

Mayor's African American Advisory Board

Wednesday, October 8, 2025

9:30 a.m.

Meeting Location: Ed Ball Building, 214 N. Hogan Street, 32202 – First Floor Hearing Room #1002

Meeting Attendance: MAAAB Chair, Dr. Barbara Darby; Lee Brown; Kelly Frazier; Errol White; Conrad Jennings; Kiara Nixon.

Absent/Excused: Dr. Ronetta Wards; Dr. Audrienne Burgin; Dawn Curling; Menelik Vereen; Latrina Dowdell.

COJ Staff: Schnell Chin, Executive Assistant to Director Thomas Waters, Neighborhoods Department; Andrew Powers, Executive Council Assistant to Council member Rahman Johnson, District 14.

Guests: Ernest Smith, Urban Core CPAC & Northside Coalition.

Meeting Summary

1. **Call to Order and Verify Quorum** – Chair Darby called the meeting to order at 9:41 am and verified that a quorum was present.
2. **A Moment of Centering** – Chair Darby read a quote from Powerful Black Voices: “Faith is the first factor in a life devoted to service.” Mary McLeod Bethune. Dr. Darby reminded the Board that they are serving our community.
3. **Approval of the Agenda** – The October 8, 2025, meeting agenda was approved.
4. **Approval of the Previous Meeting Summary** – The September 10, 2025, meeting summary was approved as presented, with minor edits as noted.
5. **The scheduled presenter was COJ Councilman Rahman Johnson** – Due to a scheduling conflict, Council member Johnson will reschedule his presentation on his proposal to codify the Neighborhood Bill of Rights. His assistant will be in touch to reschedule.
6. **Mayor's Staff Updates** –
7. **Public Comments & Announcements** (three-minute time limit)
 - Mr. Ernest Smith inquired about the 2026 Meeting Schedule for the MAAAB.
 - Dr. Darby indicated that the 2026 MAAAB Meeting Schedule is not yet set and that the schedule will be widely circulated, and a copy will be made available to him.
8. **Chair's Report** – Dr. Darby gave the following report:
 - She noted that it is important to thank the members for their work through the various MAAAB Committees. She is pleased with the outcomes and asks that members continue to work hard. Dr. Darby reminded members that the community is watching.

- Since the October 8, 2025, MAAAB Meeting, Dr. Darby has attended:
 - Mayor Deegan’s Budget Town Hall, community meeting on September 22, 2025, on the Northside.
 - She also attended the final City Council Budget Hearing and Vote on September 23, 2025.
 - Prepared the agreed to MAAAB Statement on the Budget and Milage Rate Increase.
 - Attended a Prayer Vigil on September 23, 2025, for a positive outcome on the Budget vote.
 - Reviewed the MAAAB Meeting Agenda and other documents with Ms. Henry, each month in preparation for the Board meeting.

- Chair Darby encouraged Board members to share specific events that they attend or are trying to host. Please include the list of CPAC meetings you attend and present information on the Board. Please coordinate your schedules with Ms. Henry.

Discussion Template

- **What** – define the MAAAB
- **Who** – list the Board members
- **When** – provide our meeting schedule
- **Why** – discuss Executive Order 2024-02
- **How** – the Board works through committees, attend other organization meetings and collect community feedback through surveys
- **Actions** – discuss what has been done thus far, recommendations, share the community survey

There was a motion to accept the discussion template, as stated, for community presentations. It was properly moved and seconded. Motion passed.

9. Committee Reports:

- **Arts & Culture** – Committee Chair, Dawn Curling, will be out until December.
- **Economy & Infrastructure** – No report. Next meeting scheduled for October 27, 2025, at the Main Public Library.
- **Health & Public Safety** – No report. Wait until November meeting to discuss recommendations.
- **Military & Veteran Affairs** – Attended the District 3, Southeast CPAC Meeting at the Mandarin Center. Provided an overview of what the MAAAB is and what the Military and Veterans Affairs Committee does. Mr. White spoke during the Public Comments Section on the CPAC Meeting Agenda.
 - Mr. White also attended the October 11, 2025, Veterans Services Standdown Health Care Event at the VyStar Atena.
 - Next Committee meeting will be November 18, 2025, at the Main Public Library, at 6 pm.
 - He noted that Council member Johnson did make a presentation at the CPAC Meeting on the Neighborhood Bill of Rights; and DCPS Board member Cindy Pearson spoke on the school district’s “Be Seen, Be Safe” Campaign.

- **Program Committee** – Next meeting is scheduled for October 27, 2025, at the Main Public Library.

10. Unfinished Business:

- **Draft Community Survey**
 - COJ Public Affairs will create the QR Code to attach the survey to the MAAAB COJ Webpage.
 - Kelly Frazier will convert the survey into the proper format to be used with the QR Code.
 - It was properly moved and seconded to adopt the MAAAB Community Survey, as amended.

11. New Business:

- **MAAAB Letterhead**
 - It was properly moved and seconded to adopt the new MAAAB Letterhead.

12. Next Steps/Board’s Open Forum:

- **Conrad Jennings** – the intent is to have the Community Survey ready for use at the Melanin Market, November 28, 2025.
- **Errol White** – attended the September 25, 2025, Unidos JAX Event. He was invited by Yanira Cardona, Hispanic Outreach Coordinator. He is looking forward to collaborative efforts with other affinity boards. Mr. White is also working to coordinate a tour of the Air Base – 125 Fighter Wing – COJ MAVD “FANG.”
- **Dr. Ronetta Wards** – also expressed an interest in collaborating with other affinity boards.
- **Lee Brown** – expressed concerns that services are being withdrawn from certain parts of town; ie, grocery stores, pharmacies, etc.
- **Kelly Frazier** – announced that the ACLU Jacksonville will hold its 70th Anniversary Celebration on Friday, October 10, 2025, and encouraged members to support/attend.
- **Menelik Vereen** – asked if there is a template to forward recommendations to the Chair. Dr. Darby advised him to send the recommendations to Ms. Henry via email, as there is no formal format.
- **Dr. Darby** – reminder that the November MAAAB Meeting will be held at 6 pm at the Legend Center, 5130 Soutel Dr. Please circulate the public notice of meeting widely.
- **Andrew Powers**, Executive Council Assistant to Council member Johnson, stated that the Council member will need to reschedule and that he will be in touch with Ms. Henry regarding a more suitable timeframe.

13. The meeting adjourned at 11:06 pm.

Submitted by:

Edwina Henry
Board Coordinator

Dr. Barbara Darby
Board Chair