

COMMITTEE NOTES

**Ad Hoc Committee Meeting on Black Archives of Mid-America, Inc.
Kansas City Public Library
Board of Trustees
February 17, 2012**

The Ad Hoc Committee on Black Archives of Mid-America, Inc. of the Board of Trustees of the Kansas City Public Library, pursuant to official notification, met Tuesday, February 17, 2012 at 3:30 p.m. at the Black Archives of Mid-America, Inc., 1722 E. 17th Terrace, Kansas City, Missouri.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Olivia Dorsey (Chair)
Rose Marie Bell
Leon Dixon
Jonathan Kemper (ex officio)

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Billie Howard Barnes

STAFF PRESENT:

Crosby Kemper III, Chief Executive
Cheptoo Kositany-Buckner, Deputy Director
Eli Paul, Director of Missouri Valley Special Collections
Heather Pedersen, Administrative Officer
Jonathan Zwillenberg, Collection Librarian-Black Archives

OTHERS PRESENT:

Anthony Arnold, Black Archives Board Member
Alexander Ellison, Black Archives Board Member
Denise Gilmore, Black Archives Board Member
Kimberlee Ried, Black Archives Board Member
Doretha Williams, Executive Director of The Black Archives of Mid-America, Inc.

Dorsey called the meeting to order at 3:37 p.m.

Discussing the status of funding and fundraising Williams reported that the Black Archives will be receiving grant funding from the Neighborhood Tourist Development Fund to support upcoming general programming at the Archives.

Williams reported that the total budget for the grand opening is currently set at \$28,000 with \$8,000 funded by the Missouri Humanities Council grant and another \$6,000 to be requested through an additional grant application to NTDF. The remaining \$14,000 will need to be raised through fundraising efforts. Plans for the grand opening events include an invitation only fundraising event on Friday, June 15th with tickets set at \$50.00 and a possible fundraising lunch or dinner with Lonnie Bunch.

C. Kemper reported that Ollie Gates has agreed to support the Black Archives grand opening events and meetings are scheduled with several other potential funders.

Discussing exhibit development Kositany-Buckner reported that the *My Eyes No Longer Blind* exhibit is in the final stages of design and that most of the images are from the Black Archives collection, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Historical Society, and *The Kansas City Star* archives. The RFP for exhibit fabrication will be issued February 24th, with plans to have a contract signed by mid-March, a fabrication work start date of March 19th, and a work completed date of May 31st. She stated that Library and Archives staff are working on developing an exhibit on the history of the Black Archives and working with UMKC's Conservatory of Music and Dance on development of the Alvin Ailey exhibit.

J. Kemper suggested a timeline or map to synthesize the various collections and exhibit themes.

Discussing the Black Archives website Kositany-Buckner reported that the new website design has been approved, content is being developed, and the completed website is scheduled to launch in April. Kositany-Buckner noted that events will be managed in the same way as on the Library's website and that branding for the Black Archives is being developed that will give the Archives a recognizable brand yet will integrate with the Library's branding, both of which will facilitate cross-promotional efforts.

Discussing the grand opening activities Williams shared the proposed schedule of events starting with an invitation only opening reception scheduled for Friday, June 15th; public grand opening activities on Saturday, June 16th; Teacher's Institute program with Dr. Lonnie Bunch on Wednesday and Thursday, June 20-21; and Youth Day activities that will include high school debates on Saturday, June 23rd. Plans are for the public grand opening to include a variety of events and activities going on throughout the day to engage the community. Williams reported that members of the Grand Opening Committee will be meeting weekly until the details of the grand opening are settled and that the events and promotional efforts are being designed to both spread awareness of the Black Archives and to develop sustainable support.

Discussing the Black Archives collection the group talked about the need to connect the collection materials to the community and to start this process with the collections that are the most valuable to expand, such as important community leaders (Congressman Cleaver, Mayor James and Ollie Gates have all committed their archives) and institutional community anchors (churches, Greek organizations, *The Call*, the Black Journalists Association), then moving on to others in the community with interesting stories to tell. Dorsey suggested that the Archives approach the Kansas City Police Department and the NFL about including contemporary stories. C. Kemper noted that more than half of the major institutional leadership positions in Kansas City are held today by African Americans and suggested developing timelines, such as telling the story from the first African American Kansas City police officer to the current African American police chief, for various leaders and notables in local institutions, sports, academics, the business community, and the arts. He added that it might be good to try to develop a few of these timelines in time for the grand opening and to try to get the individuals to attend. Williams stated that the Archives is working with the FEC on arrangements for utilizing their recording studio for oral histories, particularly from older community leaders and members.

J. Kemper commented that the Chiefs Alumni Association is interested in supporting the Library and suggested that support of the Black Archives might also be of interest to them.

Discussing Black Archives programming Williams discussed the current schedule of events with the Committee. Highlights included social commentary workshops for high school students, a Mary Lou Williams event, and a panel discussion on the Freedom Inc. documentary *Freedom Is Now* scheduled for the day after the Plaza Branch Library event with Emiel Cleaver. She also noted that work has begun on the teacher applications for the Missouri Humanities Council grant funded Teachers Institute program.

Ellison recommended that promotion of Black Archives events include print materials since many of those individuals the Archives hopes to reach do not have easy access to computers.

J. Kemper suggested that the Archives explore the possibility of producing a poster to commemorate the grand opening. Dorsey suggested that the Archives also look into a smaller “take-away” that could be utilized for the grand opening and beyond.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Olivia Dorsey, Chair
Ad Hoc Committee

Date