

Mayor's Commission on African American Elders

c/o Aging and Disability Services, Seattle-King County
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MCAAE Meeting Summary

August 16, 2024

Members: Benjamin Abe, Charlotte Antoine, Pamela Williams, Paula Williams

Members Absent: Rita Howard, Paul Mitchell, Claudette Thomas

ADS Staff: Michael Adusah, Eldad Mekuria, Mary Mitchell, Dinah Stephens, Karen Winston, Andrea Yip

I. The History & Future of the MCAAE

Karen opened the discussion regarding the future support and coordination of the MCAAE, which will be managed by the Age Friendly team at ADS going forward. A history of the MCAAE was provided with a slide presentation, focusing on how the commission has a history of collaborating with Age Friendly. This will be a good match for the commission to be supported in the future.

The commission was established in 1995 by Mayor Norm Rice and was created to monitor the development of comprehensive services for older black adults in Seattle. Some of the former appointees were shown from 2010, 2012, and 2019. The commission started the Grandparents Day celebration in 2010 in collaboration with churches, and in 2019 they reached out to the Northwest African American Museum (NAAM) and has been partnering with NAAM ever since. The next Grandparents Day is scheduled for Sunday, September 8, 2-4 p.m. at the museum. Dr. LaShawnDa Pitman was the keynote speaker at the 2019 event, and she has since completed her research on kinship caregivers with a published book, and she has accepted our invitation to be this year's keynote speaker.

Karen reminded everyone about the 2024 priorities established at last year's retreat: low-income housing, financial literacy/fraud prevention, social isolation/digital access, and supporting the African American Elders Program (AAEP). Karen highlighted the commission's ongoing advocacy efforts, including submitting letters to policymakers, assisting with vaccine distribution, and advocating for an additional nurse for the AAEP.

Some accomplishments of the commission were highlighted:

- Report to the Mayor in 2015 about the growing number of Black homeless people and the lack of affordable housing. The report can be viewed on the MCAAE website.
- In 2017, the commission was invited to address the US Government Accountability Office and provided a report on the needs of older Black adults in King County. The commission also held a forum on older adults and HIV.

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- In 2018 and 2019, the commission submitted another report to the mayor with recommendations for affordable housing, a neighborhood preference policy, property tax relief, and a nurse position for the AAEP.
- In 2020 the commission submitted letters to policymakers expressing concerns about Covid 19 disparities, defunding SPD, and vaccine distribution equity.
- In 2021, the commission assisted ADS staff and aging network providers with outreach to BIPOC residents at the highest risk of serious illness from Covid 19 and assisted with scheduling vaccine appointments.
- In 2021, the commission submitted a letter of support to DSHS on behalf of Heart n' Soul Hospice, the first Black-owned hospice in King County.
- In 2022, successfully advocated to increase funding support for one FTE nursing position for the AAEP.
- In 2023, met with Mayor Harrell regarding MCAAE priority concerns.
- In 2024, submitted comments regarding the One Seattle Comprehensive Plan

II. **Age Friendly Updates**

Dinah presented information about the aging population in Seattle and the creation of the Age-Friendly Seattle program within the Human Services Dept. She explained the role of Age Friendly Seattle as a connector, convener, educator, and advocate for older adults, and highlighted the importance of collaboration with other departments to address the needs of the aging population. Ongoing projects included a pilot project for a new approach to home care delivery, and advocacy for a larger budget to support these initiatives.

Dinah discussed the efforts her team has made to foster intergenerational connections and support for one another. She talked about the Neighbor-Helping-Neighbor Snow Shoveling Pilot program that provided assistance to older adults and those with disabilities. The Civic Coffee events have been scheduled throughout several communities to increase attendance. The City's mission is to improve the quality of life for older adults in Seattle, and Dinah explained how they measure success through life satisfaction, which is influenced by continuity in health, economic security, and social connectivity. Dinah shared examples of their work, including the Gold and Flashcard discount programs, advocating for digital equity, and emergency preparedness efforts. These initiatives are important in maintaining continuity and improving the overall well-being of older adults in the city.

Partnership with the MCAAE has included addressing shared priorities such as supporting social connections for older adults, improving housing options, reducing health disparities, and enhancing public safety. Past collaborations were highlighted including events and several candidate forums.

III. **ADS Updates**

Mary announced Karen's retirement and thanked her for her many contributions. She provided updates on various initiatives including a remote caregiver pilot led by Catholic Community Services, and a request from the Department of Corrections to collaborate on re-entry programs. The team was asked to volunteer for a state-led work group to streamline the Area Plan and remove any duplications.

Mary announced that the south county Care Management Program office will be moving to the Triton Towers in Renton, which offers better security and increased access for clients and team members. The new location is expected to be ready before the end of the month. Mary also highlighted the efforts of Lena and Lori in managing the transition and commended Dr. Abe for his interest in volunteering for the WA Cares campaign, which aims to raise awareness about the long-term care benefits among communities of color.

Mary outlined two separate projects: a video and a branding communication toolkit designed for social media to promote WA Cares. She proposed filming testimonials about caregiving during the week of August 19th to 23rd, either in person at the Seattle Municipal Tower or virtually. Pamela agreed to participate, despite her upcoming trip to Chicago. Mary also announced a partnership with the Youth and Family Services division on an intergenerational project.

Announcements

Rita Howard has registered the commission to participate in the Seattle Housing Authority Resource Fair scheduled for Friday, August 30 at the Rainier Beach Community Center. The event is from 12-4pm. Karen will set-up the table and Rita will staff the table for the first hour. Three additional members are needed to staff the table for the remainder of the event. Karen will send out details to anyone who can volunteer to staff a table for an hour.

On September 5, from 10-12 noon, the City of Seattle is announcing an updated [Food Action Plan](#). The Mayor's Office is asking interested organizations to send no more than 3 representatives. Details will be emailed to members and anyone wanting to attend must RSVP.