

The Lewes African American Heritage Commission

Mission, Vision, Goals

The Lewes African American Heritage Commission was established by the Mayor & City Council on January 13th, 2020.

Mission

To preserve the historical contributions and educate the public regarding the history and contributions made by the African American Community in Lewes, De.

Core Values

Hope, Integrity, Truth, Compassion

Vision

Residents and visitors of all ethnic backgrounds will become aware of the contributions made by the African American residents who once lived in the City of Lewes from slavery to present day, including the prior segregationist laws of the State of Delaware and Jim Crow practices. This should include but not limited to descriptions and locations of African American neighborhoods, churches, persons of significance, schools, small businesses and recreational gathering places, including beaches, and parks and any other relevant information.

Commission Goals

Increase the social, political and economic value of African American Heritage

Encourage written, oral, and photographic documentation along with any relevant artifacts of African American Heritage and to foster appreciation of and for African Americans

Create a process of ongoing documentation of the African American Experience

Collaborate with members of the community, past and present, and increase awareness that African Americans were a thriving, contributing and integral part of the Lewes community

Promote the infusion of Lewes African American history into the curriculum of our local public schools to include after school programs and events through partnerships with the LAAHC and other organizations such as the Lewes Historical Society, Delaware Historical Society and Southern Delaware Alliance for Racial Justice

Create a timeline of important events and activities of the Commission and African American life in Lewes

Create markers and signage to designate areas of the neighborhood as significant to the history of Lewes.

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Obtain funding as necessary to carry on the work of the commission along with sponsorship by the city of Lewes, state representatives and other organizations

The information gleaned from African American residents should be published and easily assessable to the public as any other information disseminated concerning the history of Lewes including but not limited to recordings of oral histories, written brochures, markers, maps, walking and trolley tours or by any other means necessary as future experience and technology dictates

Notify community stakeholders of the existence of the Commission, its make-up and its mandate

- a. Contact past and present residents of the Lewes African American community and/or their families or friends to obtain pictures, articles, artifacts and oral histories
- b. Utilize all available resources to acquire information (social media, newspapers, pictures and photographs, tax maps, archives, historical societies, word of mouth, etc.)
- c. Contact shall be made but not limited to all African American Churches in Lewes and surrounding communities
- d. Contact shall be made but not limited to all African American organizations to promote and seek support for the commission
- e. Contact shall be made but not limited to all HBCU's, Sororities, Fraternities to promote and seek support of the mission
- f. Contact Chamber of Commerce and Tourism organizations to promote the mission
- g. Recruit Volunteers and Students to work projects, research, interview, record and document information as determined by the commission
- h. Develop marketing and communications plans and initiatives through available resources such as social media
- i. Develop talking points for the commissioners about the LAACH

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Develop a list of African American Businesses and their histories

Develop a list of Individual African Americans and their families who lived in the town and their histories

Develop a walking map and app of where the businesses were and where people lived throughout the town of Lewes

Develop a list of influential African Americans and their families who lived in the community

Develop language for markers and work with city with placement and funding

Promote programs and events of the commission and others in the area

Identify potential sites for markers and/or plaques or signage

Please note:

The Goals, Objectives may be amended as necessary by the LAACH as they may change relative to projects

Press Releases and Interviews & Social Media

The Chairperson and/or Vice Chair will be the representatives for Local TV interviews and newspaper articles unless otherwise delegated by the Chair or Vice Chair. The Secretary may submit approved Press Releases, Maintain Social Media Forums and Public Relations coordination with Chair and Vice Chairs prior approval.

Historical Timeline

xx/xx/xxxx : Friendship Baptist Church along with other organizations Proposal to City Council to Rename West 4th Street to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr Blvd. (later changed to Way)

January 13, 2020: Formation of the Lewes African American Historic Commission

xx/xx/xxxx: Ceremony to place honorary sign on West 4th Street

Ceremonial placement of honorary MLK Signage with announcement to the community

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