

Mayor's Commission 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

February 20, 2026. 2:00–3:30pm
Grace United Methodist Church, 722 30th Ave

Attending

Members: Pam Williams, Tiffanie Toms, Charlotte Antoine, Calvin Lassiter

Members Absent: Crystal Dawkins, Deborah O'Neal, Benjamin Abe, Hiwot Zewdie

Staff: Allison Boll, Dinah Stephens, Eldad Mekuria, Emily Zinter, Mary Pearson, Michael Adusah, Stevie Elliott, Tanya Kim

Guests: CM Joy Hollingsworth, Deborah Hughes, Maggie Thomson, Peggy Paul, Toni Harroll

Welcome

Pam Williams led the introductions. Council members and guests introduced themselves and shared their roles within the community.

MCAAE Business

Minutes: Tiffanie Toms moved to approve the previous minutes. Deborah Hughes seconded. Motion passed.

Area Planning: Allison Boll presented an overview of the current Area Planning process and data collection.

MCAAE Priority Goals:

Pam Williams and Tiffanie Toms presented the core pillars for the Council's 2026 strategy:

Housing: Advance equitable, senior-focused policies to protect older adults from displacement.

Caregiving: Strengthen support systems for family and community caregivers within African American communities.

Nutrition: Ensure equitable access to healthy, affordable, and culturally relevant food.

Social Connectivity: Reduce isolation and increase opportunities for belonging and participation.

Discussion with Council Member Joy Hollingsworth:

Housing.and.Displacement

Deborah Hughes and Councilmember (CM) Joy Hollingsworth discussed the critical state of African American Elder (AAE) housing:

Barriers to Stability: Gentrification, rising taxes, and predatory reverse mortgages are primary threats.

Technical Assistance: A lack of information regarding probate and estate planning often "paralyzes" families from taking protective steps.

Legacy Homeowners: The priority is stabilizing current residents and "Black Legacy Homeowners" rather than solely focusing on returning residents to the Central District.

Policy Action: A policy was recently passed to stop predatory tactics used to seize homes.

Collaboration: Peggy Paul is coordinating with the City to assist residents with King County property tax relief.

Nutrition?Connectivity?and.Safety

The Council discussed the "City Basics Better" approach to community infrastructure:

Grocery Store Access: CM Hollingsworth has worked to eliminate "non-compete" clauses that prevented new stores from moving into vacant spaces.

New Models: The focus is on identifying affordable, smaller-scale store models that provide fresh food without the overhead of a full-service supermarket.

Security Costs: High security and safety costs are a major barrier for urban grocery stores; the Council suggested the City provide more direct support for safety to keep these businesses viable.

Food Rescue: While programs exist to extend food life, transportation costs remain a major hurdle for delivery and access.

Urban Farming: Mary Pearson highlighted urban farming as a supplementary solution for local food equity.

ADS Staff Update:

State Level: The Council was thanked for the letter supporting Senate Bill 6162 (Property Tax). Mary will be in Olympia testifying soon; the state budget is expected to be released this Sunday.

Federal Level: Mary and Michael will travel to D.C. in mid-March for the Older Americans Act (OAA) Reauthorization.

Economic Impacts: Michael is tracking the "Millionaires Tax" and the impacts of the HLS shutdown, noting that FEMA and TSA staff are currently working without pay.

Immigrant Support: Mary has joined a state workgroup to support immigrants impacted by federal policy changes (BBB).

The Roadshow: Plans are underway to bring the Area Plan directly to the King County Council as part of a regional outreach effort.

Closing

Adjournment: Tiffanie Toms moved to adjourn the meeting. Calvin seconded. Motion passed.

Next Meeting; March 14, 2026