more schools to BDM.
- The BDM has raised \$30,000 of the \$80,000 towards the Anti-Racism Initiative Coalition Training Services that will be free to the youth, students, teachers, the community and the public of Maryland.
- The Governor's Office of Community Initiatives is working with all of the Maryland Ethnic commissions in sharing the various COVID-19 Vaccination Communication's plans.
- The Kwanzaa Celebration, "A Virtual Experience" program will take place on Friday, December 11, 2020 from 12:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m.
- The MCAAHC & BDM will close out the year 2020 by having a happy hour program on Friday, December 18<sup>th</sup> from 3:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

*BDM Committee-Commissioner Janice Curtis Green and Commissioner Edwin T. Johnson, Co-Chairs*

- The Black Vote Symposium held on Saturday, October 24, 2020 on FaceBook and YouTube was a huge success.

*Individual Commissioner Reports*

- Commissioner Greene will present a reenactment of Harriet Tubman and her Christmas rescue during the holiday at the Hosanna School Museum on Saturday, December 12, 2020 at 1 p.m.
- Commissioner Maya Davis has been meeting with the Prince George's County Schools and invited Mr. Herbert to meet with the CEO of the Prince George's County Schools in reference to renaming various schools in Prince George's County.
- Commissioner Lopez Matthews was installed as a senior advisor to the U.S. Truth Racial Healing and Transformation Leadership Commission that was devised by Senator Cory Booker and Congresswoman Barbara Lee.
- Commissioner Marilyn Hatza received a two-year appointment to the Baltimore National Heritage Area.
- Commissioner Anthony Spencer - the Anne Arundel County Arts Council has a \$1 million-dollar grant to help arts centered organizations in Anne Arundel County that has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

*New Business*

- The MCAAHC bylaws that were established a couple of years ago have not been voted on yet. Vice Chair Frisby will review them and will present them to the Commission for a vote at the February 1, 2021 meeting.
- A strategic committee will be established to assist Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Frisby, and Executive Director Compton with developing the agreed upon ideas from the retreat.
- MCAAHC Commissioners were asked to consider working on a short term committee to establish a reopening plan for the BDM.

Commissioner Iris Leigh Barnes made a motion for adjournment, it was seconded by Commissioner Marilyn Hatza, and the motion carried.

The public meeting was adjourned at 12:42 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

LeRonn Herbert, Special Assistant