

Mayor's Council on African American Elders

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Meeting Summary

July 20, 2018

Members Present – Brenda Charles-Edwards, Chair; Benjamin Abe; Ina Howell; Dr. Brenda Jackson; Paul Mitchell; Mattie Taplin (Emeritus); Claudette Thomas; Cynthia Winters

Absent – Noris Daniel; Janice Davis; Tricia Diamond; Jim Watkins

Guests – Andrea Caupain Sanderson; Heyward Watson; Charlotte Jacobs; JR Gillespie

ADS Staff – Brent Butler; Cathy Knight

I. Byrd Barr Place

A presentation was provided by the Andrea Caupain Sanderson, Executive Director of Byrd Barr Place (BBP). The primary services that BBP provides are energy assistance, eviction prevention services, financial education, and a food bank. The organization rebranded to Byrd Barr Place in January 2018. Roberta Byrd Barr was a well-known community leader. BBP is currently working in partnership with Africatown, to focus on place-keeping for African Americans in the central district (CD). The rationale is to ensure that the legacy of African Americans in the CD remains, regardless of the changes taking place in the community.

In the 1970's, the CD was nearly 80% African American; now that figure is less than 20%. Due to gentrification, many former CD residents have been displaced. Byrd Barr Place is working with Africatown to help them build capacity to enable them to own property and do development in the future within the CD and other Seattle communities. They recognized how displacement is fracturing our culture and creating missed opportunities to access prosperity for the Black community.

Africatown created a Community Land Trust, and Andrea serves as the vice chair on the board of directors. The land trust was created to be a mechanism to preserve space impacted by gentrification. The goal is to increase location security, cultural vibrancy, and intergenerational wealth accumulation by creating more opportunities for common land ownership projects. BBP is seeking to design a national land trust pilot and blueprint to show African American communities throughout the country how to become "partner ready." Because of the racial wealth divide, owning and keeping property is difficult for African Americans in King County. Creating a land trust, as a community, is a mechanism that makes procuring property attainable.

The first property, as part of the land trust, is known as the Liberty Bank project (2420 E Union St). The project consists of 115 units studio, 1- and 2-bedroom apartments, with three commercial spaces below. Affirmative marketing principles are required and will be

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developed for the property. This will allow new residents and African Americans who want to return to CD, to have the opportunity to secure housing. The land trust board of directors is currently working with the Mayor and the City Council to establish a Neighborhood Preference Policy, so that other communities won't complain and put the project at risk when preference is given to African Americans.

Heyward Watson, Senior Director of Property Management, Capitol Hill Housing, described the Liberty Bank project and the Affirmative Marketing Plan. The project will be mixed-use with 25 studio units; 75 one-bedroom units; 15 two-bedroom units; three commercial spaces; and 17 parking spaces. The project is required to have accessible units - 1 % for persons with vision disabilities, and 5% for physical disabilities.

The project will also include artifacts from the old Liberty Bank, that opened in 1967, as well as, artwork from eight local African American artists. Tours of the project will begin in September. The ribbon cutting ceremony is scheduled for February 2019, during Black History Month.

Affirmative Marketing Plan – The Africatown Community Land Trust, the Black Community Impact Alliance, Byrd Barr Place, and Capitol Hill Housing are the project affirmative marketing partners. The plan includes assistance workshops to help interested families and individuals learn about the process and eligibility requirements. There will also be an application fee of \$52. Beginning November 1st, a phonenumber will open and the first 300 callers will be added to a pool to determine eligibility. Typically, there is a 25% drop-off rate of individuals who won't qualify. If qualified, a deposit will be collected, and assistance will be provided so that individuals will be ready to move in. Residents will start moving in February 1st to 28th. Section 8 vouchers will be accepted. There are no limits regarding how long a person can hold residence.

Andrea ended by asking MCAAE members to assist with informing other African American organizations, and organizations that serve African Americans, about the project and the Africatown Community Land Trust.

II. Planning for Meeting with Mayor Durkan

Brenda reported that she will be working with Karen on a letter to Mayor Durkan to request a meeting for the MCAAE. We are hoping to have a meeting with her in the fall. The August meeting will be dedicated to reviewing the issues in preparation for the meeting.

III. MCAAE Subcommittees

Members revisited issues to discuss with the Mayor and formed committees for each issue. Brenda requested that committees meet and come prepared to report at the August meeting.

- **Low-Income Housing Subcommittee** – Claudette, Paul, Dr. Brenda
- **Property Tax Subcommittee** – Brenda, Benjamin, Ina
- **AAEP RN Subcommittee** – Mattie, Cynthia

IV. August MCAAE Meeting

Per the chairs request, the August meeting was rescheduled to the fourth Friday, August 24, 2 to 3:30 p.m., at the Beacon Hill Library, 2821 Beacon Ave. So., Seattle, 98144.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m. The next meeting will be Friday, Friday, July 20.