



Governor's Commission on Caribbean Affairs
Strategic Planning Session (SPS-II) Meeting

Virtual ZOOM
Thursday, March 19, 2026
6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

Commissioners in Attendance:

Ken Alce, Member
Dr. Melissa Buckley, Member
Jemima Davis, Member
Samantha Howard, Vice Chair
Anderson Jean, Member
Cylia Lowe, Member
Luis McSween, Chair
Kasandra Tucker, Member

Commissioners Absent:

Gabriel Christian, Member
Dr. Maxine Kellman, Member
Winsome Leslie, Member
Habacuc Petion, Member
Dr. Carla Sewer, Member
Dr. Elaine Simon, Member

GOCI Staff:

Gregory Yancey, Chief of Staff
Silvia Decja, Administrative Director
Cheryl Madigan, Executive Assistant

I. Call to Order:

Luis McSween, Chair – Meeting called to order at 6:10 p.m.

II. Prayer:

Commissioner Jemima Davis – graced us with a prayer.

III. Opening Remarks:

- ❖ *Chair Ambassador Luis McSween* welcomed everyone. He thanked those that have had their committee meetings. He stated that he will be sitting in at these meetings to provide support. He also recommended that all commissioners support each other.

IV. Motions: Approval of Minutes:

Motion	1st	2nd	Vote
Approval of the 02/19/2026 Minutes	Ken Alce	Jemima Davis	7Y-0N-0A

V. Committees:

a) Business & Economic Development - Commissioner Ken Alce

- ❖ Commissioner Alce informed the commission that the committee held its second meeting on 03/10/26. The committee decided to advance on two of their initiatives, which are the Caribbean Business Database and the planning of the Caribbean Business Roundtable/Conference. He



announced that Commissioner Maxine Kellman has been appointed as Vice Chair of the committee. As for the Database initiative, they are still deciding if the database should include only Caribbean-owned businesses or Caribbean-affiliated businesses. Also, they discussed methods for businesses to join the database and if the Commission can control the access but at least have this database as a living document. Also, there was discussion on having it housed on the GOCI website under resources and having interns assist with maintaining it. Next step will be to draft a proposed structure and further guidelines for the database. They also discussed lead roles withing the committee and they hope to have this decided by the next meeting. They plan to develop the Working Group for the Caribbean Business Roundtable/Conference event.

b) Community (Arts-Culture-Faith) - Commissioner Jemima Davis

- ❖ Commissioner Davis stated the committee held its first meeting on 03/13/26. They focused on structure, priorities, and ideas on projects. They want to create roles for a Vice Chair and Communications Lead. The committee spoke about ideas concerning the Caribbean Heritage Month Celebration and about collaborating with other organizations or events. A new idea is to have a Multi-faith Prayer Gathering for the Caribbean and a Community Cultural Event (community base and neighbors). Wants to build a calendar of events. Chair McSween mentioned the CNJ-Soccer Tournament and the Bladensburg Caribbean events that will be happening. VC Howard mentioned the Cinco Pedro-Domino Tournament in DC. AD Decja stated she will create a live document for community events. She also reminded the commission that they will need to present a proposal at least 180 days prior to the date of the event, for events that the commission wants to hold or partner with another organization. This will include an estimated budget for the event. All funds for the event must be received at least 30 days prior to the date of the event.

c) Education & Workforce Development - Commissioner Gabriel Christian

- ❖ Commissioner Christian was not present to present an update.

d) Health - Commissioner Dr. Melissa Buckley

- ❖ Commissioner Buckley stated that the committee meeting needed to be canceled and provided an update on the Maryland Caribbean Voices Forum under Working Group.

VI. Working Groups:

a) Maryland Caribbean Voices Forum: Commissioner Dr. Melissa Buckley

- ❖ Commissioner Melissa Buckley stated that this event will be May 2, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. till 12:00 p.m. at GOCI's Crownsville office building and the working group is on track. Invitations have gone out to the panelists. AD Decja confirmed that only one panelist has confirmed. She mentioned that State Ethics has been contacted to make sure that there is no conflict with the referrals of student panelists from the college that a commissioner works at. Commissioner Buckley feels restricted on some of these guidelines that they need to go through. Chair McSween and VC Howard have concerns about the budget and confirmed panelists. AD Decja suggested changing the date of the event or switching the event back to being a virtual event. EA Madigan clarified all funds, and in-kind sponsorships must be received 30 days prior to the date of the event. Commissioner Buckley wants to schedule a Working Group meeting as soon as possible.



- b) **Maryland State Archives Oral Interviews (MD250):** *Vice Chair Samantha Howard*
 - ❖ VC Samantha Howard stated the questions for this event have been approved by GOCI. EA Madigan will contact Mr. Lewis at MD State Archives to help with scheduling the interviews.
- c) **Caribbean Connection Night (UMD-Caribbean Students Association):** *AD Silvia Decja*
 - ❖ AD Decja has not heard anything from the University but will send a follow-up email to them.

VII. New Business:

- ❖ Commissioner Ken Alce spoke on encouraging civic participation within their communities. Promoting the public to participate in the elections, maybe as poll workers or an election judge, but on a non-partisan basis. This can be done through social media (Videos from the commissioners, VC Howard mentions language access for language barriers, an email campaign). AD Decja said in the past that commissioners could take their own video with their cell phones and send them to GOCI for the Communications unit to edit.

VIII. Motion to: Encourage civic participation within our communities by engaging in a campaign to encourage our constituents to become poll workers and election judges and also promote election accessibility.

Motion	1st	2nd	Vote
Encourage civic participation within our communities by engaging in a campaign to encourage our constituents to become poll workers and election judges and promote election accessibility.	Ken Alce	VC Samantha Howard	8Y-0N-0A

IX. Old Business:

- ❖ **By-laws Discussion:**
This topic is still tabled. Waiting for the commissioners to review the draft of the by-laws. Commissioners need to submit their responses by March 31st.

IX. Motions: Adjournment of the Meeting:

Motion	1st	2nd	Vote
Adjournment of the meeting at 7:50 p.m.	Chair Luis McSween	Ken Alce	7Y-0N-0A