



Reparations Committee

Thursday, October 05, 2023

Hybrid Morton Civic Center, Parasol Room, 4th Floor, Room 4900 9:00 AM

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Council Member Krissie Harris; Chair Robin Rue Simmons;
Committee Member Carlis Sutton; Committee Member Claire
McFarland Barber; Council Member Bobby Burns

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Council Member Devon Reid; Committee Member Bonnie Lockhart

STAFF PRESENT:

Tasheik Kerr, Assistant to City Manager

1. CALL TO ORDER/DECLARATION OF A QUORUM

The meeting was called to order. No declaration of quorum

A. Ancestral Acknowledgement

Committee Member Carlis Sutton read the Ancestral Acknowledgment.

B. TESTIMONIALS

Testimonial One: This person went to Fleetwood-Jourdain Community Center to fill out the paperwork and was told that she did not qualify for the program. Thus, she feels as if she has been wronged.

Testimonial Two: They are curious as to when future applications to a reparations program will be opened.

Testimonial Three: They appreciate the effort that the Committee has put in to put forth the reparations program. The efforts are going towards helping, not hurting, the community.

Testimonial Four: She feels as though she has experienced things within the Black community that have contributed to her setback. One of those experiences was in the 60s,

going to school across the City. She felt this experience hindered her educational growth. She would like to say she was misinformed about what the requirements were for the Housing Reparations program. She hopes that the application opens up soon.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Approval of the August 3, 2023 Reparations Committee Meeting Minutes

No action there is no quorum

B. Approval of the August 3, 2023 Reparations Committee Meeting Minutes

No action there is no quorum

3. DISCUSSION

A. Update on Projects Managed by CPAH

The projects handled by CPAH will soon be transferred to Reparations Construction Administration. The Reparations Construction Administration will start on October 10, and a more detailed report will be shared at the next meeting.

B. Ancestor Reparations Recipients Disbursement Update

City staff has met with 105 ancestor recipients out of the 139 qualified recipients. 14 recipients would like to take additional time to receive their benefits.

Council Member Burns inquires if updates are being sent to Ancestors and Descendants as well. He suggests sending an email out periodically with the updates in the body of the email.

Chair Simmons suggests sending updates on a monthly basis. Additionally, a location for a physical posting location will be determined to post agendas.

C. Developing a Selection Process for Direct Descendants

There are two possible options to select the order for distribution for Direct Descendants:

1. Manual option that was completed last time for the ancestors
2. Use a computer generated program to randomly order the Descendants to create the order.

No action can be taken at this time but will be chosen at next Reparation's meeting with quorum. Committee will reach out to the IT department and ask Descendants what they prefer.

Additionally, Descendants will choose which option they prefer in order to better plan how the distribution can go forth as smoothly as possible.

4. CONSIDERATION

5. COMMUNICATION

A. **Reparations Construction Administrator (Start date - October 10.)**

The Chicago Community Trust provided a \$100,000 grant for a staff person to assist residents who opted for any type of home improvement. The person chosen, Michael Dykes, is a 5th ward resident with 30 years of experience. Mr. Dykes starts on October 10.

Chair Simmons also re-emphasizes that whichever choice a recipient chooses is their choice. There are no restrictions on who can carry out the decision. For example, if an individual chooses home improvement they have the option to choose how that home improvement gets carried out.

B. **Recap of Reparations Dinner**

Mr. Sutton shares that at the dinner recipients received their plaques and acknowledgments. He would like to commend the staff for the wonderful job they did and the food. He also notes that the acknowledgment is very important in this Reparations program because no matter the criticism the program received, the harm being acknowledged is more than what most are doing.

Council Member Harris states who catered the dinner; Heckie's, Jennifer's Edibles, CNW, and Claire's and the Jerk Pit.

Chair Simmons thanks Ms. Tasheik Kerr, and she states how much positive feedback she has received.

C. **Reparations Financial Report**

As of October 1, 2023, the City has received \$51,207.22 in donations to the Reparations Fund. As of October 1, the City has received \$2,756,993.51 in Real Estate Transfer Tax revenue.

D. **Reparations Working Groups Update**

Education: Henry Wilkens and Professor Kihana Ross shared a report about the Black Evanstonian's community feelings about education in Evanston.

Economic Development: They are meeting on October 10 virtually. They will be hosting speakers from the state and the county about initiatives that have supported Black businesses and entrepreneurs.

Housing: At the next meeting they will be voting and determining the priorities on what the housing initiative will focus on next.

All of these meetings are open to the public

E. Upcoming Reparations Working Group Meetings

Educational Initiatives: October 3, 2023

Economic Development: October 10, 2023

Housing: October 19, 2023

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

Public Comment One: Evanston resident reads poem they wrote expressing how they try to silence her voice when trying to uplift Black people.

Public Comment Two: Individual asks how she would determine where she is on the list. Chair Simmons responds that a letter will be sent out to all direct descendants to choose how the order of the process will go. Additionally, for the next meeting they will try to get the CFO on the agenda to share.

Public Comment Three: They first shared they received a verification letter back in August and they are curious about what the significance of the Unique ID number. Additionally, they have learned a lot through the Reparation's program that even their parents didn't share. It was terrible how we were treated before.

Public Comment Four: They want to ensure that they are on the Direct Descendant list because they do not recall seeing any emails.

Public Comment Five: Most of their questions were answered during the meeting but they also want to add support for things previously mentioned. They emphasized Council Member Burns' idea of two lists to expedite the Direct Descendant process. Additionally, they are in favor of the manual process. He also proposes for an joyous event for the reparations program similar to the reparation's dinner and for an information gathering location to be somewhere like Fleetwood or somewhere in the Fifth Ward.

Public Comment Six: They believe the entire process should be controlled by the Black community. Additionally, they claim Evanston should set up a real estate transfer fund and a venture capital group that would give money to businesses. Also, they share that it is important for Black people to share their stories.

Public Comment Seven: This individual was born and raised in Evanston. He is here to represent his sister. He has received his reparations check. However, his sister has not yet received her check. He wants to know why she has not received her check yet.

Public Comment Eight: They ask where the millions of dollars in donations are going. With this large amount of money coming in the process should be going a lot faster. Chair Simmons responds that 100% of the money is going to the community, those who have received their benefits. Every dollar is transparent. She states the money is not donations but from the real estate transfer fund, and the money from the dispensary.

Public Comment Nine: They are advocating on behalf of family members for the committee to reopen the application for Reparations. They state the notification for this program happened just right before the pandemic then everything closed. Therefore, they believe there are a lot

of loose logistics that would be alleviated if those who were not able to do the process before had the opportunity to do so now.

Public Comment Ten: They did not have a chance to submit an application they thought that they did but they did not. However, they state there is a need for their family to receive reparations as she has great great grandparents from Evanston.

Response from Assistant City Attorney: They are aware of the Weidman situation and they are working on their case.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Simmons adjourns the meeting