

Mayor's Commission on African American Elders

c/o Aging and Disability Services, Seattle-King County
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September 19, 2025 – 2:00–3:30pm
Grace United Methodist Church, 722 30th Ave

Members: Pamela Williams, Claudette Thomas, Paul Mitchel, Tiffany Toms, Charlotte Antoine, Calvin Lassiter

Members Absent: Crystal Dawkins, Deborah O'Neal, Benjamin Abe, Hiwot Zewdie,

ADS Staff: Michael Adusah, Eldad Mekuria, Dinah Stephens, Emily Zinter

Guests: Deborah Hughes, Cindy Herndon, Brady Rainey, Dian Ferguson, Tony Harold, Peggy Paul, Grace

Summary: The meeting began with approval of the August minutes as presented, followed by continuing the MCAAE Advocacy discussions on strategies for local political advocacy and addressing challenges faced by African American older adults.

Key Discussion Points:

Administrative

- **August Minutes:** Approved by motion and second.
- **Advocacy Priority Setting:** The council focused on narrowing four core issues (social connectivity, nutrition, housing, caregiving) into top priorities to present to the Mayor.
 - Breakout groups were formed to continue discussions on key topics.
- **Federal Updates:** No major changes reported regarding the Older Americans Act or HR1; monitoring news of a potential government shutdown.

Previous Event Updates

- **Grandparents' Day Event:** Reported as a great success, featuring excellent young speakers, dancers, and a panel discussion.
- **Plymouth Housing Luncheon:** Attended by council members; highlighted the importance of supporting permanent supportive housing for people with mental health and substance abuse issues.

Upcoming Events and Engagement

- **Caregiver Forum - Legacy Love African American Forum:**
 - November 1st, at NAMM.
 - Council members are asked to support the planning committee and assist with tabling/greeting on the day of the event.
- **Senior Lobby Conference:**
 - October 16th, virtual.
 - Council will pay registration fees for interested members to attend legislative-focused sessions.

- **Mayoral Engagement Opportunities:** Council members were encouraged to attend upcoming events featuring:
 - Mayor Harrell: September 26th at the Central Area Senior Center.
 - Candidate Wilson: Scheduled in October.

Top Advocacy Priorities for the Mayor

The council identified the following key issue areas:

- **Caregiving and Nutrition**
 - Invest in and promote the creation of a centralized online and phone-based caregiver resource portal for Seattle/King County residents.
 - Provide resources, basic training, and close the knowledge gap for family members who suddenly become caregivers.
 - Ask the Mayor to use his public platform to raise awareness of caregiving resources.
- **Social Connectivity & Digital Equity**
 - Collaborate with the Seattle IT Digital Equity Program to ensure older adults are prioritized for access to physical devices (laptops) and training.
 - Lift up the importance of Black art spaces and community events (like successful line dancing parties) to ensure equitable cultural funding and support.
 - Work to create a "one-stop-shop" resource guide for seniors to easily find social and community activities.
- **Housing & Displacement**
 - Advocate for housing set aside for 30% of a person's income, not just "affordable housing," which is often priced too high based on the King County median income.
 - Support the Urban League's property tax reform bill that aims to assess property taxes on the current use/value of the home (rather than the highest potential sale price) to protect long-term residents from displacement.
 - Advocate for the use of Housing Levy funds to build housing that is designed for seniors (aging-in-place) and to prioritize low-income units during Comprehensive Plan implementation.
 - Support the creation of non-profits specializing in home sharing and the rehabilitation of existing housing to provide low-cost units in original neighborhoods.

Next Meeting; October 17, 2025