

COAA AUGUST 2018 MINUTES

The following minutes are taken as the COAA/ MOAA and the public input was reported.

08/01/2018	6: 14 PM	OFFICE ON AFRICAN AFFAIRS	6th Floor
Meeting called by	Interim Vice Chair Margaret Kamara		
Secretary	Interim Vice Chair Margaret Kamara		
Attendees	<p><u>Commissioners:</u> Kedist Geremaw, Margaret Kamara, Noel Karl Lebondzo, Johanna Leblanc, Kotheid Nicoue, Lydia Nylander, and Ikenna Udejiolor,</p> <p><u>Aspiring Commissioners:</u> Mariama Keita, Dimah Mahmoud, and Nenehwa Tomi,</p> <p><u>MOAA:</u> Rediate Yohannes and Elsa Haile</p> <p><u>Members of the Public:</u> Shelia Wojloh, Desmond Ellis, Salim Adofo, Ahadi Ture, Zakiya Sankara-Jabar, Theodore Ngatchou</p>		
OLD BUSINESS: No old business was discussed			
May 2018 Minutes	A review was not completed of the previous meeting minutes. It has been tabled for the next meeting. A public meeting was not held in June based on the request of the Commission. A public meeting was not held in July due to the Independence Day Holiday.		
Introduction	Interim Vice Chair Margaret Kamara called the meeting to order. She welcomed attendees and thanked them for their attendance.		
STANDING BUSINESS			

MOAA Updates & Announcements

The two newest members of the Mayor's Office on African Affairs introduced themselves. Rediate Yohannes is the language access coordinator and Elsa Haile is the African community grants specialist.

Event Debrief:

1. 4th Annual Young African Connexion Summit was held on July 18, 2018. The themed was Nelson Mandela 100: Be the Legacy. The event was well received by the community. Members of the Commission came to support.
2. Mandela Day: The day of service program originally scheduled for July 21, 2018 was postponed due to the weather but has been rescheduled to take place in September during African Heritage Month. More details to come.
3. MOAA/MPD Community Soccer Game: The community event, which was held earlier in the week featured food, DJ, MPD band, giveaways, and opportunity for community to engage and connect with the police department. MOAA took the trophy home with a 9-1 victory! Members of the Commission came to support and assisted with planning.

Upcoming

1. African Heritage Month: MOAA is still finalizing the details of the month. However, some proposed programs include:
 - a. Theme: Stronger Together: bring communities together
 - b. Festival (closing event, last Saturday in September 29th/Wharf area), working with DPR on securing space
 - c. Soccer tournament
 - d. Reschedule date of Mandela Day of Service
2. Decision for the African Community Grant: MOAA Grant Specialist Haile gave background on the purpose of the grant, which is to support African community based organizations, with an allocation of \$100,000 to be distributed to programs that reflect the Mayor's top priority areas and document the needs of the District's African constituency. The deadline to apply was July 6, 2018. Thirty-six (36) applications were received and final review is being conducted. Decisions will be made by end of August.

Questions and Comments:

Commissioners: Can the commission get advance notice once details are confirmed?

Members of the Public: **Salim Adofo** of the **National Black United Front**: suggested that the focus of the month be to unit all of African decent and promote better understanding and education of African culture to African American families and children.

Questions on the African Community Grant was raised by **Ahadi Ture** and how the program is publicized to the public. Maile informed all that there was an information session held early July and encouraged the public to subscribe to the MOAA newsletter.

Ahadi Ture, Kenyan, founder/CEO of **4 The Culture App**, presented his company, which is an online platform to promote culture, disseminate information to the public on matters that affect the black community, which has over 2400 followers on Instagram and 80,000 App downloads. He proposed that MOAA/COAA consider using his platform to promote their programs. Contact: IG: 4theculture_now and website is 4thcultureapp.com.

COAA Updates & Announcements:

Chair Announcements: Lydia Nylander

Event Debrief:

1. July 13, 2018 Yelp Business Hours: Behind the Dream: the event, which was a partnership with Yelp featured first generation immigrant entrepreneurs. The business owners were Rahama Wright of Shea Yeleen (Ghanaian American), Nnamdi Nwaneri of Neat Meat dc (Nigerian American), Di Dang of Happy Endings Hospitality, and Ben Lin of B Lin Catering. The event was a pilot program to test out relationship with COAA and seats were limited.
2. July 23, 2018: Diaspora Engagement Reception: Collaboration program with The Africa Society, The African Middle Eastern Leadership Project (AMEL), and COAA featured a panel session, breakout session, and networking centered on connecting diaspora with Mandela Washington Fellows and how to leverage connections of both groups. The execution of the program highlighted the collaboration abilities of all members of the COAA and was well received by the State Department Howard University. COAA was awarded a plaque by Howard University for service to the YALI fellows and the diaspora, which was passed around for all to see.
3. Commissioner Lebondzo discussed the Mandela Washington/ YALI Fellows Expo: featured 700 leaders and partners. COAA was represented and the event was successful

Questions and Comments:

Comments from attendees of the program

Nenelwa Tomi of Tanzania, attended the Diaspora Engagement Reception and said she liked that the event was beyond the normal happy hour program and offered more depth. The breakout session allowed engagement and connections across sectors.

Desmond Ellis founder of the **Sierra Leone Empowerment Network (SLEN)** said that the Fellows enjoy meeting members of the diaspora and the event allowed it to occur.

Commissioner Kedist Geremaw announced her resignation and move to the Commission on Aging. She gave remarks and advice to both MOAA/COAA to work to support the African community.

Commissioners took turns giving their best wishes to **Geremaw** and thanked her for her leadership, commitment, influence, and guidance to the African community.

Commissioner Lebondzo shared the information for the upcoming African Diaspora Young Leaders Summit taking place Friday, August 3, 2018 at the Intercontinental Hotel at the Wharf. However, registrations have closed. This information was not available at the time of the meeting but live streaming will be available by Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/AuDiasporaTV>

Commissioner Kamara recognized the past weekend events celebrating Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's visit to DC, in which Mayor Muriel Bowser proclaimed July 28, 2018 as Ethiopia Day in DC. **Maile** stated that MOAA was instrumental in getting the Mayor to the celebration at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center.

Secretary Nicoue Discussed needed changes and challenges between MOAA and COAA and mentioned the absence of both **Director Mamadou Samba and Deputy Director Soro Kignaman**. Chair Nylander addressed the room. She complemented each Commissioner for their contribution to serve the African community and gave her resignation, citing differences with MOAA.

<p>Public Comments</p>	<p>Desmond: SLEN, operating in SL and US focus on professional development; host annual conference, SLEN Network facebook.</p> <p>Shelia Wojloh: John John Hopkins School of Medical, lived in liberia, retired and here to assist and stay abreast of commision. She is interested in working with elderly community on HIV medication.</p> <p>Dimah Mahmoud: Discussed her current projects with the Nubian Initiative- working on a festival and conference. She is a part of some the Diplomats Science Club, which Africans are not represented and wants to change that. She is an aspiring Commissioner. More info about Nubian Initiative can be found at Nubiainitiative.org</p> <p>Nenelwa Tomi: Aspiring Commissioner and Masters Candidate at George Washington University in International Education with a focus on Decolonizing Development in the African diaspora. Tomi suggested a <i>Black Panther</i> theme for African Heritage Month to address issues raised by the film but not being addressed in the public space such issues of segregation even within the African community.</p> <p>Theodore Ngatchou: there appears to be lack of information and resources on assisting various businesses with vending opportunity and securing opportunities with offices such as the Office of Contracts and Procurements.</p> <p>Mariama Keita of Guinea, attended the meeting as an aspiring Commissioner. She has worked with Department of State on programs such as YALI, and is communication and partnership advisor for USAID.</p>
<p>Meeting Adjourned</p>	<p>7:42 pm:</p>

Meetings are held every first Wednesday of every month and are open to the public. For more information, email aaa@dc.gov or call 202.727.5634