

**African American Advisory Council
Summary Report from Senator Mamie Locke, Chair
VA250 Commission Meeting: Wednesday, July 17, 2024**

The VA250 African American Advisory Council met virtually in May, with a full agenda and robust discussion, which included plans for upcoming Juneteenth events, participation in the July 4th celebration, a presentation by VA250 Emerging leader, Alton Coston, and several updates from Advisory Council members.

Some members of the Advisory Council participated in the Independence Day celebration at the State Capitol on July 4th. The New Fellowship Gospel Choir and the DAY Program were both recommended by the Advisory Council and gave standing ovation performances as part of the Grand Ceremony. It is unfortunate that the rain impacted the Square Fair. More diversity in vendors there would have been greatly appreciated.

In the May meeting, we re-emphasized the themes of authenticity and inclusion throughout the commemoration and heard from several members with updates and input on programming at their respective organizations. It was requested that VA250 participate in Juneteenth celebrations and contact information was provided to do so. Unfortunately, this did not materialize and was a missed opportunity for over 4000 in the community to learn more about the Commission and its work.

On behalf of our partners at Fort Monroe, please note the upcoming events on August 22nd-24th for the African Landing Commemoration. This powerful event will feature a symbolic blending of soils from Angola, Virginia Native Tribes, and England, representing the cultural convergence of 1619. Saturday will feature the main commemorative ceremony, with the entire weekend dedicated to commemoration, reconciliation, and healing. The groundbreaking for the African Landing Memorial has been moved to Saturday, August 24th.

Looking ahead, the Council is planning its next meeting and is looking forward to continuing its work to ensure authentic and inclusive representation of throughout the commemoration.

The African American Advisory Council maintains a page on the VA250 website, providing links to past and future meeting agendas and notes. The next meeting will be scheduled in the coming weeks.