

MIAMI BEACH

COMMITTEE MEMORANDUM

TO: Public Safety and Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee Members

FROM: Eric Carpenter, City Manager

DATE: May 14, 2025

TITLE: DISCUSS DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE, CITYWIDE PLAN TO COMMEMORATE AND ELEVATE BLACK HISTORY MONTH ANNUALLY

RECOMMENDATION

The Administration recommends the Public Safety and Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee (PSNQLC) discuss a comprehensive, citywide plan to commemorate and elevate Black History Month annually, inclusive of the current programming by the Tourism and Culture and Parks and Recreation departments. Staff is committed to continue enhancing programs while working with the Economic Development Department to elevate Black-owned businesses within the City.

BACKGROUND/HISTORY

At the February 26, 2025, City Commission meeting, the Mayor and Commission approved a referral by Commissioner Alex Fernandez, co-sponsored by Commission Tanya K. Bhatt, to the Public Safety and Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee (PSNQLC) to discuss developing a comprehensive, citywide plan to honor and highlight Black History Month each February, beginning in 2026.

The referral asks that the plan include, but not be limited to, the following elements:

1. Celebrating Black History and Role Models: The committees are encouraged to propose initiatives that celebrate the contributions and achievements of Black individuals throughout history, including prominent figures who have shaped the cultural, social, and political landscape of our community and nation. This can involve educational programming, community events, and public art installations, among other things.
2. Supporting Black-Owned Businesses: A significant component of the plan should involve supporting and elevating black-owned businesses within the city. Initiatives could include efforts to increase visibility, foster patronage, and ensure these businesses have the resources and opportunities to thrive.
3. Consultation with the Black Affairs Advisory Committee: It is essential that the plan incorporates active engagement with the Black Affairs Advisory Committee. Their guidance and perspective will be invaluable in ensuring the proposed initiatives are reflective of the committee's mission and goals and larger community.

ANALYSIS

Black History Month is an annual celebration of achievements by African Americans and a time for recognizing their central role in U.S. history. Since 1976, every U.S. president has officially designated the month of February as Black History Month.

The Parks and Recreation Department has been hosting Black History events at its park sites for close to two decades which have included childrens' performances and skits, food tastings, and other activities such as carnival rides, face paintings, and more. Similarly, the Department has also worked with the Hungry Black Man to produce the Soul Vegan Festival on Miami Beach for over 5 years.

Celebrating Miami Beach African American / Black Persons

Since 2022, the City of Miami Beach Black Affairs Advisory Committee (BAAC) has been recognizing Black members of the city who have had a significant impact during Black History month. Members that have been recognized are as follows:

- 2022 Bibi Andrade
- 2023 DeAnne Connolly Graham
- 2024 Miami Beach Detective Christopher Mitchell
- 2025 Tanisha "TeeTee" Terry

In addition, the BAAC has sponsored events outside of Black History Month which include the Muhammad Ali Historical Tribute in partnership with the Washington Avenue BID and Remembering Josephine Baker: An Evening of Jazz in partnership with the The Betsy Hotel. The BAAC also advocates for significant Black events in the city which include but not limited to American Black Film Festival, Miami Takeover, and M.I.A. Legacy.

Cultural programming around Black History continues to include dynamic events produced by the city and its cultural anchor institutions. In January 2025, the City of Miami Beach proudly announced a month-long celebration of Black History Month, with a series of exciting and culturally rich events produced by the Tourism and Culture and Parks and Recreation departments. Events took place throughout February and offered a variety of activities celebrating African American heritage, culture and achievements.

The following list of free events that took place in the City during Black History Month were a combination of City-produced events and events produced by Cultural Anchors and partners.

City-produced events:

Movie in the Park: *Wakanda Forever*

Date: Saturday, Feb. 1, 2025

Location: Altos Del Mar Park, 241 77 Street

Screening of *Wakanda Forever* (rated PG), a tribute to the legacy of the Black Panther franchise. Complimentary popcorn was available.

Black History Night Celebration

Date: Friday, Feb. 7, 2025

Location: North Shore Park Youth Center, 501 72 Street

Free entry and entertainment. \$5 for unlimited rides.

The Parks and Recreation Department hosted a lively celebration of Black History Month. The event kicked off with the City of Miami Beach Black Affairs Advisory Committee presenting the 2025 Community Award to Olympian Twanisha "TeeTee" Terry. It also featured cultural performances by the city's after-school participants, music, rides, food, crafts, and more.

Soul Vegan & Seafood Food Festival

Date: Saturday, Feb. 8, 2025

Location: Lummus Park, Between 6 and 7 Streets on Ocean Drive

The Soul Vegan & Seafood Food Festival returned to Lummus Park, bringing together the best of plant-based African American and Caribbean cuisine. The Parks and Recreation Department partnered with The Hungry Black Man, LLC, to present this free festival featured delicious dishes, live entertainment, wellness activities, and more.

"Never Drop the Ball" Film Screening

Date: Thursday, Feb. 13, 2025

Location: SoundScape Park, 1670 Washington Avenue

The City of Miami Beach OnStage! Program and the City of Miami Beach Black Affairs Advisory Committee presented a screening of *Never Drop the Ball*, a documentary that chronicles the remarkable journey of Black baseball players who helped transform the sport from a segregated pastime into a global phenomenon. The screening was followed by a panel discussion with Dr. Dorothy Jenkins Fields, baseball historian Abel Sanchez, and Michael Anderson and was moderated by Tom Hudson from WLRN News.

Botanical Garden Groove

Date: Thursday, Feb. 27, 2025

Location: Miami Beach Botanical Garden, 2000 Convention Center Drive

To close out Black History Month, the Miami Beach OnStage! Program presented Botanical Garden Groove, which featured live sets from PAPERWATER, DJ Duality, Pressure Point, and DJ Dlux, showcasing an eclectic mix of footwork, Baltimore house, jungle, juke, and more.

Events produced by Miami Beach Cultural Anchors and partners:

White Shadows in Black Art

Date: Tuesday, Jan. 31, 2025

Location: The Wolfsonian-FIU, 1001 Washington Avenue

This talk by Johns Hopkins University historian Minkah Makalani considered how Hughes and Roumain created images of modern Black folk as the focus of political struggle and artistic production, part of a larger current in the "New Negro" movement of the 1920s and '30s, and explored how their correspondence sheds light on the politics of art in the 21st century. Sponsored by the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau's Art of Black Miami initiative.

Jazz Men: An Evening of Music and Conversation with Larry Tyre

Date: Wednesday, Feb. 5, 2025

Location: Miami Beach Jewish Community Center (JCC), 4221 Pine Tree Drive

The event at JCC included a conversation with Larry Tyre, author of *The Jazzmen: How Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong and Count Basie Transformed America* as well as a special performance by Young Musicians Unite Jazz Ensemble.

Kilombo

Date: Friday, Feb. 7, 2025

Location: The Betsy South Beach, 1433 Collins Avenue

The exhibition of large-scale documentary photographs entitled Kilombo, a tribute to the resilience and vitality of the African legacy in Brazil, represented the work of Maria Daniel Balcazar, a prize-winning documentary photographer and visual anthropologist, whose projects focus on the vitality of cultural traditions in the constant remaking of identity.

Third Thursdays: Featuring Hued Songs

Date: Thursday, Feb. 20, 2025

Location: The Bass Museum, 2100 Collins Avenue

Building belonging, empathy, and community for all, Hued Songs performed a tapestry of song and spoken word at The Bass by an all-women cast, centering female resistance, freedom and liberation of self.

Shattered Structures: Looking Back 15 Years to the Earthquake in Haiti

Date: Thursday, Feb. 20, 2025

Location: FIU-Miami Beach Urban Studios, 420 Lincoln Road

The exhibition focused on the architectural legacy and its fragility in Haiti as documented in photographs of buildings taken following the 2010 earthquake in Haiti.

Black Affairs Advisory Committee

The Tourism and Culture Department (TCD) is the liaison to the Black Affairs Advisory Committee (BAAC). Leading up to Black History Month every year, TCD regularly updates BAAC on planned city activations for ideas and feedback. This year, the BAAC was supportive of the planned activations and shared the idea of screening “Never Drop the Ball,” which ultimately came to fruition at a well-attended event at SoundScape Park.

In early February, the BAAC made a motion, shared via LTC No. 056-2025, to provide notice to the City Commission of events throughout the year, which included those for Black History Month and Black Business Month, which takes place in August every year.

Comprehensive, Citywide Plan

Currently, TCD works closely with the Parks and Recreation Department for programming during Black History Month. TCD also works with the Marketing Communications Department to ensure that a press release is composed detailing not only city-produced events, but also wonderful free programming throughout the City. For February 2026 and beyond, TCD and Parks and Recreation departments are prepared to continue these efforts. The Economic Development Department will also continue its programming that include supporting Black-owned businesses within the City.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

Does this Ordinance require a Business Impact Estimate? (FOR ORDINANCES ONLY)

The Business Impact Estimate (BIE) was published on .

See BIE at: <https://www.miamibeachfl.gov/city-hall/city-clerk/meeting-notices/>

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

CONCLUSION

The Administration recommends the Public Safety and Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee to discuss a comprehensive, citywide plan to commemorate and elevate Black History Month annually, inclusive of current programming by the Tourism and Culture and Parks and Recreation Departments. The Economic Development Department will also continue its programming that includes supporting Black-owned businesses within the City.

Applicable Area

Citywide

Is this a “Residents Right to Know” item, pursuant to City Code Section 2-17?

No

Is this item related to a G.O. Bond Project?

No

Was this Agenda Item initially requested by a lobbyist which, as defined in Code Sec. 2-481, includes a principal engaged in lobbying? No

If so, specify the name of lobbyist(s) and principal(s):

Department

Tourism and Culture

Sponsor(s)

Commissioner Alex Fernandez

Co-sponsor(s)

Commissioner Tanya K. Bhatt

Condensed Title

Discuss Developing a Comprehensive Citywide Plan to Commemorate Black History Month