



## **Reparations Committee**

**Thursday, September 1, 2022 @ 9:00 AM**

Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center, G300

**COMMITTEE MEMBER  
PRESENT:**

Bobby Burns, Councilmember, Devon Reid, Councilmember, Robin Rue Simmons, Committee Member, Bonnie Lockhart, Member, Claire McFarland Barber, Committee Member, and Carlis Sutton, Committee Member

**COMMITTEE MEMBER  
ABSENT:**

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Tasheik Kerr, Assistant to the City Manager, Kimberly Richardson, Deputy City Manager, and Krissie Harris, Councilmember

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

The meeting was called to order at 9:06 a.m. by Chair Robin Rue Simmons.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

It was moved by Councilmember Reid and seconded by Committee Member Barber to approve the July 13, 2022 Reparations Committee meeting minutes.

**3. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**A. Introduction of Research on Evanston Reparations**

It was motioned by Councilmember Reid to introduce the research study on Evanston Reparations.

Chair Simmons introduced Dr. Alvin B. Tillery, Jr, Professor of Political Science and Director of the Center for the Study of Diversity and Democracy at Northwestern University. Dr. Tillery announced that his department would be working with community partners to provide a comprehensive study on how residents view the reparations program. A survey will be distributed over the fall months.

Chair Simmons acknowledged Councilmember Reid for working to make Juneteenth an official holiday for the City. She also acknowledged Councilmember Burns for spearheading efforts to acquire parcels of land for affordable housing in the Fifth Ward and for honoring JoAnn Avery, of Family Focus Evanston.

Chair Simmons announced Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, of the Alpha Mu Chapter at Northwestern University, had conveyed their interest in a Reparations Town Hall and physical site restoration on October 22, 2022.

#### **4. DISCUSSION**

##### **A. Update on Cannabis Licenses**

Paul Zalmezak, Economic Development Manager, announced the State of Illinois issued 119 conditional licenses for marijuana dispensaries. The Economic Development division proactively outreach to those licensees by providing a letter from Mayor Biss and a zoning map indicating where dispensaries could be located in the City.

Councilmember Burns shared that proactive outreach methods are vital to getting a dispensary in the City. The most successful communities are those that do adequate outreach to showcase their City is welcoming and that there is City Council support.

Councilmember Reid responded that more work needs to be done to make Evanston a welcoming City for individuals purchasing marijuana and for dispensaries to want to locate in Evanston. Committee member Barber added that individuals need to be informed about the various laws surrounding marijuana that may be applicable after purchase.

##### **B. Ancestral Acknowledgment**

Chair Simmons recommended future Reparations Committee Meetings open with an Ancestral Acknowledgement to center the committee members' minds around the work of reparations. The Ancestral Acknowledgement would be read on a rotating basis by each Committee Member beginning with Committee Member Sutton.

It was moved by Committee Member Barber and seconded by Councilmember Reid, to adapt the Ancestral Acknowledgement. Motion passed unanimously.

##### **C. Request for Qualifications (RFQ): Restorative Housing Program Administration**

Chair Simmons recalled the City launched the Restorative Housing Program with Community Partners for Affordable Housing (CPAH), an organization that does housing-related work with the City. The Committee is now moving forward with a competitive process through an RFQ to provide opportunities for interested parties to aid in the program's administration.

##### **D. Deceased Reparations Recipients**

Chair Simmons noted the passing of six reparations recipients. The Committee would need to discuss how to proceed with this matter because the goal of the reparations program is to repair and build intergenerational wealth.

Corporation Counsel, Nicholas E. Cummings, recalled that one of the supplemental services offered to Ancestor recipients is estate planning. Mr. Cummings recommended recipients be educated on estate planning. Mr. Cummings noted the process could become complex if there are multiple heirs or a will. The City could deposit the funds with the estate should go to probate court.

Chair Simmons inquired whether the City could outreach to recipients and have the recipients identify an heir. Mr. Cummings responded that this could be allowed. Committee Member Mr. Sutton noted he had received concerns from the community regarding deceased recipients. He also shared that he supports asking individuals to identify an heir.

Staff was directed to draft a beneficiary form to be sent to Ancestors and Direct Descendants. Committee Member Barber recommended sending a condolence letter to the deceased's family.

**5. CONSIDERATION**

**A. Reparations Town Hall**

Chair Simmons noted Dr. Nabors had extended an invitation to host the Reparations Town Hall at Second Baptist Church. It was decided that the Reparations Town Hall would be held on Saturday, October 22, 2022.

**6. COMMUNICATION**

**A. Reparations Financial Donation Report**

Assistant to the City Manager, Tasheik Kerr, noted that the City had received \$35,643 in donations to the Reparations Fund. Chair Simmons thanked Soul and Smoke, an Evanston BBQ restaurant, for contributing to the Reparations Fund. It was moved by Committee Member Barber and seconded by Chair Simmons to accept the donations report.

Chair Simmons noted the less than ideal amount of donations received by the City and mentioned the Evanston Reparations Community Fund held at the Evanston Community Foundation. The Reparations Stakeholders Authority of Evanston governs the funds.

Councilmember Reid suggested the Committee reconsider its vote at the September meeting to disburse funds incrementally in the amount of \$25,000 to include a provision that funds be transferred from the General Fund into the Reparations Fund. This will hasten the pace of distribution and make it less clear how much the City is receiving from the one dispensary.

**7. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Ms. Ndonga Muboyayi inquired whether the City or the State of Illinois is holding the cannabis licenses and whether any red tape prevents another dispensary from locating in Evanston. Ndonga also asked about other programs beyond housing.

Ms. Tina Paden recommended that the Reparations Committee meetings be hybrid to allow seniors and immune-compromised individuals to participate. She also shared her interest in hearing from Mr. Cummings regarding cash payments. Ms. Paden inquired about the next steps regarding those who would not be able to use the benefits under the Restorative Housing program. Ms. Paden asked about the City's expenses for all reparations-related activities.

Ms. Vanessa Johnson- McCoy noted some individuals were confused by the letters. Ms.

McCoy also noted individuals were confused by the role of the banks and recommended the banks attend the town hall meeting to present their offerings.

Mr. Bennett Johnson informed the Committee of his Freedom Plan and recommended the Committee put together a PR campaign to raise funds. Mr. Johnson recalled a conference around reparations held at Northwestern in 1999.

Ms. Brenda Greer mentioned she would not be able to take advantage of the benefits of the Restorative Housing Program and that she would not be able to pass the benefits to an heir.

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 10:23 AM.