

Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture
Annual Meeting
Minutes of October 2, 2017

An annual meeting was held on Monday, October 2, 2017 at the Howard County Library-Charles Miller Branch, 9420 Solomon Frederick Road, Ellicott City, Maryland 21042.

The meeting was called to order at 11:06 a.m. by Madam Chairwoman Lyndra (née Pratt) Marshall. The following commissioners were in attendance: Donna Cypress, Barbara Dunn, Vice Chair Dale Glenwood Green, Marilyn Hatza, Melvin Kelly, Steven X. Lee, Michael Kent, Lopez Matthews, Cheryl McLeod, and Janet Sims-Wood.

Proof of Public Notice

Accepted by general consensus.

Welcome

Madam Chairwoman Lyndra (née Pratt) Marshall, introduced Cheryl McLeod, Commissioner for the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture (MCAAHC) that gave the formal welcome to the MCAAHC meeting. She thanked the public and the MCAAHC for coming to her home town area.

While she was elated that individuals came to the MCAAHC annual meeting, Commissioner McLeod shared that her mother, Ms. Bette McLeod, who was an avid supporter of the Banneker-Douglass Museum (BDM) and the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture, passed on Thursday, September 27, 2017 to a stroke. The Home Going service will take place Friday, October 6, 2017 at Greater Mt. Nebo Church in Bowie, Maryland at 11:00 a.m. Madam Chairwoman Lyndra (née Pratt) Marshall and the commission extended their condolences to Commissioner McLeod and her family during this trying time.

Madam Chairwoman Lyndra (née Pratt) Marshall gave room for Commissioner Barbara S. Dunn to share words about Ms. Betty McLeod. Commissioner Dunn said that Ms. McLeod was a powerful, strong, leader, and lady that exemplified the spirit of excellence in all that she did especially, in teaching and sharing African American history through the Association for the Study and Life of African American History. She said that Ms. McLeod had given tremendously to the community, the Banneker-Douglass Museum, and all that came across her path.

LeRonn Herbert, Special Assistant for the MCAAHC, introduced Ms. Susan Stonesifer, Executive Director of the Howard County Public Library-Miller Branch, who gave the formal welcome. Ms. Stonesifer said that she and the Howard County Library-Charles Miller Branch were very happy to host the MCAAHC annual meeting. She shared a story that she met Mr. Lonnie Bunch, the Executive Director of the National Museum on African American History & Culture the other day, while attending the last Washington National's regular season baseball where he threw out the first pitch.

While spending time with Mr. Bunch, she found Mr. Bunch to be an exceptional shepherd for his institution and an advocate for all of the stories recorded under his care. Ms. Stonesifer said that Mr. Bunch was very encouraging in imparting his belief that we all should strive to share the stories that are important to us as a people and as a society. She said that the library provides top notch education and resources for all where she and her staff serve 2000 individuals daily. Ms. Stonesifer said that the MCAAHC and its guests are welcome to enjoy the amenities they provide anytime they are open.

Minutes of August 7, 2017 Meeting

Chairwoman Marshall shared that the minutes of the August 7th meeting will be tabled and presented at the December 4th MCAAHC meeting.

Director's Report

Director Chanel Compton began her Director's Report by sharing that she is the new director for the BDM and the MCAAHC. She said that it has been her pleasure getting to know the BDM staff, the MCAAHC Commissioners, and the community stakeholders like: Visit Annapolis, Maryland Office of Tourism, Kunta Kinte Alex Haley Foundation, and the Governor's Office of Communications as well as the public.

Director Compton said that in the month of September she attended the 250th Anniversary of the Kunta Kinte Alex Haley Memorial Festival that was located on the City Dock in Annapolis, Maryland. Cultural vendors and educational presentations were given during this day. Director Compton shared that she, Commissioner Steven Lee, and Mr. Christopher Haley-descendant of Alex Haley and Kunta Kinte spoke at this affair.

On Saturday, September 23, 2017 Director Compton, Chairwoman Marshall, and Vice Chair Green attended the Frederick Douglass Celebration sponsored by The Frederick Douglass Honor Society, the Town of Easton, and Talbot County. Mr. Kenneth Morris, Jr., who is the great, great, great, grandson of Frederick Douglass and the great, great, grandson of Booker T. Washington gave the keynote address at this affair. Director Compton said that Mr. Morris and the Frederick Douglass Foundation took on the task of printing one million books to be distributed to students across the schools throughout the nation. A libation ceremony took place during this event and Governor Larry Hogan gave a citation for this event of which Director Compton and Chairwoman Marshall presented it during this affair.

On Saturday, September 25, 2017 Director Compton reported that she and the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives visited the Junior Achievement Finance Park for the Governor's Office of Service and Volunteerism in Lanham, Maryland. This program is designed to teach middle and high school students how to budget household income, mortgages, car loans as well as prepare themselves for living as an adult. Volunteers contribute their time and talent to support this program.

Director Compton said that she also attended an art and medicine event by Sir Rodney Williams, Governor-General of Antigua and Barbuda came and spoke at a State of Maryland's Secretary's event. She also shared that Governor Larry Hogan has formally said that he is making: "2018 The Year of Frederick Douglass." There will be events, celebrations, and programs given all year long through great scholars all over the State of Maryland coming through the areas of Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, and Talbot County.

Director Compton said that the BDM has an "Untold Stories of African American History & Culture" exhibit that is traveling to Morgan State University where its exhibition opening will take place on Sunday, October 15, 2017 at the James E. Lewis Museum at 2:00 p.m. This exhibit displays images of Morgan State University's edition of untold African American sport stories. All are welcomed to attend this affair. Director Compton shared that there will also be a Benjamin Banneker lecture at the BDM given by C.R. Gibbs, historian. Last but not least, the BDM will have a Kwanzaa Celebration sponsored by the Banneker-Douglass Museum Foundation.

Report of the Officers

MCAAHC Madam Chairwoman Lyndra (née Pratt) Marshall

Madam Chairwoman Marshall shared that the MCAAHC has been on the move where they have been spotlighted in several major newspapers. The MCAAHC was recognized in: The Dundalk News for the Henrietta Lacks Dedication Ceremony where the commission presented a proclamation from Governor Larry Hogan; The Dorchester Star Cambridge, Maryland newspaper for the Emancipation Proclamation quilt; as well as the Star Democrat Newspaper where the commission was spotlighted three times over past couple of months about Frederick Douglass Day in Talbot County.

MCAAHC Vice Chair Dale Green

Vice Chair Dale Green shared that he always likes to begin his report by sharing the legacy of the MCAAHC. He said that Senator Verda Welcome, the first black female state delegate elected to the Maryland General

Assembly in 1962 and Professor Mr. Benjamin Quarles, first generational historian, from Morgan State University are the esteemed founders of the MCAAHC and BDM that was legislated in 1969. Because of their legacy, the MCAAHC has: the Banneker-Douglass Museum Foundation founded in 1976, the Friends of the Banneker-Douglass Museum founded in 1979, the Emancipation Quilt, the Banneker-Douglass Museum founded in 1984 as well as the \$1 million dollar African American Heritage Preservation Grant (AAHPG) founded in 2010.

Vice Chair Green gave a report on the African American Heritage Preservation Grant that is used to preserve the African American history in the great State of Maryland. It has provided \$6 million in funds over the past six years. There were 82 applicants that were awarded the fund this year reaching 20 out of 24 counties in Maryland. It has provide jobs to 435 individuals throughout the State of Maryland. The MCAAHC has been able to reserve 20% of the grant funds for emergency situations. The date for turning in applications will change for 2018. There were 40 applicants that applied for this grant. Vice Chair Green shared that there were 12 organizations that received finances from the African American Heritage Preservation Grant. Of those 12 organizations: seven were historic churches, three historic schools, one historic house, and one historic lodge building.

Vice Chair Green said that The National Trust for Historic Preservation did a national study on African American Commissions throughout the United States. The MCAAHC is only one of nine commissions in the United States. He also said that the MCAAHC continues to work with the Middle Passage organization where they are looking to designate a slave port marker in Oxford, Maryland on the Eastern Shore.

Vice Chair Green said that the MCAAHC is continuing to work diligently on the State of Maryland's Bicentennial Celebration of Frederick Douglass. He said that he and Madame Chairwoman Marshall have been attending affairs that focus on Frederick Douglass.

Vice Chair Green also shared that he, Chairwoman Marshall, and Lopez Matthews sit on the Reginald Lewis Museum Board of Directors. They all recently attended a program at the museum entitled "Racism Matters."

Vice Chair Green said that he, Chairwoman Marshall, Commissioner Donna Cypress, and Director Compton all took and completed the Open Meetings Act training. He and Chairwoman Marshall were also able to attend the Sesquicentennial service in Unionville, Maryland. The 18th century Civil War veterans were interned there. Many descendant still remain from this area.

Vice Chair Green also shared that history was made in Baltimore, Maryland where all nine original Historically Black Colleges and Universities (Morehouse, Howard, Alabama State, Talladega to name a few) convened at Morgan State University for the 150 Sesquicentennial Celebration for three days. He said that this was the largest number of HBCUs founded in the year of 1867.

Vice Chair Green said that he and Chairwoman Marshall were able to speak with Second District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church for their Quarterly Conference. They were invited by the Presiding Elder of Baltimore and the Eastern Shore. Three hundred persons were in attendance where some have received the African American Heritage Grant.

Vice Chair Green said that he and Chairwoman Marshall participated in the agenda setting of the Black Caucus which took place on Saturday, September 31, 2017 from 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. in Annapolis, Maryland. He said that a tour will be given to the Black Caucus on grant applicants that have been funded and not funded to grow the participation to this grant. The MCAAHC has been asked to devise a list of African American sites that would be place on the National Registrar of Historic Places. A committee will have to be formed to cover all four areas of the State of Maryland.

Vice Chair Green asked that there be a coalition of MCAAHC Commissioners to go to the Maryland Historical Trust Board of Trustees' meeting in Assateague, Maryland. He also shared that he will be doing an open doors lecture at the Earl Graves Business School on Black Architects. The lecture will take place from 6:00 p.m.-7:30 p.m. Michelle Obama was the 2nd person of color to address this issue that was not recognized significantly in the State of Maryland. The first person to recognize Black Architects was Whitney Young in 1968. All are welcomed to attend this program.

Vice Chair Green shared that the MCAAHC has been partnering with the National Organization of Minority Architects in celebrating architecture month in October in Baltimore City. This organization will be celebrating the early black architects whose history goes as far back as 1915 in Southern Maryland. Before these findings, the first black architect was not recognized by the State of Maryland until 1970. From the association's research, there were 60 black architects registered in the State of Maryland since 1901.

Vice Chair Green said that the MCAAHC is working diligently on the State of Maryland's Bicentennial Celebration of Frederick Douglass. The state will be focusing on three key areas for this celebration: Talbot County on the Eastern Shore where Frederick Douglass was born, Anne Arundel County where he spoke at different churches and the Maryland State House, and Baltimore City where he escaped to New York. There will be numerous sites sharing in the celebration as well. The MCAAHC will be working at the national and state level for this special celebration.

Report of Committees

Commissioner Steven X. Lee

Kunta Kinte Festival

Commissioner Steve X. Lee shared that he had the great opportunity to attend the Kunta Kinte Heritage Festival with Director Compton. He said that it was a great comprehensive festival that celebrated the life of Kunta Kinte that came through the Annapolis Harbor 250 years ago. He enjoyed the discussions of the speakers that came there as well as the libation ceremony given bringing home to the audience, especially the young people, the significance of Kunta Kinte. Commissioner Lee enjoyed the great African vendors that came to this affair that had the authentic African materials.

Commissioner Lee said that he has been working to rally support for the various African American organizations throughout the State of Maryland. He shared that he was speaking of the non-governmental art and cultural organizations. There is a struggle for these organizations to sustain themselves and he is seeing what part he can play in helping them to the best of his abilities.

Benjamin Banneker Mural

Commissioner Lee shared that there was a Benjamin Banneker-George Ellicott mural that used to hang in the Maryland House on Rt. 95. Commissioner Lee, with the MCAAHC, have been able to procure this mural to hang in the BDM's permanent exhibit gallery room in 2018.

Commissioner Barbara S. Dunn

"2018 The Year of Frederick Douglass" & "The 50th Anniversary of MCAAHC"

Commissioner Dunn shared that she is very appreciative to serve on the MCAAHC where they preserve and share African American History but she was equally elated that the Association for the Study and Life of African American History (A.S.A.L.H.) accepted Chairwoman Marshall and the MCAAHC's formal request to join Governor Larry Hogan and the State of Maryland in the "2018 Year of Frederick Douglass" celebrations as well as celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the MCAAHC in 2019.

Commissioner Dunn also shared that A.S.A.L.H. member Dr. Benjamin Quarles, Morgan State University Professor, is also the founder of the MCAAHC and the BDM. One can find Dr. Quarles obituary in Dr. Carter G.

Woodson's Negro Journal of African American history as well as information that Dr. Quarles established the MCAAHC.

Commissioner Dunn shared that she will be working on MCAAHC's Rosenwald School Initiative in helping individuals gain and explain the rich history and stories behind each school. Chairwoman Marshall asked Vice Chair Green to share information about a Rosenwald School endeavor he embarked upon. Vice Chair Green said that he recently spoke at one of nine Rosenwald Schools that still exists in Prince George's County. He has been afforded the opportunity by the Maryland Historic Trust to be responsible on the restoration of the school which was a three room, teacher type school.

Commissioner Janet Sims-Wood
50th Anniversary of the MCAAHC

Commissioner Sims-Wood gave information that she is preparing to compile and work on the marketing and printing of the 50th of the MCAAHC. She shared that A.S.A.L.H. is going to support and work with the commission on this endeavor to spotlight the commission throughout the State of Maryland.

A.S.A.L.H. Conference

Commissioner Sims-Wood said that the conference was phenomenal. There were many scholars that shared the vision and the great African American History that was spotlighted. Commissioner Sims Wood said that Commissioner Dunn, working with the youth of A.S.A.L.H. had 1,300 youth there at the conference. There were many you at the conference that 300 additional lights had to be added for the additional area that was open for the great attendance to the conference.

A.S.A.L.H. focused on many sessions, book signings, teacher sessions with extensive lesson plans and different programming to address the issues that are taking place across the country and the world. By attending this conference individuals have the opportunity to meet with many scholars across the country and world. Commissioner Sims-Wood said that she gave a presentation on Morgan State University's Sesquicentennial Celebration as well as Senator Verda Freeman Welcome. She ended her report by saying that MCAAHC and A.S.A.L.H. are open to everyone.

Commissioner Lopez Matthews

Commissioner Lopez Matthews said that he also attended the A.S.A.L.H. Conference where he gave three presentations. His presentations consisted of: "Howard University at the First 150 Years", "Members of the Alpha Phi Fraternity-Filling the Gap in The Crisis of Black Education", and "History Makers."

In addition to this, Commissioner Matthews runs the digitizing department at Howard University. He shared that he is writing a book about Howard University being the first training school for African American students that went into the military. Commissioner Matthews said the first commissioned officers were from Howard University.

Beyond this Commissioner Matthews shared that he recently was added to the Board of Directors for the Reginald Lewis Museum representing the MCAAHC taking the position as the recording secretary.

Commissioner Cheryl McLeod

Howard County Public School System Committee for Diversity & Inclusion-Board Report

Commissioner McLeod that said that there has been a lot of progress made in moving forward and going beyond some instances of racism that took place in the Howard County schools. The Howard County school system engaged the students and the community in having dialogue and a great talk in addressing the issues and moving forward. Commissioner McLeod said the largest voice is coming from the Howard County students are making sure that schools are listening to their needs and making some changes.

Commissioner McLeod also came to the MCAAHC meeting to share that there are a lot of concerns on the achievement gaps in reading in the Howard School system in comparison to the majority. She said that at one time in Prince George's County and Montgomery County, there was a focus on reading where teachers were reading specialists. Teachers had to go back for classes to get certification to teach on reading to their students. This is no longer the push with reading programs because school budgets are tight these days.

Commissioner McLeod said that Howard County is looking for a new superintendent where she is looking to bring these issues to the forth front. In regards to her mom, Commissioner McLeod asked that in honor of her mom, she asked that people get involved with Enoch Pratt's "Buying Book for Students" program to purchase books for students.

Commissioner Cypress

Commissioner Donna Cypress gave a report that she attended the Jacob Lawrence exhibition opening, "Maryland Collects" that was held at the Reginald Lewis Museum. She found the exhibit to be very interesting and informing, from his personal prints collection in and around Maryland. Commissioner Cypress said that Jacob Lawrence was a painter, story teller, and artist.

Commissioner Kent

Commissioner Kent shared that in Calvert County there will be "Lower Marlboro Day" that takes place on Saturday, October 8, 2017. He shared that there were 700 enslaved Africans that were set free with the help of the British from the War of 1812 that came through Calvert County. This will take place at the Lower Marlboro church from 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

New Business

Vice Chair Green presented to Chairwoman Marshall and the MCAAHC Commissioners that there be support for the 12 applicants that applied for the African American Heritage Preservation Grant. The MCAAHC Commissioners unanimously voted yes for their support.

Presentation

Commissioner Steven X. Lee introduced Senator Barbara Robinson who represents the city of Baltimore, Maryland and is the Chair of the Black Caucus of Maryland. Senator Robinson said it was an honor for her to come to the MCAAHC meeting and see how much the commission has progressed. She came to the MCAAHC meeting to encourage the MCAAHC Commissioners to continue the great work that they are doing.

Senator Robinson shared that she and the Black Caucus are available to support the commission with any of their affairs and endeavors they are involved with.

Chairwoman Marshall, called for a motion to adjourn the MCAAHC meeting. Commissioner Lopez Matthew made a motion that the MCAAHC being adjourned. The MCAAHC unanimously seconded and the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 1:38 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

LeRonn Herbert, Special Assistant