



COMMISSION ON AFRICAN AMERICAN AFFAIRS (CAAA)

FEBRUARY MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date: February 17, 2021
WebEx Meeting

1. **Call to Order**: Vice Chair, Spencer Gopaul called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm.
2. **Roll Call**: Quorum was established. Quorum is established when there is a presence of one third of the Commission (voting and non-voting Ex-Officio). There were 9 Commissioners present, 6 Public Members and 3 Ex-Officio.

Commissioners Present:

- Salim Adofo, Public Member, Ward 8
- Spencer Gopaul, Public Member, Ward 5
- Kimberly Dickerson, Ex- Officio Member, MPD, Ward 7
- Kristin Shymoniak, Public Member, Ward 8
- Melanee Woodard, Public Member, Ward 5
- Anthony Diallo, Ex-Officio Member, DCRA, Ward 7
- Ronald King, Ex-Officio Member, DC Health, Ward 7
- Vivian Derryck, Public Member, Ward 4
- Sondra Phillips-Gilbert, Public Member, Ward 6

Commissioners Absent:

- Charles Jones, Ex-Officio Member, DOES, Ward 2
- Delano Hunter, Ex-Officio Member, DPR, Ward 5
- Lolita Ratchford, Public Member, Ward 1
- Ryan Jones, Public Member, Ward 4
- Prentice Parrish, Public Member, Ward 5
- Kimberly Jeffries Leonard, Public Member, Ward 4 (Chair)
- Deneira Owens, Ex-Officio Member, DHCD, Ward 7
- Lauren Vaughan, Public Member, Ward 6

3. **Approval and Correction of Minutes**: Commissioner Melanee Woodard made a motion to accept and approve the meeting minutes. Commissioner Anthony Diallo seconded the motion.
4. **MOAAA Update**: MOAAA Associate Director Lionell Gaines shared Black History Month Event updates which will be sent through MOAAA's bulletin. Associate Director Gaines encouraged residents to share their family stories. Interim Director Rev. Thomas Bowen encouraged residents to register for the COVID-19 vaccination and encourage others to register. Associate Gaines also shared that there are vacancies on the

COMMISSION FEBRUARY MEETING MINUTES

Commission and encouraged interested residents to send their bio and resume to the MOAAA email.

5. Guest Speakers:

- Sylvia Cyrus, Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH),
 - Ms. Cyrus shared the history of ASALH and Black History Month events
 - ASALH's BHM Event: "The Black Family" which will be held Saturday, February 20, 1:00 PM
 - A list of other events can be found and tickets can be purchased at www.ASALH.org
 - ASALH also provides docent training program in partnership with Dunbar Highschool for the youth which can be found on the website
- Ocie Stroud-Miles, Tulsa Initiative, Inc
 - digital organization which has an 8-week program that teaches young men (ages 18-24) on entrepreneurship
 - applications are now being accepted and can be requested by emailing Mr. Stroud-Miles at ostroudmelvin@tulsanonprofit.org
- Karleton Thomas, BUILD DC
 - using entrepreneurship and business development to close the achievement gap in students in DC
 - some programs include an digital incubator
 - 10 slots are left
 - applications can be found at BUILD DC, kthomas@build.org, build.org/dc/
- Alfred Swailes, Community Advocate
 - shared information regarding the Disparity Study formulated by Councilman McDuffie
 - unemployment and low income among African American residents in the District are vast
 - suggested that there should be a meeting to discuss a long-term plan to address these issues
 - The Greater Washington Urban League is also providing resources to aid in the research
- Commissioner Mustafa Adbul-Salaam (ANC 8C05), shared that the Ward 8 Community Economic Development Planning Process (www.ward8cedplan.com) are working to address these disparities throughout the District
- Associate Director Gaines shared some resources and programs currently available in the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning Economic Development: [DC Local Equity, Access and Preservation Funds \(DC LEAF\)](#)
- Commissioner Melanie Woodard, Industrial Bank
 - Upcoming workshop on Estate Planning
 - Friday, February 19
 - industrialbankannualestateplanning.eventbrite.com
 - First time Home Buyer Process Workshop
 - please email Commissioner Woodard at mwoodard@industrial-bank.com for more information.

COMMISSION FEBRUARY MEETING MINUTES

6. **Commission Business:** The Commission did not have any items in the agenda.

- (Old Business) Making recommendations for the Comprehensive Plan, Budget and Engagement Forum and procedures -- Vice-Chair Gopaul revisited the importance of the Budget and Engagement forum (6:00 PM 2/18/2021 and 11:00 AM 2/20/202) and including community organizations and stakeholders in the process by generating a survey and receiving feedback so that it can be used to generate recommendations to the Mayor Bowser.
- Commissioner Gopaul will share a list of organizations that the Commission can collaborate with the Commission.
- Associate Director Gaines shared that the MOAAA performance oversight hearing will be on February 24 at 12:00 PM and the oversight hearing will be in April. Additional information will be shared in the MOAAA bulletin.
- Commissioner Ronald King shared that the COVID-19 vaccine is now available for additional populations such as grocery store employees.
- The vaccine will be released at different times on 2/18/2021 to accommodate residents' schedules. The schedule will return to normal 2/19/2021
- Commissioner Gopaul shared information regarding the Paid Family Leave for DC residents.

7. **Public Comments:** Below are action items for Commissioners:

- Ms. Brenda Jones requested to gain more information regarding Mayor Bowser's Building Blocks DC initiative to reduce gun violence. Associate Director Gaines will share more information.
- Associate Director Gaines shared information about the Gun Violence Prevention Center in Anacostia which will focus on initiatives regarding Gun Violence and victims of gun violence which will include wrap-around supports and mental health care across Wards 7 and 8.
- Brenda Belton, Resident, shared that a lot of DC's senior citizen residents are willing to volunteer to help the Commission with any of its outreach projects.
- Commissioner Holmes (ANC 7C) inquired about the MOAAA's funding during the fiscal year and signature programs offered by MOAAA which will aid in his advocacy for additional funding for the office.
- Associate Gaines and Commissioner Gopaul shared programming and funding information
- Alfred Swailes, Community Advocate, suggested that he and MOAAA collaborate to create an empowerment conference for African American residents. Brenda Jones and Denise Wright expressed interest in being on the planning committee. Commissioner Gopaul will set up an email correspondence with Associate Director Gaines and Mr. Swailes.

8. **Adjournment:** Vice Chair Gopaul adjourned the meeting at 8:00 pm.