



**Maryland Commission  
on LGBTQIA+ Affairs**

**Strategic Planning Retreat Minutes**

July 19, 2025, 10:00am - 4:00pm  
Banneker-Douglass-Tubman Museum  
84 Franklin Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Members Present:

Lee Blinder, Commission Chair  
M Pease, Commission Vice Chair  
Joan Bryan  
Josie Caballero  
Kurt Doan  
Debb Dunn  
Anthony Fox

Asher Kennedy  
Stephen Martin  
Paula Neira  
Brandon Russell  
Joe Toolan  
Ly Xīnzhèn Zhǎngsūn

Members Not Present:

Rev. Ali K.C. Bell  
Amit Dhir  
Nicole Hollywood  
Wendy Novak  
Sarah Stern

Staff and Guest Present:

Jeremy Browning, Director  
Taylor Harer, Special Assistant  
Charlotte Persephone Hoffman, Policy Committee Advisor  
Tica Torres Bolivar, Appointed to the Commission - term beginning on 10/1/2025

- I. Chair Blinder called the meeting to order at 10:03am.
- II. Roll call was conducted via sign in sheet.
- III. Land Acknowledgement: A Land Acknowledgement was provided by Commissioner Toolan.

- IV. Welcome and Overview of the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture: A brief overview of the history of the museum was provided by Executive Director, Chanel Johnson. There was a brief discussion on the structure of MCAAHC that included information on the Commission's independence and how they function as an independent Commission. The overview concluded with a brief tour of the Museum.
- V. Soul Check: Chair Blinder led the Commission through a series of reflective questions centered on selfcare in advocacy, emotional wellbeing, and actions to take care of oneself and others.
- VI. State of the Commission, Key Accomplishments, & Administrative Updates: Director Browning provided a brief history and overview of the Commission, as well as a review of the Commission's legislative mandates. There was a discussion regarding the Commission's accomplishments as well as discussing relevant administrative updates.
- VII. 2025 Strategic Plan updates provided by Director Browning started with a review of the Commission's Mission, Vision, and Values, followed by a review of the progress made towards the 2025 Strategic Plan. Commissioner Zhǎngsūn made a motion to update Section: 2. A. to include "disabled people" and was seconded by Commissioner Dunn. A vote was conducted by those in favor raising their hands and the motion passed unanimously.
- VIII. What comes next: Vice Chair Pease led the Commission through exercises to cultivate joy and dream big for the future. The session included small group discussions reflecting on what brings commissioners joy, what the Commission can do now with greater independence, and what's needed for future success. The session concluded with a group discussion that aimed to connect dreams and visions to the Commission's priorities.
- IX. Project Spotlights & Collective Input:
  - A. Vice Chair Pease gave an overview of community needs assessment that included an overview of the draft survey. Commission members were encouraged to review the survey and provide feedback by July 27, 2025.
  - B. Commissioner Dunn provided an update on the Development Committee's efforts to bolster funding for the Commission. Strategies included the potential for a 501(c)(3) nonprofit sponsor and information on the benefits of creating an affiliated foundation to aid in the Commission's work. She highlighted the importance of identifying what the Commission's funding needs are and creating a list of potential funders.
  - C. Director Browning led a segment regarding telling our story. He discussed creating a communications infrastructure that would include logo and branding creation, as well as social media guidelines. A communication workgroup will be created to recommend a communication strategy for the Commission.

- X. Next Steps and Closing Remarks: Chair Blinder led a round-robin exercise, allowing Commissioners to share their thoughts and reflections. Chair Blinder expressed their gratitude for everyone working together to support the community and the Commission through challenging times.
- XI. Meeting adjourned by Chair Blinder at 3:47pm.

Minutes submitted by: Taylor Harer, Special Assistant