

# Maryland Commission for Women

## Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 17, 2018

5 p.m.

Attman-Glazer Building – Room 164

45 Calvert Street, Annapolis, Maryland

### Commissioners Attending:

Lee Bachu, Chair  
Tawanda Bailey  
Marianne Brackney TC  
Tammy Bresnahan  
Deborah Cartee  
Gloria Chang  
Maureen Colburn  
Amanda Costley  
Lorna Forde  
Lauren Lambert  
Bonnie Luna  
Patrishia Robinson  
Carole Sepe  
Corinna Shen  
Evelyne Steward  
Ummu Bradley Thomas  
Marylou Yam TC  
Yun Jung Yang

### Commissioners Absent:

Homayara Aziz  
Brenda McChriston  
Marion Manski  
April Nyman  
Roberta Pardo  
Tamara England Wilson

### Staff Attending:

Judith Vaughan-Prather, Executive Director  
Tammy Wise, Management Associate

### Guests:

Jeanne Martin, Million Women Mentors  
Nargiz Aliyeva, Professional Fellow, ACIE  
Ummu Irene Thomas, Student  
Janishia Sherman, Student

### I. Call to Order.....Chair Bachu

The meeting was called to order at 5:14 p.m. by MCW Chair Bachu who welcomed those in attendance, and thanked them for attending despite the terrible weather. She called for approval of the agenda for tonight's meeting. Commissioner Thomas moved approval of the agenda as amended. The motion, seconded by Commissioner Forde, passed unanimously.

Chair Bachu called for approval of the minutes of the April 19, 2018 MCW meeting. Commissioner Yam so moved. Commissioner Bailey seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

The evening's agenda includes two guest speakers: Jeanne Martin from the Million Women Mentors program and Nargiz Aliyeva, Professional Fellow in the MCW office. Chair Bachu asked them to introduce themselves.

**II. Million Women Mentors.....Jeanne Martin, Maryland Chair**

Million Women Mentors is an initiative of STEMconnector, a national movement that supports the engagement of STEM mentors to increase the number of girls and women from school age to work age to persist and succeed in STEM programs and careers. The mission in Maryland is to create a network of private and public-sector organizations across the state that are committed to building a sustainable mentoring “ecosystem” to motivate girls and young women to pursue and succeed in STEM careers. Lt. Governor Boyd Rutherford is the Honorary Chair of MWM MD. Opportunities to participate include service on the MWM MD Steering Committee, service on the MWM MD Steering Subcommittee, and joining the network and participating in mentoring in your community. Ms. Martin encouraged the commissioners to join and support this effort, and to follow MWM MD on social media, including Facebook: Million Women Mentors- Maryland, @MWMMaryland; Instagram: MWMMaryland; and Twitter: @MWMMaryland, #MWMMD

Chair Bachu thanked Ms. Martin for her informative presentation.

**III. Professional Fellows Program/Women of Azerbaijan.....Nargiz Aliyeva, Professional Fellow**

Ms. Aliyeva has been working as a Professional Fellow in the office of the MCW since April 27 and will conclude her fellowship here on May 24. The Professional Fellows Program is funded by the U.S. Department of State and is coordinated by the American Councils for International Education. Professional Fellows are brought to the U.S. from many different countries with developing democracies. In her home country, Ms. Aliyeva works as an Advisor to the State Committee for Family, Women and Children’s Affairs for the Republic of Azerbaijan. She is especially interested in learning how the issue of domestic violence is addressed in the U.S. She has visited the Montgomery County Family Justice Center and will visit the Betty Ann Krahnke Domestic Violence Shelter next week. She described some of the important issues facing women in Azerbaijan, the laws protecting women’s rights, and compared statistics on the status of women there and in Maryland. She thanked the MCW for providing the opportunity to work in its office for these four weeks.

**IV. Chair’s Report.....Chair Bachu**

**A. MCW Annual Planning Meeting**

For the past few years, the MCW has devoted its June meeting to planning its agenda for the next fiscal year (July 1 – June 30). This year, that meeting will be **Thursday, June 21, starting at 3 p.m. in the Columbia/Ellicott City Conference Room of the George Howard Building at 3430 Courthouse Drive, in Columbia.**

**B. MCW Officer Candidates**

The MCW Bylaws provide that elections of officers are held in June in even-numbered years. The terms of office for Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary are for two years, and officers may serve up to two terms in office. Chair Bachu announced the candidates:

- Candidate for Chair
  - Yun Jung Yang
- Candidates for Vice Chair
  - Tawanda Bailey
  - Lorna Forde
- Candidate for Secretary
  - Carole Sepe

The elections will be held at the June meeting.

**C. MNADV Conference Sponsorship**

The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV) will hold its bi-annual conference tomorrow, May 18. The MCW is contributed a \$250 sponsorship of the conference as it provides training to service providers throughout the state.

**V. Unfinished Business**

**A. Women of the World Conference.....Commissioner Yam**

Almost 2000 individuals were on campus for the WOW conference on Saturday, April 28 on the campus of Notre Dame of Maryland University. Tarana Burke, founder of the #MeToo Movement was the keynote speaker. Chair Bachu attended.

**B. The Big Dig.....Commissioner Bresnahan**

AARP Maryland and the AARP Foundation, in cooperation with Real School Gardens, hosted a community service event creating an intergenerational outdoor learning center at James McHenry Elementary School in southwest Baltimore last week. AARP Maryland has been a long-standing supporter of the MCW’s events, so the MCW sent a delegation to help with the work: Executive Director Vaughan-Prather, Management Associate Wise and Professional Fellow Aliyeva joined Commissioner Bresnahan and dozens of volunteers from AARP’s Experience Corp, to turn a vacant lot into a beautiful outdoor classroom and community garden, in a single rainy day!

**VI. New Business**

No new business was brought before the Commission.

**VII. Committee Reports**

**A. Listening Tour.....Commissioner Yang**

The researchers are hard at work analyzing the data we collected and consolidating the information gathered from the series of public forums and the on-line survey. Very preliminarily, it looks like the "top five" issues will be (this could change somewhat):

- Addiction/Drug Abuse Problems
- Number of Women in Leadership Positions
- Domestic Violence - tied with:
- Access to Quality, Affordable Child Care
- Housing for People of Limited Income

The Listening Tour Committee will be developing suggestions for recommendations on each of these issues to present to the MCW for approval before the report is finalized. Speakers will be invited on each of the "top five" issues, once they are definitely determined, to participate in panel discussions at the August 18 conference. The MCW will want to brief the DHS Secretary, and to work with her office to determine how and when to brief the Governor or his staff before we go public with the report.

Commissioner Yang recommended that the researcher who is conducting the data analysis and developing the report be invited to brief the MCW at its June 21 planning meeting. After some discussion, it was agreed that the findings of the report should serve as a guide for the planning meeting.

Special thanks are due to Commissioners Shen and Sepe for all their hard work translating the survey responses that were submitted in Chinese and Spanish.

**B. Education and Outreach.....Commissioner Bailey**

Several new Issue Alerts have been issued since the last MCW meeting in April, including information on The Big Dig, the Governor’s new appointments to the MCW, and an invitation to the NACW upcoming webinar on the #MeToo Movement. The Committee continues to work on plans for the August 18 conference.

**C. Policy and Legislation.....Commissioner Bresnahan**

The Governor held final bill signings on May 8 and May 18 and has signed all the bills the MCW supported that passed this year. Commissioner Bresnahan recommended that the MCW write to the Governor thanking him for signing those bills into law, and that the MCW also write to Senator Zirkin and Delegate Vallario and their committees for moving the legislation forward this year.

Earlier this week, Commissioner Pardo shared a link to a news article about the recent passage of legislation in Delaware setting 18 as the minimum age for marriage, with no exceptions. Current Maryland law (and most states in the U.S.) permits exceptions for marriage at a younger age with parental consent or under certain circumstances such as pregnancy. However, in many cases, pregnancy at an early age results from what would be legally defined as statutory rape. In addition, children under the age of 18 cannot file for divorce or seek shelter from domestic violence, file for credit in their own name, etc. Therefore, some advocates argue that no child should be able to marry before they are of the legal age to consent to marriage, under any circumstances. Former Montgomery County CFW President and now Maryland Delegate Vanessa Atterbeary sponsored legislation to this effect this year, but it did not pass because while it was cross filed in the Senate, the Senate bill put the age at 17 and the two committees could not come to agreement, so the bill died. Commissioner Bresnahan asked for the MCW’s approval to meet with Delegate Atterbeary in the interim to explore this issue further. Commissioner Forde suggested that she also meet with Delegate Morales who may have a different position on the appropriate age of marriage. It was the consensus of the MCW that the Legislation and Public Policy Committee should move forward with this proposal.

**D. Public Relations and Communications.....Commissioner Aziz**

No report.

**E. Health and Wellness.....Commissioner Yam**

The Committee has issued four Women’s Health Alerts since the last MCW meeting including invitations to the Women’s Health Expo in Calvert County, information about National Physical Fitness and Sports Month, National Women’s Health Week, and National Osteoporosis Awareness and Prevention Month. Next week, a health alert about National Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month will be distributed.

**VIII. Liaison Reports**

**A. Maryland Women’s Heritage Center..... Chair Bachu**

The Heritage Center is still looking for a new home.

- B. 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment Commemoration Commission.....Chair Bachu**  
Chair Bachu and former Vice Chair Williams have represented the MCW on this Commission (the Commission to Commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution of the United States) for the past year. The legislation establishing that Commission specifies that two MCW commissioners serve on that board. Ms. Williams may continue to serve on that board in another capacity, but as she is no longer a MCW commissioner, the MCW has been asked to nominate a current commissioner to serve. Chair Bachu recommended that Commissioner Yam be designated as the MCW’s representative. There being no objection, Executive Director Vaughan-Prather was asked to communicate this decision to the staff of the Maryland State Archives.
  
- C. Zonta Human Trafficking Symposium.....Commissioner Yam**  
The “Moving from Awareness to Action” conference was held Saturday, April 21 from 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the Laurel Branch Library. Commissioner Yam estimated the audience at 90 to 100 people. Chair Bachu, Commissioner Yam, who served on the planning committee, and Management Associate Wise attended.
  
- D. AAPI Domestic Violence Conference.....Commissioner Chang**  
The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence offered a two-hour seminar on domestic violence in the Asian American/Pacific Islander communities. Commissioner Chang and Management Associate Wise attended. One of the most interesting points was the generational differences in perspectives on the issue with younger women seeming much less tolerant of intimate partner abuse, and also defining or perceiving abuse differently.

At this point, Chair Bachu asked if commissioners had any comments or questions.

Commissioner Costley asked when decisions are made regarding legislation the MCW will support or oppose. She mentioned a child support bill that failed this year but is likely to come up again next year. Commissioner Bresnahan invited her to send more information to her as chair of the Legislation and Public Policy Committee and to be involved in the resulting discussions that can begin immediately.

Commissioner Steward asked about the structure of the planning meeting. Chair Bachu responded that the MCW will set its priorities and agenda for the coming year at that meeting, and commissioners may choose on which committees they will serve. She asked the staff to send information about the planning meeting to the commissioners.

Commissioner Yang mentioned that after last year’s planning meeting, several commissioners went out to dinner, spur of the moment, and it had proved both fun and productive in building good working relationships. She offered to coordinate such an event again this year at a nearby restaurant, and invited all the commissioners to join in.

**IX. Staff Report.....Executive Director Vaughan-Prather**  
**A. Annual Report for FY 18**

The Commission programs on a fiscal year of July 1 – June 30. Staff will soon begin work on the annual report for FY 18 (the year ending June 30, 2018). Committee chairs will be sent drafts of the report of their committee’s work as they are developed. The report will likely be published in the fall.

**B. NACW and Washington Visits**

The President of the National Association of Commissions for Women, Kristen Garvey of Indiana, came to Washington, D.C. last week to meet with leaders of other national women’s organizations and she invited the NACW Board members who live in this area to join her. Executive Director Vaughan-Prather and Professional Fellow Aliyeva, along with Bella Owens, Chair of the Baltimore County Commission for Women, met with her on Monday, May 7. We met with staff at the Institute for Women’s Policy Research (IWPR), the director of the International Women’s Forum and Leadership Foundation, and staff at the National Women’s Law Center.

The NACW annual conference will be held in Los Angeles this August. Executive Director Vaughan-Prather is a current member of the NACW Board of Directors. Chair Bachu has nominated herself for election to the NACW Board. The office has been advised by DHS that this year’s policy is to send only one delegate to such conferences.

**C. Donation of Office Furniture**

A company based in Bethesda, having been bought by a company in Boston, is closing its Maryland offices. Executive Director Vaughan-Prather was able to secure donations of several nice chairs for the MCW office.

**D. Interns**

The MCW office has been fortunate this year to have had Yael Hanadari Levy, a graduating senior at Walter Johnson High School, interning three afternoons each week for the entire school year. Her internship just finished up this week. For her second semester project, she developed a chronology of MCW activities and projects since its first establishment in 1965, after locating and reviewing all the MCW annual reports available. A copy of that chronology will be in the MCW office and can be sent to any commissioner who would like to review it.

As discussed earlier this evening, we have also benefited from the work of our professional fellow, Nargiz Aliyeva. Included in the work she has done is the development of a directory of state-wide women’s organizations in Maryland. Her professional fellowship will be complete next week, on May 24.

The MCW expressed its appreciation for all that both Ms. Levy and Ms. Aliyeva have contributed.

**X. Announcements**

- A. Commissioner Yang announced that the Korean American Women’s Society of Maryland is holding a citizenships clinic this weekend in Ellicott City.
- B. Commissioner Thomas noted that it is especially significant after today’s presentation on women and girls in STEM, that the two student guests at this evening’s meeting are both STEM students, studying medical sciences. The Commissioners welcomed and congratulated the two young women.

**XI. Adjournment.....Chair Bachu**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted*

Judith Vaughan-Prather, Executive Director  
Maryland Commission for Women

**APPROVED: June 21, 2018**