

Mayor's Commission on African American Elders

c/o Aging and Disability Services, Seattle-King County
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April 17, 2026. 2:00–3:30pm
Grace United Methodist Church, 722 30th Ave

Attending

Members: Chair - Pamela Williams, Vice Chair - Tiffany Toms, Claudette Thomas, Calvin Lassiter, Debroah O'Neal

Members Absent: Hiwot Zewdie, Brady Rainy, Deborah Hughes, Paul Mitchel, Dr. Benjamin Abe

Staff: Eldad Mekuria, Dinah Stephens, Jacqueline Cobbs, Sherry Wu, Stevie Elliot

Guests: Cole Kiser, Dr. Elizabet Gordon, Sharron Hargraves, Charlotte Antoine,

Welcome

Council members and guests introduced themselves and shared their roles within the community.

MCAAE Business

Bylaws Approval: Claudette moved to approve the bylaws for 2026, Tiffanie seconded and the bylaws were approved unanimously

Minutes: Claudette moved to approve the minutes from March 2026 meeting, Tiffanie seconded and the minutes were approved unanimously.

AgeWise Juneteenth Article Contribution: Volunteers are sought to contribute articles celebrating Black culture and excellence for the monthly newsletter, specifically for a Juneteenth feature.

Joint May Meeting with Advisory Council: May 15th, 1:30 PM - 3:30 PM

Location: Renton office (Triton Towers, 707 S Grady Way Suite 700, Renton, WA 98057).

Info: Discussions will center around current initiatives of the two councils and collaboration opportunities. Light refreshments will be provided. Further details on travel, parking, and accessibility will be shared.

Establish Task Forces: To enhance action-oriented work and member engagement, task forces were established for the four key initiatives Housing, Caregiving, Social Connectivity and Nutrition. Task forces will connect outside council meeting and provide updates at council meetings, with the first reports expected in June. Community members are welcome to join.

Washington State Reparations Study Update:

Deborah O'Neal and Dr. Elizabeth Gordon provided an update on the Washington State Reparations Study an initiative aimed at investigating the impacts of chattel slavery to establish a lineage-based reparations process. The primary concern raised by American Renewal 1870 is the appointment of the contractor Truclusion, whom they argue lacks the statutorily required academic and technical

expertise to conduct a credible study. This dispute has led King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties to pause their funding.

The group is now calling for public action to advocate for reassigning the contract to a qualified entity and is seeking additional support from the City of Seattle. They encourage community members to visit the "Unspoken Truths" exhibit at King Street Station until May 9th and engage with local representatives in Olympia. For more details, resources are available at ar1870.org.

ADS Staff Update:

Mama Jo Project: Sherry announced an upcoming event: The Mama Jo Project is a free community event taking place on Saturday, May 16th, from 2 PM to 4 PM at the Langston Hughes Performance Art Institute, with a resource fair starting an hour early at 1 PM.

City Budget: The city faces a projected budget deficit of \$150 million, though there is cautious optimism due to upcoming events like the World Cup. This means a tight budget year with limited new large funding projects.

HR1 Impacts (Medicaid/SNAP): Federal HR1 changes are expected to impact over 1,000 individuals in King County (excluding youth/families), potentially leading to a loss of Medicaid and SNAP benefits.

African American Elders Program (AAEP) Update: The AAEP is transitioning from Catholic Community Services (CCS) to Tubman Health, with an effective date of July 1st.

- **Staffing:** Tubman Health has hired a program manager and plans an open hiring process, with current CCS staff encouraged to apply.
- **Council Oversight:** The Mayor's Council on African American Elders has an oversight role to ensure the program's success and advocate for necessary funding. Tubman Health plans to have representatives attend council meetings to provide updates and receive feedback.

Community Announcements

Senior Tax Exemption: An expanded senior property tax exemption has been signed into law, a result of the council's advocacy. A meeting for Black Legacy Homeowners will be held April 19th to discuss the exemption.

Community Health Fair: A health fair will take place April 18th at the NW African American Museum, offering health screenings, health insurance information, ORCA lift cards, hygiene kits, and information on the long-term care investment program

Closing

Adjournment: A motion to adjourn the meeting was approved.

Next Meeting; May 15, 2026