

Mayor's Council on African American Elders

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

June 21, 2024

Members: Dr. Abe, Charlotte Antoine, Rita Howard, Pamela Williams, Paula Williams

Members Absent: Paul Mitchell, Claudette Thomas

ADS Staff: Mary Mitchell, Karen Winston

I. Juneteenth Celebration Potluck & Trivia

- **What is Juneteenth?** It is the oldest known holiday that commemorates the end of slavery in the US.
- **What are other names for Juneteenth?** Emancipation Day; Freedom Day; Black Independence Day; Jubilee Day; Liberation Day
- **What are the ways Juneteenth is celebrated?** BBQs, fish fry, community events and workshops. Some cities and groups have Miss Juneteenth contests.
- **Why is RED a significant color for Juneteenth and what does it stand for?** Red foods like red velvet cake, strawberry soda, and watermelon are commonly served during Juneteenth gatherings, representing the resilience of African Americans throughout their journey to freedom. These vibrant red dishes not only nourish the taste buds but also represent resilience and unity within the community.
- **What are the traditional Juneteenth foods?** BBQ, coleslaw, peach cobbler, red velvet cake, strawberries, watermelon
- **What flower represents Juneteenth?** Poppy
- **Which Constitutional Amendment officially abolished slavery across the United States?** – 13th Amendment
- **How many slaves were estimated to be in the United States in the early 1860s before slavery was outlawed?** 3.9 million
- **Which US President signed a bill making Juneteenth a federal holiday?** Biden
- **What state was the first to recognize Juneteenth?** Texas
- **A revised red, white and blue flag honoring Juneteenth was introduced in 2000. What symbol is at the center of the flag?** There is a Juneteenth Flag of Freedom. It is half red and half blue with a star in the middle.

II. Committee Reports

Isolation and Digital Equity

Committee chair, Charlotte Antoine shared examples of what older adults can do to avoid loneliness:

- Exercise and physical activity – Join classes at the community center
- Referenced resources from the [National Institute on Aging](https://www.nia.nih.gov/).
- Bridging the gap by promoting conversations between older adults and young people.

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Charlotte would like the commission to brainstorm on different ways and/or events to host that could address isolation. Karen reminded members of the annual Grandparents Day event that could accomplish this. It's an intergenerational event that could foster ongoing relationships. Charlotte agreed to participate on the planning committee.

Rita discussed agencies that partner with the Seattle Housing Authority to address loneliness, e.g., Full Life Care, the Central Area Senior Center (CASC) and other agencies. Perhaps they could give a presentation and include ideas of things the commission could do to address isolation.

Pamela suggested partnering with the CASC on their annual block party, scheduled for early August. We can sign up to have a resource table at the event. Everyone liked the idea and Karen will contact the center to make arrangements.

Advisory Council Update

Pamela reported that she has been attending both the Advisory Council and the Advocacy Committee. Attending both, that are scheduled back-to-back, is a huge time commitment. She would like to someone else to attend the Advocacy Committee, if possible. The Advocacy Committee meetings are from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Items discussed over the past few months at the Advocacy Committee included:

- Outreach efforts regarding services for older adults and property tax exemptions,
- Concerns about the lack of a separate human services element in the Seattle Comprehensive Plan,

III. MCAAE Recruitment

MCAAE chair, Rita Howard, brought attention to the roster which indicates that several terms are scheduled to expire at the end of 2024. Karen will contact the Boards and Commission Administrator about ways to stagger terms to avoid everyone leaving at the same time. Members whose terms are scheduled to expire are: Omara Abe, Paul Mitchell, Pamela Williams, and Claudette Thomas.

Recruitment - Pamela suggested checking with the Central Area Senior Center about participating in their block party. Perhaps we can have a table of resources there. Paula suggested writing an article for AgeWise. Karen will contact the center and work on an article.

IV. Mary's Update

- Remote Caregiver Pilot – WA is the first in the nation! It is a way to support caregivers, but it won't replace the services and supports that caregivers need. Qualification will be determined by case managers.
- WA Cares – Long-term care is expensive, but unfortunately most people do not have funds saved to cover the expenses. Medicare does not cover it, nor does health insurance except in rare circumstances, and Medicaid only covers long-term care if a life savings is down to \$2,000. The WA Cares Fund is a new program designed to

provide affordable, sustainable long-term care coverage to working Washingtonians. Is intended to help people save money for long-term care. Mary shared that she has been doing a media tour to help communities understand and prepare for long-term care needs, including how WA Cares benefits can help. All working people will pay into an account. For those who have paid in, the benefit will be available to support their long-term care needs, starting in 2026.

- Karen is retiring in September 2024. Mary engaged members in a discussion about their priorities and how they would like to be supported in the future.
 - One suggestion was to have the Age Friendly team take responsibility for staffing the commission, but due to lack of time, the discussion was tabled until the July meeting.
 - Mary would also like the MCAAE to join forces with the AAEP and provide more advocacy and support. She reported that Margaret Boddie will also be retiring soon.

Announcements

- Paula announced that she is working with the Rotary Club to start a club in southeast Seattle that will focus exclusively on projects addressing equity in that community. More to come!

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Next meeting: July 19, 2024. **Will be virtual only.**