

Mayor's Council on African American Elders

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Meeting Summary

February 17, 2017

Members Present – Mattie Taplin, Chair, Dr. Brenda Jackson; Jim Watkins (Appointment pending), Cynthia Winters, (Appointment pending)

Excused – Susan Millender

Guests – Wayne Barnette, Seattle Office of Ethics & Elections; Jenna Smith, Seattle Office of Ethics & Elections

ADS Staff – Gigi Meinig, Karen Winston

I. Democracy Voucher Program

Wayne Barnette, Director of the Seattle Office of Ethics & Elections presented information about the Seattle Democracy Voucher Program (DVP). The program is a new way for Seattle residents to participate in local government. Beginning January 2017, eligible Seattle residents can receive \$100 in Democracy Vouchers to support candidate(s) in the 2017 City of Seattle elections. The DVP aims to encourage more Seattle residents to donate to campaigns and/or run for elected positions themselves. It will also increase transparency, accountability, and accessibility for how Seattle elections are financed.

In November 2015, Seattle voters passed a citizen-led initiative known as "[Honest Elections Seattle](#)" (I-122). I-122 will allow a maximum property tax of \$3 million per year to fund the Democracy Voucher Program for the next 10 years. The DVP costs the average homeowner about \$11.50 per year.

One major reform allows the Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission to distribute "Democracy Vouchers" to eligible Seattle residents. Eligible Seattle residents will receive four \$25 certificates they can use to support candidate(s) running for Seattle City Council or City Attorney. Seattle residents may give any eligible candidates one (\$25), two (\$50), three (\$75), or all four (\$100) of their Democracy Vouchers. Seattle is the first city in the nation to try this type of public campaign financing.

Assigning vouchers to a candidate is the same as donating to a campaign. So far, 10 candidates have signed up to participate in the program. Candidates may use Democracy Vouchers to finance campaign activities and are held to the same City of Seattle campaign spending laws under the City's election code. Candidates participating in the Democracy Voucher Program must follow strict reporting guidelines to qualify for the program. In addition to these laws, participating candidates may not use Democracy Vouchers to:

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- Make cash payments;
- Reimburse contributors for their contributions;
- Pay the candidate a salary, or pay the candidate's personal expenses;
- Support the candidate in a campaign for a different office;
- Make contributions to other candidates or political committees; or,
- Make payments to family members.

For the 2017 City of Seattle elections, only eligible candidates running for City Council or City Attorney may accept vouchers. In 2021, the program will expand to include funding for the Mayor's race. How does the DVP work?

1. From January 2017 to October 2017, the Seattle Ethics & Election Commission will distribute four Democracy Vouchers valued at \$25 each to eligible Seattle residents.
2. Eligible candidates who may receive vouchers will be listed on Ethics & Elections website.
3. Residents will assign vouchers by writing in the eligible candidates' name and signing the voucher. Vouchers may be redeemed anytime between January 3, 2017 and November 30, 2017.
4. Vouchers may be returned directly to a candidate's campaign or mailed to the Seattle Ethics & Elections Commission.
5. The Seattle Ethics & Elections Commission will verify the signature on each voucher before releasing funds to the campaigns.
6. All contributions are public information and will be published on the Ethics & Elections website.

Wayne concluded the discussion by asking members for names of individuals who may be interested in joining the Advisory Group.

II. ADS Updates

Kinship RFP – Karen provided an update on the Kinship Request for Proposals (RFP) process. The RFP was released on January 17th and closes on February 24th. The available funding is \$191,500. Kinship care includes relatives caring for children age 18 or younger, and are not formally involved with the public welfare system. Kinship caregivers, mostly grandparents, often struggle with the challenges of parenting a second family. A rating committee will evaluate proposals during March and awards will be announced by the end of May 2017.

Senior Lobby Day – Gigi Meinig, ADS planner, reviewed the 2017 State legislative priorities:

- Preserve and increase affordable, accessible housing.
- Increase long-term care case management services.
- Protect victims of elder abuse.
- Ensure Medicaid coverage for hearing and vision.

Gigi concluded the discussion by encouraging members to attend Senior Lobby Day, scheduled for Thursday, February 23, 2017. Mattie and Jim signed up to attend.

III. Outreach & Recruitment Opportunities

February 11 – **Black Health: *What makes us sick and what can we do about it?*** The event was held at NAAM. Michele Andrasik, PhD, was the presenter. Mattie reported the event was excellent and it was a wonderful turnout.

February 27 – **Black History Month Celebration with Mayor Ed Murray**, Central Area Senior Center, from 5 to 7 p.m. It will include performances by Elnah Jordan, Akila Franklin, and the Central Area Sliders. Mattie will also say a few words about the MCAAE.

March 11 – **HIV is Ageless**, Rainier Beach Community Center, 2 to 5:30 p.m. African Americans Reach and Teach Health (AARTH), the Mayor’s Council on African American Elders (MCAAE), Fred Huctch, the Seattle Human Services Department - Aging and Disability Services (ADS), and others, are partnering to host a community forum – HIV is Ageless. The forum is scheduled during The National Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS, March 5 – 11, 2017. The forum will include a short segment from the PBS Frontline documentary, ENDGAME: AIDS in Black America, followed by dialogue with a panel local experts and providers. The event is FREE. We are hoping for 60 to 75 in attendance. Members were asked to help spread the word and bring someone to the event.

IV. 2017 Work Plan – Tabled

V. March Meeting

- Kent Black Action – Invite them to the March meeting or schedule a separate meeting.
- Seattle Navigation Center for the homeless – Members requested more information or a copy of the report. They are interested in knowing more about the plan and the timeline.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.