# NAME OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE

**Enhanced Interpretation Subcommittee, The Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site Advisory Commission (Commission)**

# FUNCTION OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE

## Mission Statement

The role of the Enhanced Interpretation Subcommittee is to make recommendations to the Commission to enhance the visitor experience and interpretive programming that they provide in-person and virtually including better usage of the archives and other resources recommended by the Subcommittee.

# LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE

Elizabeth Clark-Lewis; Maurice Hobson; Heather Huyck; NACE Representative: Superintendent Tara Morrison and Michael J. Donato

Co-Chairs: Barbara Spencer Dunn; Bettye Gardner

# RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE

## Recommendations in reference to challenges suggested by NPS.

**Challenge # 1:** Limited parking at the Council House. Keeps visitation numbers lower; not a new issue, but a challenge.

## Recommendation Number One:

We recommend the following:

1. Utilize Shuttle Buses.
2. Encourage use of public transportation.
3. Collaborate with women’s groups that conduct tours to women’s history sites and conduct webinars in Washington, DC to increase visitation.

Each of these suggestions provides opportunity to promote outside resources that will increase visitorship to the Bethune Home using transportation that does not require parking at the site.

## Recommendation Number Two:

We recommend NPS promote more broadly, on the website, the existence and use of the NPS Passport as a tool for increasing visitation. Encouraging visitors to get their Passport stamped at each site they visit creates an interactive relationship between the visitor and the Park visited.

**Challenge #2:** Building awareness/visitation at the Council House. Mrs. Bethune is becoming more widely known but still does not have the same national awareness as figures such as Frederick Douglass.

## Recommendation Number One:

We recommend that Mary McLeod Bethune’s life and legacy be seen through a multi- dimensional lens that reflects her national impact. Additionally, Mary McLeod Bethune’s Last Will and Testament should be utilized to promote her global impact as she worked to improve the status of women of color around the world. Recent books and other scholarly resources will enhance the NPS Staff’s knowledge of Bethune as a national figure. Additionally, Dr. Ashley Robertson Preston will be teaching a course this fall on Mrs. Bethune at Howard University using her recent book as the focus. A specific, clear, and detailed arrangement has been made with Howard, using this class, and the students will get research credit by interning at the Bethune Home.

## Recommendation Number Two:

At respective conferences, organize panel sessions to discuss the life and legacy of Mary McLeod Bethune.

## Recommendation Number Three:

To create a renewed relationship between African American public history

and **STEAM** education, we recommend meeting the public’s preferred mode of information gathering, by creating podcasts, short films, curating museum exhibitions, and animations to broaden the public’s awareness of Mrs. Bethune.

## Recommendation Number Four:

We recommend replicating NPS docent training incorporating the successes of the collaboration with Kiamsha and Dunbar High School students to increase the number of peer-to-peer trainers that will benefit in the interpretation of the Bethune legacy. The “transfer of knowledge” methods utilized will impact the expansion of the knowledge of Bethune. Recommend also utilizing the senior community as docents, many who have skills in transcribing and digitizing.

## Recommendation Number Five:

For the website, we recommend utilizing computer-generated work such as interactive maps, oral histories, etc. to promote Mrs. Bethune.

# ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

## Recommendation Number Six:

We recommend that the training session for interns begin with an introduction to the National Park System. Day one would be Park Service 101. Kiamsha has an excellent presentation that introduces audiences of all ages to the National Park System and a song entitled “Save the

Children” that the lyrics were changed to reflect “Save the Parklands.” Consider utilizing these resources, especially to engage youth populations, to bring the Bethune legacy to life.

## Recommendation Number Seven:

In addition to Morgan State University, we recommend in class presentations to recruit from Howard, UDC, Bowie and other HBCUs in the region such as Virginia Union, Virginia State and Hampton. Additionally recruit from local colleges and universities such as Georgetown, George Washington, American, George Mason, Catholic and other PWIs in the other.

## Recommendation Number Eight:

We recommend engaging the community in receptions and programs at the Bethune House.