



COMMISSION ON AFRICAN AMERICAN AFFAIRS (CAAA)

OCTOBER MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date: October 21, 2020

Webex Meeting

1. **Call to Order**: Chair, Dr. Kimberly Jeffries Leonard called the meeting to order at 6:33 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 10 Commissioners present, 7 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)
- Ryan Jones, Public Member, Ward 4
- 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
- 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 Salim Adofo seconded the motion. Dr. Jeffries Leonard (CAAA Chair) called a vote on the motion and the Commission unanimously approved the meeting minutes.
4. **MOAAA Update**: MOAAA Interim Director Thomas Bowen thanked Ashley Emerson for her guidance and leadership. He shared updates regarding the interview process for

COMMISSION OCTOBER MEETING MINUTES

the MOAAA Director position. Associate Director Lionell Gaines shared updates regarding the Grant awardees. The Fiscal Year 2021 MOAAA Community Grant awardees are: Arts for Our Children, BUILD Metro DC, College Bound, DC Greens, Recreation Wish List Committee, The Community Enrichment Project, The Nicholson Project, and the U.S. Black Chamber of Commerce (USBC) and the Greater Washington Black Chamber of Commerce (GWBCC). He will send the information to the Commission. The Awardees will be invited to the next Commission meeting.

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

- (Old Business) No old business was discussed.
- (New Business) Chair Jefferies Leonard suggested adding a discussion regarding the COVID-19 Vaccination. Commissioner Diallo shared his support of Chair Jefferies Leonard's suggestion. He shared that some residents have had difficulty becoming a COVID contact tracer and asked for guidance on how to attain a position. Associate Director Gaines requested that Commissioner Diallo send him the contact information of those that are experiencing difficulties so that he can connect them to the Dept. of Health, specifically to the Contact Tracing Dept. Commissioner King shared that a lot of positions have become vacant and the hiring/screening process may be delayed. Commissioner King also suggested for others to visit the DOES office on Minnesota Ave SE. Commissioner King also agreed with Chair Jefferies Leonard's suggestion. He shared a review of the DC CAN feature on smartphones (which was launched Monday 10/19/2020) which provides an anonymous alert if one is in proximity with someone that has tested positive for COVID. This feature also assists with contact tracing. Commissioner King will share talking points and materials to share with the Commission regarding DC CAN. Other resources and information can be found at [Coronavirus.dc.gov/DCCAN](https://coronavirus.dc.gov/DCCAN). Commissioner also advised against door to door trick or treating during this Halloween season to avoid COVID exposure and will send information and guidance to Associate Director Gaines to share with the Commission. Interim Director Rev. Bowen suggested that MOAAA extend an invite to the Howard President since Howard Hospital, Dr. Frederick, will be a forerunner with the vaccination trials.
- (New Business) Associate Director Gaines shared information regarding the legislation suggested by Councilman Kenyan McDuffie that DCPS begin to utilize African American Studies Curriculum. He introduced Nubia Gerima, a coordinator at Dunbar's Black Studies Academy. 142 students are currently enrolled in the Academy which includes 8-12th graders. The goal of the academy is to affirm students of their sense of self and power to impact the community and the world. The academy provides a monthly experience for students which can include partnerships with Howard University's Africana Studies class, a trivia activity that celebrates African American History and the African Diaspora, and scuba diving. Associate Director Gaines suggested having a proclamation developed for Dunbar sesquicentennial. Commissioner Diallo made a motion, Commissioner Shymoniak seconded the motion. Chair Jefferies Leonard asked the commission on guidance on how to address the legislation regarding the curriculum. Associate Director Gaines suggested that a work group be created in addition to the education committee to brainstorm strategies and develop a plan and recommendations. Commissioner

COMMISSION OCTOBER MEETING MINUTES

Gopaul suggested that Dr. Eddie Glaude be invited to the Commission's next meeting to discuss Princeton University's methods regarding Black Studies. Commissioner Gopaul also suggested that the Commission and community members listen to Dr. Carr every Saturday on the Karen Hunter Show on You Tube (<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLaFQd3vEfo-p4Y12rHjfvjNKtSwz6TY80>) to gain additional information regarding Black Studies.

- (New Business) Dr. Kelechi Egwim and Harold Bucum from the Kwanzaa Celebration Committee shared the history of the Kwanzaa celebration which is one of the largest Kwanzaa celebrations in the nation and is funded by Black businesses which in turn creates a Black business directory for the DMV area. The committee facilitates an activity (that is planned by other organizations) for each night of Kwanzaa. The committee meets each Tuesday at 8:00 PM. Information regarding the meetings are included in the MOAAA newsletter. Chair Jefferies Leonard suggested connecting contacts from the Commission to the Kwanzaa Committee. Commissioner Shymoniak suggested that Commissioner Derryck also be included since she is the chair for the Special Events Committee.
- (New Business) Associate Director Gaines shared information regarding Black Restaurant Week which will begin November 8-15 (Tentatively). He encouraged the Commission and Community Members to patronize and promote on social media not only Black restaurants but also non-conventional restaurants such as food trucks. MOAAA has Black Owned Business signs that can be posted at Black Owned Restaurants throughout the District. Small Business Resiliency fund closes on Friday, October 24. There is a very small number of applicants located East of the River. Associate Director Gaines will share information regarding the grant immediately after the Commission Meeting. The information is suggested to be shared with ANC's as well as restaurants and other small businesses throughout the District. Commissioner Adofo and Jefferies Leonard suggested that the Commission collectively visit a Black Owned restaurant during Black Restaurant Week and beyond to embody the principle of Kwanzaa. Commissioner Adofo also suggested that some technical assistance training be offered to small businesses to help them apply to grants. Associate Director Gaines shared that Greater Washington Commerce is collaborating with MOAAA to provide assistance to strengthen Small Black Owned Business' Grant applications.

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

- Commissioner Gopaul shared the increased need for social services. Parental Family Leave Program up to \$1,000/week for 12 weeks of parental (maternal and paternal) leave and 6 weeks of personal injury. Open enrollment will begin in early December. Commissioner Gopaul suggested that information for this program be included in the MOAAA's newsletter and social media. Chair Jefferies Leonard suggested that a one-pager be created and dispersed to ANC's. Associate Director Gaines shared that MOAAA has been working with DC Health Link to inform residents of open enrollments and will contact DOES.
- Commissioner Adofo requested that the Commission swiftly draft a recommendation regarding the District's Comprehensive Plan

COMMISSION OCTOBER MEETING MINUTES

(<https://lims.dccouncil.us/Legislation/B23-0736>) Chair Jefferies Leonard requested that Associate Director Gaines send the Commission information regarding the plan and the Commission will discuss the recommendations virtually and have a recommendation ready for the hearing in November. Commissioner Adofu also requested clarification on the Commission's recommendation process. Associate Director Gaines and Interim Director Rev. Bowen will provide information on the process. Commissioner Gopaul agreed with Commissioner Adofu's suggestion and also emphasized that the Commission also provided recommendations for other pressing issues regarding the Black community such as education and budgets. Associate Director Gaines will send hearing dates to the Commission.

- Commissioner Adofu shared that on November 14, volunteers are needed to paint Hart Middle School.
- Commissioner Diallo suggested making a recommendation to Mayor Bowser to observe June 19th as an official Juneteenth holiday.
- Commissioner Adolfo shared gratitude to Associate Director Gaines regarding his hard work in dispersing information to the Commission.
- Community Member Cheryl Spann shared gratitude for all of the information shared during the meeting and will be contacting some of the members of the meeting in the near future.

7. **Adjournment:** Chair, Dr. Kimberly Jeffries Leonard adjourned the meeting at 8:20 pm.