

Mayor's Council on African American Elders

C/O – Aging and Disability Services, Seattle-King County
Mailing Address: PO Box 34215, Seattle WA 98124-4215
Office Address: Seattle Municipal Tower, 700 5th Ave, 51st Floor
(206)684-0660 * TTY (206)684-0274 * FAX (206)684-0689
Website Address: www.seattle.gov/MCAAE

Meeting Summary

November 18, 2014

Present: Rev. Don Davis, Marsha Andrews, Mattie Taplin

Excused: Dr. Norward Brooks, Dr. Brenda Jackson, Susan Millender, Dr. LaShawnDa Pittman

Guests: Katie Bennett, Margaret Boddie, Dian Ferguson, Idabelle Fosse

ADS Staff: Maureen Linehan, Rowena Rye, Karen Winston

- I. Interim Chair Rev. Don Davis welcomed the group, and introductions were made around the table.
- II. Margaret Boddie, Director of the African American Elders Program with Catholic Community Services, presented to the group on the work of the program. In addition to Margaret, AAEP staffing includes two case managers, a PEARLS counselor (working with elders with depression), a nurse and administrative assistant. She noted the unique challenges and needs of African American elders, and the value of continuing the program which is competing for funding through the City's RFI (Request for Investment) process.
- III. Rev. Davis affirmed the need to increase funding to AAEP and to retain the culturally sensitive focus this program delivers to the community. He briefed the group on the recent meeting of the council with Mayor Murray, and the Mayor's promise to address the needs of homeless African American elders. He shared the council's plan to meet with public officials with King County government, as well as South King County municipalities (Auburn, Renton, Federal Way and others) with increased numbers of African American constituents to inform them of the current work of the council, and to discuss the three priorities the council has identified in order to address the needs of African American elders: 1) A culturally compatible 24-hour co-ed shelter with wraparound services to address the needs of homeless African American elders (Rev. Davis noted that the Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness has been directed to work with the MCAAE), 2) Increased funding of the AAEP to meet the unique needs of the homebound and socially isolated elders in Seattle, with expansion to South King County to serve the growing number of African American elders outside of Seattle who have been displaced by gentrification of the Central Area, 3) The return of the Kinship Center to the Central Area Senior Center and restoration of these services that met the culturally specific needs of

African American grandparents (and other relatives) raising grandchildren. Casey Foundation previously funded the program and pulled funding when the senior center was in transition and its future uncertain. Rev. Davis also suggested that private funding/foundation grants also be pursued. MCAAE member Dr. LaShawnDa Pittman is gathering additional data for the MCAAE report to be used in identifying how much funding will be needed, and projecting realistic budgets for support of the three initiatives.

- IV. Aging and Disability Services Director Maureen Linehan shared with the group the two new opportunities with the City's RFI process: Community I&As and Caregiver services funding.
- V. A briefing was also provided on the African American Elders Program, and concern was expressed about maintaining the program in the community and ensuring that it remains culture-based and that services are not lost as the AAEP program must now go through a competitive process in the ADS Request for Investment. Rev. Davis noted the shift and opportunities for the community.
- VI. Idabelle Fosse, next shared her work with Senior Services. She is working under a grant to reach isolated seniors in Central and Southeast Seattle. The grant ends in September. Idabelle has been attending community meetings, and in her efforts connected with many p and other service providers. She has been working on developing a listing of informal resources – a kind of 'Angie's List' for the Black Community. She learned recently in a visit to El Centro de la Raza's senior program that the number of participating seniors who are homeless has grown from 2 to 14. Rev. Davis noted the importance of connecting with the Central Area and Southeast Senior Centers, and learning more about their volunteer programs, and of connecting to clergy, suggesting she may want to connect with Pastor Kerry Anderson. Marsha recognized the effectiveness of old values and the use of door belling to inform people about services. Karen Winston cited the work of former MCAAE Chair, Pastor Gwendolyn Coates and her leadership in outreach to the United Black Clergy.
- VII. Dian posed the question as to safeguards in the funding process to ensure inclusiveness of African American elders experiencing homelessness. Rev. Davis expressed optimism about the direction in which the council's efforts were going, and the Mayor's recognition of the importance of a holistic approach that encompasses elders' physical, mental and spiritual needs.
- VIII. Guest Katie Bennett briefed the council on her work with Group Heath and a new patient-led approach to making positive health changes to manage diabetes, achieve weight loss, and to manage other chronic conditions.

The meeting was adjourned.

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