



**COMMISSION ON AFRICAN AMERICAN AFFAIRS
(CAAA)**

NOVEMBER MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date: November 18, 2020
Webex Meeting

1. **Call to Order**: Vice Chair, Spencer Gopaul called the meeting to order at 6:30 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
- Anthony Diallo, Ex- Officio Member, DCRA, Ward 7
- Kimberly Dickerson, Ex- Officio Member, MPD, Ward 7
- Spencer Gopaul, Public Member, Ward 5
- Kimberly Jeffries Leonard, Public Member, Ward 4 (Chair)
- Ronald King, Ex- Officio Member, DC Health, Ward 7
- Prentice Parrish, Public Member, Ward 5
- Kristin Shymoniak, Public Member, Ward 8
- Melanee Woodard, Public Member, Ward 5

Commissioners Absent:

- Akela Crawford, Public Member, Ward 7
- Vivian Derryck, Public Member, Ward 4
- Latasha Gunnels, Public Member, Ward 8
- Delano Hunter, Ex- Officio Member, DPR, Ward 5
- Charles Jones, Ex- Officio Member, DOES, Ward 2
- Ryan Jones, Public Member, Ward 4
- Deneira Owens, Ex- Officio Member, DHCD, Ward 7
- Sondra Phillips Gilbert, Public Member, Ward 6
- Lolita Ratchford, Public Member, Ward 1
- Lauren Vaughan, Public Member, Ward 6

3. **Approval and Correction of Minutes**: Commissioner Anthony Diallo made a motion to accept and approve the meeting minutes. Commissioner Melanee Woodard seconded the motion. Co-Chair Spencer Gopaul (CAAA Vice Chair) called a vote on the motion and the Commission unanimously approved the meeting minutes.

COMMISSION NOVEMBER MEETING MINUTES

4. **MOAAA Update:** MOAAA Interim Director Thomas Bowen and Associate Director Lionell Gaines shared updates regarding DMV Black Restaurant Week and the Bridge Fund which Mayor Bowser released November 17, 2020. The Bridge Fund supports hospitality, entertainment, and retail industries affected by COVID-19. Associate Director Gaines also shared that more info will be shared regarding Small Business Saturday, Kwanzaa, and MLK Day of Service. MOAAA will be working with community-based organizations and supporting them throughout the holidays. Interim Director Bowen shared the importance of DMV Black Restaurant Week and how restaurant owners will receive additional support due to these visits.

5. Special Guests:

- **Deputy Mayor Wayne Turnage - Office of the Deputy Mayor for Health & Human Services (DMHHS)**
 - The Commission asked the Deputy Mayor to share his experience regarding the COVID vaccine trial at George Washington University Hospital. The Deputy Mayor shared that the screening process was effortless and the trial is going well. He receives follow-up from the doctor and has access to an app that tracks his symptoms and wellness. He is currently waiting for the trial results that determine whether he is in the vaccine group or the placebo group. The trial concludes at the end of November. The Deputy Mayor also shared that some participants that have received the second vaccination treatment, have experienced adverse effects.
- **Brittany Whited- Air Quality Division - Department of Energy & Environment (DOEE)**
 - Shared the Medium and Heavy-Duty Vehicles Memorandum of Understanding which was approved by Mayor Bowser in July 2020. These vehicles operate mostly on diesel fuel and heavily impact and pollute the ozone and increase the risk of pulmonary disease and asthma. Wards 5, 7, and 8 have the highest cases. The MOU emphasizes the need to accelerate the eradication of these vehicles in communities that are impacted by environmental justice. The taskforce will work with stakeholders to make this initiative as effective as possible with attempts of the plan being final by Summer 2021. Feedback from the public will be accepted until the end of December.
 - Co-Chair Gopaul inquired about funding support for small businesses that utilize medium and heavy vehicles. Ms. Whited shared the importance of small business owners will be included in the stakeholder process so that the plan is well-comprehensive.
- **Jennifer Kulp-Department of Energy & Environment (DOEE)**

COMMISSION NOVEMBER MEETING MINUTES

- Ms. Kulp shared information regarding the Energy Assistance Program through the Department of Energy. Low income home energy assistance program (LIEAP) - if bill is over \$250 and a benefit up to \$600. This is a one-time benefit. UDP provides continued support for utility bill. More information can be found on the website (check recording).
- Clean Rivers Impervious Area Charge (CRIAC)- water bill relief which is based on income requirements.
- Weatherization Assistance Program- residents that are approved for LIEAP can be approved for this program. This program provides home weatherization.
- Emergency Mechanical System Program- offers repairs and replacement for HVAC systems. This is a first come first serve basis. Applicants need a statement from a contactor that indicates the estimate for repairs.
- Lead reduction program- for households built prior to 1978 and have occupants of children 6 years old and younger.
- Solar for All- Solar energy to low income families. Single family homeowners that have rooftop access and Community Solar Program allows renters and owners to save on their electricity bills even if they do not have a roof to install solar. Applicants can receive the benefits of solar from systems located anywhere in the District. To apply for the program, LIEAP applicants automatically qualify. Other applicants must meet the income requirements.
- The Commission will post this information on the MOAAA website. Interim Bowen committed to sharing the information with local congregations.

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

- **(Old Business)** Making recommendations for the Comprehensive Plan and procedures -- Associate Director Gaines shared that the Mayor has made initial recommendations and now the public record will be open until December 3. He urged the public to provide recommendations. The Commission may provide recommendation on the Plan at any time to provide structure. Associate Director Gaines will provide a process for the Commission to make additional recommendations for other matters. Dr. Jefferies-Leonard suggested that the Commission should hold a special meeting to develop recommendations by December 3. Associate Director Gaines will send a poll to Commissioners for meeting availability.
- **(New Business)** Commissioner Ronald King encouraged residents to take necessary precautions during the holidays since the majority of the COVID-19 cases are originating in small home and family gatherings. He shared that the District is looking into the two different vaccinations and discussing how this will be presented to the communities. Both vaccinations have at least 95% accuracy. Commissioner King also shared the importance of enrollment in the DC COVID Alert Network (CAN) app:(<https://coronavirus.dc.gov/dccan>).

COMMISSION NOVEMBER MEETING MINUTES

- **(New Business)** Interim Director Bowen suggested that families engage in family book readings while remaining safe in their homes. The books suggested include: Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents by Isabel Wilkerson and The Master Plan: My Journey from Life in Prison to a Life of Purpose by Chris Wilson. Chair Jefferies-Leonard also suggested creating a possible book club or posting book suggestions every two months.

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

- Community Member Alfred D. Swailes shared updates regarding the Disparity Study. Information regarding the study can be found in Mayor Bowser's press release which was announced November 17, 2020. He shared that on Friday, November 20, residents need to register to participate in the disparity study which is crucial for the development of black owned businesses and may decrease the disparities throughout the predominantly Black Communities. The Commission agreed to share this information through multiple platforms which include social media and listservs. Mr. Swailes also suggested that the Commission invite leaders of Black organizations to the Commission meetings.

8. **Adjournment:** Chair, Dr. Kimberly Jeffries Leonard adjourned the meeting at 8:17 pm.