



## COMMISSION ON AFRICAN AMERICAN AFFAIRS (COAAA)

### JANUARY MEETING MINUTES

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Meeting Date: January 15, 2020

Meeting Location: Frank D. Reeves Municipal Center  
2000 14<sup>th</sup> Street NW, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Community Room

1. **Call to Order:** Commissioner Spencer Gopaul called the meeting to order at 6:38 pm. Quorum was established. Quorum is established when there is a presence of one third of the Commissioners (voting and non-voting ex officio).

2. **Roll Call:**

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,
- Ronald King, Ex- officio member, DC Health, Ward 7
- Deneira Owens, Ex-officio member, DHCD, Ward 7
- Sondra Phillips Gilbert, Public Member, Ward 6
- Kristin Shymoniak, Public Member, Ward 8
- Lauren Vaughan, Public Member, Ward 6

Commissioners Absent:

- Niambi Carter, Public Member, Ward 5
- 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
- Kimberly Jeffries Leonard, Public Member, Ward 4 (Chair)
- Antwan Jones, Public Member, Ward 1
- Charles Jones, Ex- officio member, DOES, Ward 2
- Ryan Jones, Public Member, Ward 4
- Prentice Parrish, Public Member, Ward 5
- Lolita Ratchford, Public Member, Ward 1
- Dorjan Short, Public Member, Ward 8
- Melanee Woodard, Public Member, Ward 5

3. **Introductions:**

- Commission on African American Affairs (public members and government representatives)

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- Mayor's Office on African American Affairs (Ashley Emerson, Executive Director and Lionell Gaines, Associate Director)
  - Commissioner Adofo requested a moment of silence in observance of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr's birthday.
4. **Review of December Meeting Minutes:** The Commission reviewed and approved the December meeting minutes.
5. **Office Update:** Executive Director Ashley Emerson discussed the following items
- Black History Month 2020
  - Rise Up, Debt Down: MLK Financial Empowerment Day of Service
  - MLK Peace Walk & Parade
  - 2020 DC Black History Month Calendar
  - New Year, New Housing
  - 2020 Financially Fit DC Series Workshop
6. **Commission New Business:** The Commission made the following recommendations
- Commissioner Adofo wants to work with small businesses in the creative economy with DCRA, DSLBD, and other business related agencies to assist businesses / creatives with becoming certified business enterprises. He spoke about the difficulty with finding vendors that were CBEs. A proposal was made to hold events and workshops on weekends and after hours with the purpose of assisting those creatives and businesses with the CBE process.
  - Director Emerson: Commissioners send recommendations of organizations and businesses for the Fair Shot convening. MOAAA will request that representatives of the DC Census come to the next Commission meeting. Also, it was suggested that the Commission have a representative from DSLBD.
  - Commissioner Gopaul spoke about the US Census and stated that information does not always reach the residents.
  - Commissioner Phillips-Gilbert asked if the US Census has asked about collecting information at DC government service centers.
  - Commissioner Diallo asked if the US Census jobs were seasonal, part-time, or long term jobs.
  - Commissioner Adofo asked if the Commission was going to comment or speak about the FY 2021 Budget in the Commission focus areas. Asked what role does the Commission play in having the community comment and weigh in on the Comprehensive Plan. He stated that Commissioners have until February 14<sup>th</sup> to comment. He recommended that MOAAA send out bulletins to remind the community about the Comprehensive Plan.
  - Commissioner King spoke about legislation from Mayor Bowser to prevent the harassment of seniors and the solicitation of their properties.
  - Officer Elections: Commissioner Adofo nominated Commissioner Shymoniak for Secretary, Commissioner Sondra Phillips- Gilbert nominated Commissioner Gopaul for Vice Chaiman.
  - Bylaws: Commissioner Gopaul stated that the bylaws will be circulated to Commissioners and that a vote should be made on the bylaws.

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- Commission Committee's: recommended Committee's (Housing, Health, Education, Employment / Economic Opportunity, Social Services, Public Safety, and Business opportunities, and Art & Culture/ Cultural Preservation)
  - Commission Report: The Commission will plan the priorities of work based on the focus areas. Commissioner Gopaul recommended for a 6 month or mid-year report.
  - Director Emerson recommended a strategic plan for the Commission.
  - Meeting Frequency and Location: Commissioners had a discussion about revisiting the Commission frequency and location.
  - Commission will schedule a conference call next week
7. **Public Comments:** Residents raised the following issues and discussed the following items:
- A resident spoke about how the city should focus on mental health and homelessness issues in the city.
  - A resident asked about the homeless residents on K Street; also that her brother passed away at Texas Avenue and East Capitol Street and that she wanted to know how family members are notified.
  - Vaughn Bennett spoke about disparities and teaching chess in the city, and his concerns with the DC Chess League (the DC state affiliate), and the US Chess Federation. He spoke about the DC State Chess Championship on January 25<sup>th</sup> and that he wants to ensure that the leaders of the different chess organizations live in District. His proposal will be sent around to the Commissioners.
  - Robin Ransom, DC Chess Girls / US Chess Federation, spoke about submitting a written document speaking about the chess state affiliate and the US Chess Federation.
  - Rob Ransom spoke about the Comprehensive Plan, specifically the Brookland and Takoma neighborhoods. He asked the Commission to look at the Comp Plan and the small area plan, asking the Commission to not allow vagueness in the Comp Plan.
  - Lyn Dyson spoke about the importance of Arts & Creative Economy and businesses. He spoke about his play on Shirley Chisholm, Campaign 72 and how it can be a fundraising mechanism. He spoke about being interested in the Commission's Committee for Arts & Creative Economy / Businesses.
  - Nate Mine's, the business owner of Dynamic Health & Wellness: spoke about signing up tournament directors at his store and working with Matthews Memorial Baptist Church to teach chess to residents.
  - A resident had concerns with workers and DC residents at job sites; He spoke about concerns and issues with gentrification. First source program and finding what is the number of DC residents that getting job preferences.
8. **Adjournment:** Commissioner Gopaul adjourned the meeting at 8:25 pm.