

Reparations Committee
Thursday, November 4th, 2021
Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center, G300 9:00 AM

Minutes

Present: Councilmember Peter Braithwaite, Councilmember Bobby Burns, Robin Rue Simmons, Carlis Sutton, Bonnie Lockhart, and Claire McFarland Barber

Absent: Councilmember Devon Reid

Other Present: Kimberly Richardson, Deputy City Manager; and Tasheik Kerr, Assistant to City Manager

CALL TO ORDER/DECLARATION OF A QUORUM

The meeting was called to order at 9:01 a.m. by Chair Councilmember Braithwaite.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No one was present for Public Forum.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Committee member Claire McFarland Barber, seconded by Committee member Simmons to approve the minutes for the October 7, 2021, meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

DISCUSSION

Restorative Housing Update

Councilmember Braithwaite mentioned the final day for eligibility was November 5th at 11:59 pm. Deputy City Manager, Ms. Richardson, stated that there was 398 applicants total, and on the morning of Nov 4th, it increased to 446 applicants. Additionally, she noted that 349 of those applicants are direct descendants. Committee member Barber inquired about the process after residents received confirmation of their application. Councilmember Braithwaite recommended waiting until Deputy City Manager Ms. Richardson gets the final number of applicants. Committee member Simmons noted that the Committee had committed to a deadline, and there should be a set time to inform the community regarding the next steps.

Committee member Simmons suggested the Committee do more to assist residents in finding documents. Deputy City Manager Ms. Richardson responded that over 100 applicants attended the office hours staffed by Library employees and that staff has

been creative in helping residents find documentation. Committee member Simmons recommended further outreach to Shorefront Legacy Center and the Evanston History Center. Committee member Lockhart mentioned it might be difficult to commit to a timeline due to residents having issues finding documentation.

Committee member Sutton suggested staff looked solely at the Ancestor applicants for the first distribution. Councilmember Burns suggested the Committee set a deadline to allow applicants to correct deficiencies within their application and to make it clear to residents that this is not the only opportunity to receive reparations benefit.

Reparation Financial Donation Report

Tasheik shared that as of November, the City received \$31,410 in donations to the Reparations Fund. Committee member Sutton inquired whether the donations would be considered for distribution. Councilmember Braithwaite explained the priority is to utilize those funds already budgeted for this program.

Reparations Donation Working Group Update

Committee member Simmons mentioned that Committee members Barber and Lockhart, and two other Evanston residents are supporting the Donations Working group. Committee member Simmons shared that the group discussed ways to obtain private contributions and that the group would prepare some data points for studying the trajectory of how reparations could help families as a way to encourage participation.

Evanston Community Day Building Black Wealth Through Homeownership Workshops

Councilmember Braithwaite stated the importance of the community workshops in helping homeowners with their concerns. These workshops were brought to the Evanston Community in 2019 by then Councilmember Simmons.

The Committee heard presentations from members of the Dearborn Realtors Board including Gwendolyn Newton (President), Senina Ellis Jones (Vice President), and Diane Simmons (Chair of Community Day). Gwendolyn shared that the Dearborn Realtors Board was created in 1941 out of the need for African American/ Black realtors to have a home. The Dearborn Realtors Board provides education and empowerment to build black wealth. Gwendolyn noted the various housing-related workshops the board will provide at the upcoming Community Day.

Presentation by National African American Reparations Commission (NAARC)

Dr. Ron Daniels, President of the Institute of the Black World 21st Century, and Cam Howard, Co-chairperson of NAARC, affirmed how important Evanston's reparations

efforts are for blacks in Evanston. Mr. Howard stated there will be pushback with the reparations process, and that the City of Evanston has to push through. NAARC will continue to provide support to the Reparations Committee.

Dr. Ron Daniels and Cam Howard also announced that a national symposium on reparations will be convening in Evanston from December 9, 2021 through December 11, 2021. Speakers from across the country and world would be attending the symposium.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Councilmember Braithwaite. Meeting ended at 10:03 am.