

Reparations Committee  
Thursday, August 5, 2021  
Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center, G300 9:00 AM

## Minutes

### 1. CALL TO ORDER/DECLARATION OF A QUORUM

The meeting was called to order at 9:07 a.m. Members present were Chair and Councilmember Peter Braithwaite, Councilmember Bobby Burns, Bonnie Lockhart, Claire McFarland Barber, Robin Rue Simmons, and Carlis Sutton. Councilmember Devon Reid was absent. Staff members, Kim Richardson, Nicholas Cummings, and Tasheik Kerr were also present.

#### A. Introduction of Members

The Committee members shared their background and reasons for joining the Committee. Councilmember Peter Braithwaite acknowledged the support provided to the reparations process by Dino Robinson of Shorefront Legacy Center and Kamm Howard, National Co-Chair of the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (N'COBRA).

### 2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Sebastian Nalls noted \$25,000 is not enough of a down payment on an entry level home in Evanston. Nalls requested data behind those who indicated that they do not want cash payment. Nalls proposed the Committee survey black residents. Nalls also inquired whether the Restorative Housing Program payments would be taxable.

Bennett Johnson shared that it's important to have a housing program, however, reparations are about repair and should not be limited to housing. Johnson reviewed the Freedman Plan which calls for funds dedicated to education, healthcare, venter capital, and truth and reconciliation. Johnson also noted funds need to be independent from the electoral process.

Renee Pitter proposed examining health outcome as it relates to reparations. Renee noted health and wellness are tied to wealth creation and generational financial stability.

Tina Paden mentioned that the meeting should be hybrid. Tina shared that she is an advocate for cash payment and would like answers to how much is in the Reparations Fund and where the funds are being held. Tina also noted the public

should know who is selecting the applicants and that senior citizens should be prioritized.

### **3. DISCUSSION**

#### **A. Overview of the Open Meetings Act**

Corporation Counsel, Nicholas Cummings provided an overview of the open meetings Act. For a meeting to be official, a quorum of four members needs to be established. Cummings also noted that a group or gathering of three members will constitute a meeting. This includes communication amongst members. Those communications are also subject to the Freedom of Information Act.

#### **B. Review of the Restorative Housing Program Guidelines**

Deputy City Manager, Kimberly Richardson, reviewed the Restorative Housing Program Guidelines. Claire McFarland Barber inquired about the process for applicants that meet the qualifications but funds have been spent. Richardson responded that those applications would remain in the queue. If more funding is made available, they would be in line for funding. Carlis Sutton noted he is concerned that many seniors would not be interested in home purchase nor mortgage assistance. Carlis Sutton also shared he was concerned that payment would only be made to those contractors that are registered with the City. Alderman Simmons noted that the Committee would work on providing residents with a directory of contractors and persons who are involved in real estate transactions.

#### **C. Implementation Calendar of the Restorative Housing Program Deputy City Manager,**

Kimberly Richardson, noted staff has been working on the implementation of the program to ensure the process is fair and transparent. Richardson also mentioned that several partnerships are being developed to help with the execution of the application process.

As it pertains to the application, Richardson shared the application would be online to ensure the security of applicants' documents. Staff is also planning to conduct several workshops to educate residents on the process and the application. The application would be made available Tuesday, September 21. Applicants that qualify as an Ancestor would receive the first review. Staff will provide the Committee with a checklist indicating applicants met the qualifications.

Former Councilmember Robin Rue Simmons suggested the Committee develop a list of community organizations for Staff to outreach. Claire McFarland Barber suggested utilizing volunteers to help elders fill out the online application.

Councilmember Peter Braithwaite recommended there be a 45-day window for the application. Carlis Sutton inquired about how staff plans to conduct outreach efforts and whether applicants would receive a confirmation that their application was submitted.

#### D. Committee Goal Setting Exercise

Councilmember Braithwaite opened the floor for Committee feedback. Bonnie Lockhart inquired about the process to keep residents informed about the informational meetings. Carlis Sutton noted the need to create a sense of trust with the community. Carlis suggested members of the Committee make themselves available to speak to groups meeting on reparations.

### **4. COMMUNICATIONS**

#### A. Reparations Financial Donation Report

Corporation Counsel, Nicholas Cummings, summarized state law (35 ILCS 120/11), which prohibits the City from sharing reasonable statistics concerning the operation of the 3% tax or share allocations received from the Cannabis Tax due to there being fewer than 5 adult-use cannabis dispensaries in Evanston.

Tasheik noted the City has received \$25,309.29 in donations to the Reparations Fund (Fund 177).

Councilmember Peter Braithwaite mentioned that the Stakeholders Authority, which is a group of residents from black community organizations, will oversee the management of the Evanston Reparations Community Funds that are collected by the Evanston Foundation.

### **5. ADJOURNMENT**

Councilmember Braithwaite motioned the meeting be adjourned. The meeting adjourned at 10:28 a.m.