

Women's Commission Meeting - May 2025

5/28/2025

Attendees: Robin Drummond (OECR), Jill Muth (OECR), Sarasi Desikan (Commissioner), Kionne Abdul-Malik (Commission Chair), Casey Brent (Commissioner), Robin Neverdon (Commissioner), Ciarra Miles (Commissioner), Tevis Simon (Commissioner), Gab Sussman (Commissioner), Stephany Sulbaran (Commissioner), Ana Rodney (Commissioner), Rachel Marquez (Commissioner), Naomi Boldon (guest), Tsion Shiferaw (guest), Monica Haines Benkhedda (guest), Nahomy Tewodros (guest), Yordanos Heyelom (guest)

Welcome and call to order (6:12pm)

I. Presentation by the Embold Project

- a. Representatives from the Embold Project shared information about their mission, which is to provide free natural hair care and products for Black girls to address chronic school absenteeism caused by lack of education, resources, representation, and confidence surrounding natural hair, and ways to get involved.

II. Approval of Minutes

- a. Commissioner Rodney motioned for the March 26 meeting minutes to be approved. Commissioner Neverdon seconded the motion. The March 26 meeting minutes were approved.
- b. Commissioner Rodney motioned for the April 30 meeting minutes to be approved. Commissioner Sulbaran seconded the motion. The April 30 meeting minutes were approved.

III. Updates from Office of Equity and Civil Rights (OECR) Staff

- a. Staff updates were provided by Chief Jill Muth.
- b. An HBCU fellow from Morgan State will join OECR this summer to help identify potential grants funding opportunities.
- c. A reminder was shared about reappointment applications.
- d. OECR shared feedback from the Women's Commission on City Council Bill 25-0051 Labor and Employment – Pregnancy Accommodations and City Council Bill 25-0052 City Buildings – Provision of Menstrual Products with the City Council.
 - i. Report of results from email approval for City Council Bill Feedback on Baltimore City Women's Commission Feedback on Council Bill 25-0051 Labor and Employment – Pregnancy Accommodations and Baltimore City Women's Commission Feedback on Council Bill 25-

0052 City Buildings – Provision of Menstrual Products we received 10 affirmative votes achieving the required quorum.

- e. OECR plans to do a collaborative event with the Mayor’s Office of LGBTQ Affairs and the Community Liaison committee as a way to mitigate the impact of recent federal ruling impacting federal protections for transgender individuals.
 - i. Commissioners discussed how to support the Office of LGBTQ Affairs and expressed a desire to collaborate, amplify their work, and streamline connections. A suggestion was made to appoint a liaison between the Women’s Commission and the Office of LGBTQ Affairs.
- f. Support and protection for immigrant communities, the roll back of the Violence Against Women Act, and Curtis Bay and Brooklyn’s proximity to the industrial zone were main concerns OECR noted at FY2026 Tax Payer Night.
- g. Other brief updates were shared regarding preparation for budget hearings, an upcoming immigration summit at Coppin University, and state level bills OECR is tracking to get back on the docket for next Maryland General Assembly session.

IV. Women’s Commission Culture Committee Update

- a. An update was provided regarding the culture committee meetings, and an internal deadline of Wednesday June 25 was set for current commissioners to complete the reappointment process.
- b. Applications to fill vacant positions will be reviewed on a rolling basis.
- c. Commissioners were also reminded that the Commission has an internal event calendar and that event collateral such as brochures and Women’s Commission branded items are available to use.

V. Projects Check-In

- a. An update regarding the State of the Womb event was provided and a goal was set to have planning completed by the end of summer.
- b. Commissioners should contact Commissioner Rodney to volunteer for the planning committee.

VI. The Baltimore Office of Promotion & the Arts (BOPA) Connection

- a. Next steps to making a connection with BOPA were discussed.

Meeting adjourned at 7:40PM.