



**District of Columbia Emancipation Day Commemoration Commission Meeting**  
**Meeting Minutes**

Date: Thursday, January 27, 2022

Time: 6:34 PM – 7:11 PM

Platform: WebEx

Lead: Kimberly Bassett

In Attendance: Mary Ivey, Kimberly Bassett, Howard Marks, Emily Martin, Ayanna Hawkins, Neah Evering, Helga Baskett-Tippet, Sabrina Thomas, Malissa Freese

Agenda:

1. Secretary Bassett greeted everyone and thanked them for attending and for their support since April 2021.
2. The Secretary testified on behalf of the DC Emancipation Day Commission before Councilmember Robert White two weeks ago and informed the Commission that Councilmember White is interested to see what the Commission has planned for 2022 DC Emancipation Day.
3. The Secretary opened the floor to ideas about 2022 DC Emancipation Day programming, noting that it will likely need to be virtual given current concerns around the COVID-19 pandemic.
  - a. The Secretary noted that traditionally there is a DC Democracy breakfast around DC Emancipation Day, though it was suspended in 2020 and 2021. If there is to be an event in 2022, the Commission will need to work on gathering speakers and planning the agenda for the Breakfast. The last breakfast's speaker was Armstrong Williams. There may be an option for the breakfast to be virtual.
    - i. Commissioner Marks noted that the Commission was thankful that Rabbi Even Alexander gave the invocation at the last Democracy Breakfast, and mentioned that he would be happy to give the invocation again.
  - b. Last year in 2021, the Commission held a series of panels with historians. If the Commission has any suggestions for panelists in 2022, the Secretary requested that Commissioners send an email to Emily Martin.
  - c. The Secretary posed the question of what the overarching theme of 2022 DC Emancipation Day should be.
4. Commissioner Ivey proposed an idea that the Commission visit the Civil Rights Journey to the Edmund Pettis Bridge, if not this year, in the near future.

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5. Commissioner Marks noted that he was able to catch the Secretary’s testimony on the DC Emancipation Commission and complimented the Secretary on her answers to the questions she was asked. He also mentioned that for the vast majority of general public in the DMV, DC Emancipation Day’s real meaning is not known. He suggested that the Commission works with the Board of Education and DC Public Schools to educate students. He also noted that this summer is the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the opening of the Lincoln Memorial, and proposed tying in this theme with DC Emancipation Day, and even having an event at the Memorial.
  - a. Commissioner Marks will reach out to several contacts about the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and get more information and details.
6. Commissioner Thomas spoke to Commissioner Marks’ information about the Lincoln Memorial and noted that when the statue in Lincoln Park of Abraham Lincoln was unveiled, former slaves came to the event to honor emancipation and Frederick Douglass was the keynote speaker. The statue was also paid for by former slaves. Potentially a reenactment could be held.
  - a. Secretary Bassett noted that this was a great idea, and that the Civil Rights Sisters did a reenactment in 2019.
7. Commissioner Hawkins reported that her church showed the 2021 DC Emancipation Day documentary last year and wondered if the documentary could be shown formally to DCPS students. She also suggested an essay or art project for middle school and high school students so they can better understand the history of DC Emancipation Day.
  - a. Commissioner Thomas added that DC Public Libraries should also be engaged and that showing the documentary could easily be a virtual event.
8. Commissioner Freese supported the idea to engage DCPS and DCPL, and suggested the use of a radio show and engaging media outlets beginning in March. She also suggested reaching out to advocacy groups around DC to encourage them to show the documentary.
9. Commissioner Thomas noted that she really like the panel about the Story of the Pearl (Escape on the Pearl - Mary Kay Ricks) hosted during last year’s DC Emancipation Day by the Presbyterian Church, and emphasized that the story is something that should be highlighted.
10. Commissioner Hawkins asked about how DC Statehood should factor into this year’s celebration, and whether we should “decouple” the two this year.
  - a. The Secretary noted that we can educate about DC Statehood, as was done in 2021.
11. Commissioner Thomas expressed that she is hopeful that the parade can take place this year, and that such events like the concert can also happen.
  - a. Secretary Bassett noted that those activities are hosted by the Mayor’s Office of Community Affairs and that she will keep the Commission updated on any

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planning, as well as find a way for the Commission to have a meaningful role in the event.

12. Secretary Bassett thanked everyone for their ideas and will be in touch with the Commissioners individually before the next meeting on February 3<sup>rd</sup>.