



**Governor's Commission on African Affairs
Strategic Planning Session (SPS) Meeting**

*Virtual ZOOM
February 12, 2024
6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.*

Meeting Minutes for SPS

Commission Attendance: Yes

Chukwunonso “Vincent” Iweanoge – Chair	Vacant – Vice Chair
Dr. Alemseged Abbay – Member	J. Wyndal Gordon - Member
Tope Adeyoju– Member	Dr. Jasmine Blanks Jones – Member
Adebowale “Shola” Ajayi – Member	Dr. Terry V. Jones – Member
Adedana Ashebir – Member	Dr. Natalie McCabe – Member
Njukang Asong – Member	Nehdia Mumuni – Member
Dr. Anyinke Atabong – Member	Yodit Negede – Member
Fatmata Barrie – Member	Maroufath Ogooussan – Member
Ian Campbell – Member	Dr. James Saku – Member
Dr. Sylvia Dasi – Member	Ticia Umeh – Member
Amsale Geletu – Member	Maureen Wambui – Member

GOCI Staff:

Dr. Antwan Brown – Administrative Director of AA Commission, GOCI
Gregory Yancey – Chief of Staff, GOCI
Cheryl Madigan – Project Coordinator for the Ethnic Commissions, GOCI

I. Meeting Call to Order at 6:05 p.m.

Chukwunonso (Vincent) Iweanoge, Chair, Governor's Commission on African Affairs

II. Commission Roll Call:

Chukwunonso (Vincent) Iweanoge, Chair, Governor's Commission on African Affairs

III. Opening Remarks:

Chukwunonso (Vincent) Iweanoge, Chair, Governor's Commission on African Affairs

Chair Iweanoge stated key areas where he would like the commission to go forward.

He wants to touch on the key elements from the Governor, like “Leave no Marylander

Behind”. He stated that he wants to touch on Cultural Preservation & Exchange by transferring the culture that we know of to the community. This will consist of the areas in

Education, Healthcare and Safety. Get educated on the global issues that concern our community and disparity in employment.

IV. Introductions:

Dr. Antwan Brown, Administrative Director, Governor's Office of Community Initiatives

❖ **Delegate Mark Edelson – Baltimore City – District 46**

He is from Pretoria, South Africa. He moved to the United States in 1999 to Atlanta and then to Baltimore in 2007 to go to the University of MD – School of Law, which he graduated in 2010. Was elected in the House of Delegates in 2022. He is a member of the House of the Appropriations Committee and Vice Chair of the Transportation and Environment Subcommittee. His focus is getting the resources to the communities and how he can work together with the commission to bring the issues of the communities to the forefront.

- ❖ **Delegate Bernice Mireku-North – Montgomery County – District 14**
She is a native of Montgomery County. Went to University of Maryland College Park and Howard College for law school. After law school she got involved politically and civically. She came to this position through an appointment vacancy within the House of Delegates. She serves on the Ways and Means committee. This committee deals with taxes, revenues, tax credits, education, and other ways of bringing in revenue, such as casino and gambling.
- ❖ **Gregory Yancey, Chief of Staff, Governor’s Office of Community Initiatives**
He stated that our emphasis is on issues, events and infrastructure. So those issues that you want to be advocated, you want to see come into fruition, those holes in the law where you think should be doing better. Let us know, legislation that is being considered and legislation that you think should be considered.
- ❖ **Cheryl Madigan, Project Coordinator & Fiscal Administrator, Governor’s Ethnic Commissions**
She is the project coordinator for the ethnic commissions and fiscal administrator for GOCI. She is here to support the commission in every way that is needed.

V. GOCI Handbook:

Administrator Director Antwan Brown

- ❖ The agendas will be provided one week prior to the meeting.
- ❖ Asked the commissioners to read over the handbook.
- ❖ Attendance of a commissioner – must attend 50% of meetings within each year.
- ❖ Bylaws – This will be addressed later. The commissioners were asked to review and suggest changes if they have any.
- ❖ Went over the Administrative Director’s roles.
- ❖ State Ethics – there will be a representative at the next meeting on March 12th.
- ❖ Meetings - there will be 6 commission meetings each year. Attending meetings when overseas can be attended via Zoom but will be discussed when going over the bylaws. In-person meetings need to be decided later.
- ❖ Emails – eventually everyone will have a GOCI email account.
- ❖ Appointments – everyone has 2 years and then another 4 years. After that, you can take time off and then reapply.
- ❖ Strategic Planning Session Discussion – **Chair Iweangoge**
 - ❖ Goals: First year is to let the communities know that this commission exists.
 - ❖ **1st Quarter**
 - Commissioner Blanks Jones - Greeting sent out by mailing to electronically that consists of everyone’s names.
 - Commissioner Barrie – Come up with lists from the different African community organizations and send out an email to them. Listening sessions, go to their meetings and introduce ourselves to them. Create a google doc.
 - Commissioner Geletu – set up a meeting in Montgomery County by the end of the February at a community center or mosque.
 - Dr. Brown announced that the commissioners will be invited to an event at the Government House on February 18th.
 - Commissioner Campbell – He has a paper that would advertise the commission and maybe do it once a month. This would have to be approved. Need to follow State Ethics guidelines.
 - Commissioner McCabe – Social Media exposure.
 - Commissioner Ajayi – Create a communication plan.
 - Commissioner Ashebir – Electronic greeting card.
 - Commissioner Adeyoju - ??? on physical or electronic greeting card.

- Commissioner Wambui – Social Media Dr. Brown would like to put a hold on this until GOCI hires a communication person.
 - Commissioner Barrie – Can there be a separate website for African Affairs? Mr. Yancey is currently working on this.
 - Chair Iweanoge will work with Dr. Brown to summarize the short-term goals.
 - Commissioner Umeh asked what do we say to the communities, except for introducing ourselves? Dr. Brown will work on a communication plan.
 - Commissioner Adeyoju – It would be a good idea to piggyback with the current Black History Month and Women’s History Month in March. Create a 45 second message to include Happy Black History Month and include the website and phone number. Also, he has a broad spectrum of social media contacts and organizations beyond Maryland.
 - Commissioner Shola – to learn how other commission on how they reached their communities. Creating a power map that includes African churches, other African organizations, list of delegates, Facebook ads that targets communities, if there is a budget.
 - Dr Brown – We need a call to action when doing events. Start planning for African Heritage month for September.
 - Commissioner Ashebir – Press release/interview with African Now radio. African Film Festival in Silver Spring AFI. March 15th through the 28th. Maybe an ad on the program. African Day on May 24th could be a potential way to get the word out.
 - Dr. Brown – Nelson Mandela Day and the Yali Fellows are coming back. They were approved by the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. They are asking us to collaborate with them to do some volunteer things. They will head down to the White House. Mandela Day is July 18th and the Yali Fellows are in August.
 - Commissioner Blanks Jones – International Day of the African child in June.
 - Commissioner Tope Adeyoju – The United Nations Decade for the People of African Descent. Maybe the commission can help cross-promotion of this.
 - Commissioner Dasi – Newsletter – depends how often on GOCI.
 - Chair Iweanoge – International Women’s Day event in Prince George’s County on March 8th. Have someone from the commission to speak there.
- ◆ **2nd Quarter:**
- Commissioner Ashebir – Power map for different organizations. Data on population in Maryland and its percentages for jobs, educations, schooling, etc. Chair Iweanoge will send out information pertaining to this.
 - Commissioner Campbell – Create an African policy for the Governor. Action plan. Develop pipeline projects.
- ❖ **3rd Quarter:**
- African Heritage Month Celebration
- ❖ Commissioner Adeyoju – requested the outcome of the poll that consisted of 10 questions.

❖ **Sub-Committees**

(The Commission Chair designates the sub-committee chair and then each commissioner must choose at least one sub-committee.)- Health - Business/Economic Development - Workforce Development Education - Community (Arts/Culture/Faith))

- ❖ Business/Economic Development
 - Adebowale (Shola) Ajayi
 - Adedana Ashebir
 - **Ian Campbell - Chair**
 - Sylvia Dasi
 - Amsale Geletu
 - J. Wyndal Gordon
 - Maroufath Ogoussan
 - Tricia Umeh
 - Maureen Wambui
 - Njukang Asong
- ❖ Community (including arts, culture and interfaith)
 - Tope Adeyoju
 - Adebowale (Shola) Ajayi
 - Anyinke Atabong
 - Jasmine Blanks Jones
 - Amsale Geletu
 - Terry Jones
 - Natalie McCabe
 - Maureen Wimbui
 - **Fatmata Barrie – Chair**
- ❖ Education (social workforce development)
 - Maureen Wambui
 - Fatmata Barrie
 - Terry Jones – Chair
 - J. Wyndal Gordon
 - Adedana Ashebir
 - Anyinke Atabong
 - Jasmine Blanks Jones
 - Ian Campbell
 - Maroufath Ogoussan
 - **Tricia Umeh – Chair**
 - Njukang Asong
- ❖ Health
 - Tope Adeyoju
 - Jasmine Blanks Jones
 - Natalie McCabe
 - Yodit Gedamu
 - J. Wyndal Gordon
 - Alemseged Abbay
 - Nehdia-ut-Zuhra Mumuni
 - James Saku
- ❖ Dr. Brown informed everyone about attending meetings.
- ❖ Commissioner Wambui commented on African History Month – Collaborate with other counties.
- ❖ Requested calendar of Holidays

❖ **Meeting Adjourned**

Motion	1 st	2 nd	Vote	Adjourn: 8:12 p.m.
Adjourned	Adebowale (Shola) Ajayi	Fatmata Barrie	13Y-0N-0A	