

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
206-684-0706 • TTY 206-684-0274 • FAX 206-684-0689
Website: www.seattle.gov/MCAAE

MCAAE Meeting Summary

September 15, 2023

Members Present: Pamela Williams; Claudette Thomas, Rita Howard

Members Absent: Charlotte Antoine; Benjamin Abe; Paul Mitchell,

Guests: Shaquan Smith, Seattle Parks & Rec; Rachel Banner, Seattle Parks & Rec; AyeNay Abye, CEO Tubman Center; Emijah Smith, Dir. of Engagement Tubman Center

Staff: Mary Mitchell; Tiffany Johnson, Jessica Gardner; Dinah Stephens; Michael Adusah; Lena Tebeau; Karen Winston

I. Welcome and Introductions

The MCAAE chair and vice chair were not able to attend the meeting. The meeting was facilitated by the MCAAE liaison, Karen Winston.

II. Park CommUNITY Fund

Shaquan Smith and Rachel Banner, Program Managers Seattle Parks and Recreation, are leading the development of a new community-initiated project fund called the Park CommUNITY Fund. The purpose of the program is to advance park equity by:

- Expanding inclusive access to clean and safe parks
- Closing gaps in access to quality parks and park facilities that disproportionately affect frontline communities
- Centering efforts in partnership and transparency with communities

Frontline communities are those that experience high displacement risks, disproportionate exposure to environmental harms, and a history of disinvestment and lack of green space access. These include:

- Black people
- Tribal communities in the Seattle area
- Communities of color
- Immigrants/refugees
- Limited English proficiency
- Trans, non-binary, or gender non-conforming
- People experiencing housing instability or homelessness
- People with disabilities
- People who have been incarcerated
- People experience poverty
- Older adults—65+
- Youth (ages 14-21)

Priority areas are those places where frontline communities live and work.

Why focus on park equity in Seattle? – The goal is to create just and fair access to high-quality parks to build healthier and stronger communities for all. Engagement with community members identified the current state of park access in Seattle:

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- Need for increased physical access and safety
- Simplify complex political and process and expand engagement
- Desire for more environmental programs, including safe and maintained green spaces
- Funding Improvement: We need long-range planning, increased inclusive outreach and engagement, communicating park development processes and policies, acknowledging past inequities.
- Feedback from BPRC Commissioners: Increase program funding, allow for various size projects, and increase staffing.
- We want to involve the community in every step of the process to build relationships and stay accountable to the community. And we want feedback on the planning state and any interest in being a partner in the program.
- Seward Park: We are starting the discussion with elders first to tap into their knowledge on how to engage the communities who have been pushed out. We're looking to do a pre-outreach process then do intentional outreach to the public.
 - The Harriet Tubman Center wants to continue to partner to make a collective impact. They've selected a future medical home at Rainer Beach Light Rail Station (near Elizabeth Thomas Homes and Rainer Beach Action Coalition) because it takes a village and people around that area advocate for community.
 - Consider the needs of older people, we need to have surfaces where we don't lose balance and are accessible for walkers, wheelchairs or walking assistance devices. It's dark in the winter so having sufficient lighting in parks and facilities helps older people walk, egress and ingress. A lot of family members take loved ones there during the day, some with Alzheimer's and dementia, and they need a safe place to walk.
 - King County Parks have their own program and Shaquan Smith can send information via email after this meeting.
 - There's talk in the community about a park off 23rd and Cherry and using some of that space for a dog park. Some community members are not in support of this. <https://seattle.gov/parks/about-us/plans-and-reports/recreation-plans-and-reports/off-leash-area-study>.
 - Several sites were considered; one must be in West Seattle and the other one in the city. If you know of an organization who could partner to help us out, let them know.
 - We want feedback on plans, outreach, and engagement to make sure we're inclusive, and kept accountable.
- Renton bought exercise equipment designed to support older adults and had classes for elders to learn to use the equipment safely. <https://fitlot.org/parks/renton/>. Renton got an AARP Community Challenge Grant, and Age Friends connected with the staff to learn more about what made it successful. Lessons Learned can transfer to our work for elders in Seattle. The programming mattered as well as the equipment (trainers, classes, and lessons), and we had a conversation with Life Long on how to activate some of our existing equipment.
- AARP is health related partner with money to give to parks because they have impacts on our health. Contact the Seattle Parks Department with any questions.

- If you know some people committed to serving our elders, reach out to Karen Winston for information on how to join, and to learn more about the work being done on the committee.

III. **Grandparent Day Debrief**

Comments on the event included:

- A fantastic job! I love public service because of being in the community, how grateful people were to be there. I'm looking forward to more opportunities like this.
- We had to keep getting chairs. Was one of the better ones I've attended.
- Appreciated grandparents talking about their grandkids.
- The Induction of Elders into the Elder Circle (only one in AA Museum in nation) was touching, and learning and hearing about the active work they're still doing tells me I have to step it up.
- It warmed my heart, gave me a sense of pride. I loved it!
- We need a larger venue next year. This was a wonderful opportunity to love on our elders and lift them up.
- This was first time we had a male Keynote speaker.
- One negative was the food and book freebee giveaways and people running out with multiple boxes of food and stacks of food, so I wish distribution could have been more equitable.

IV. **Age Friendly Updates** (Dinah Stephens)

- Anti-Agism training launched in Live and available to 10,000-plus city colleagues to take. We're holding small group discussions with departments and have had our first discussions with librarians.
- We're working our way through technical challenges to make the training accessible to people without a City of Seattle email address.
- We have a series of upcoming Candidate Forums and Karen Winston will send out details.

V. **The Harriet Tubman Center**

The Tubman Center CEO, Agenay Abeye provided an update on the center.

- The team at the Tubman Center doubled last year. We're working at the Rainier Valley leadership Academy and next year expand to include kindergarten. We offer complementary medicine at the school and hope to do that in the flagship clinic.
- We received \$11.7 million for construction in the capital budget for 40,000 sq ft. designed by and for the community and hope to open doors in 2026. The building will be owned for and by patients. Harriet Tubman is for the people, by the people.
- Partnership is the biggest ask. We will be partnering with Medicaid so we can provide funding and are reaching back out to philanthropic sources.
- Dinah Stephens would love to support the application of an AARP Community Challenge Grant to collaborate on equipment and space activation and will circle back with MCAAE and Tubman Health when that time rolls around.

VI. Aging and Disability Updates (Mary Mitchell)

- The Care Coordinator Case Management Team is working with the state on a process to help transfer clients that do not have caregivers. We don't have caregivers in place and are working on finalizing an agreement with HCS so we can take on more clients.
- In conversation with DSHS and WA Consumer Directed Washington, the agency hired to take over the hiring process so people can get through the hiring process and be paid. We'd like AAA to have an assigned team to walk case managers through the process as people can't get through the system to get hired and we're pushing harder on that.
- We are paying into the Washington Cares Tax now, which will provide us benefits if we need long-term care services, and all the AAAs are asked to do outreach. We're connecting with Summer Youth Interns, Advisory Council members and MCAAE members and want to do videos to get the message out sharing perspectives of youth, parents, and grandparents.
- We will partner with the Youth and Family Empowerment Division and are talking to the state on what it looks like to roll out this program and areas AAAs will provide support.
- The commission is working on changes to the area that have been challenging such as portability, and there are exemption forms that can be filled out.
- Legislative priorities include focus on case management, requesting additional funding to have lower caseloads, and funding around nutrition. Funding for COVID and ARPA is ending, and community agencies are struggling to find funding so that seniors get fed.
- Taking away the cultural tradition of taking care of our elders and bringing a stranger into the home is a concern. Mary Mitchell will research on whether family members (blood relatives) can be paid as caregivers.
- The HCA state and federal Interlocal Agreement talks about having a state family care support program which includes respite care and Seattle, and King County have that program.
- Community Living Connections is a great resource:
<https://www.agingkingcounty.org/what-we-do/programs-services/#caregiver>

Meeting Adjourned: 3:35 p.m.
Next Meeting: Friday, October 20, 2023