



Reparations Committee

Thursday, November 02, 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 Bonnie Lockhart

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

ABSENT:

Council Member Devon Reid; Committee Member Claire McFarland Barber; Council Member Bobby Burns

STAFF PRESENT:

Tasheik Kerr, Assistant to City Manager; Jim Milano, Information Technology Division; Michael Dyke, Reparations Construction Administrator; Mayor Daniel Biss

1. CALL TO ORDER/DECLARATION OF A QUORUM

The meeting was called to order.

A. Ancestral Acknowledgement

Council Member Krissie Harris read the Ancestral Acknowledgment

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Approval of the July 6, 2023 Reparations Committee Listening Session Minutes

Council member Harris moved to approve the meeting minutes. Committee member Sutton seconds. The motion passes.

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

Council member Harris moved to approve the meeting minutes. Committee member Sutton

seconds. The motion passes.

C. **Approval of the October 05, 2023 Reparations Committee Meeting Minutes**

Council member Harris moved to approve the meeting minutes. Committee member Sutton seconds. The motion passes.

3. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mayor Daniel Biss - His maternal grandmother was a recipient of reparations. In 1944, there was deportation to Auschwitz so all four of his grandparents were enslaved. Fortunately, they survived. His grandmother then immigrated to Israel. Few decades later the German government instituted a reparations program. At first, they rejected an idea of taking money from the German government but pushed back knowing the acceptance of the money does not equate to forgiveness to the German government or is even a replacement for the people they lost. The reparations program is just a step towards building repair.

Public Comment Two - She shared that one of the things that allows for Black people to be dehumanized is the lack of knowledge about who we are as African people. She also shared at the last listening session that there be something held to unify the community. She said the invitation to the Epistemic Reparations meeting was a slap in the face because epistemic means scientific knowledge as opposed to practical knowledge. Chair Simmons offered to speak more with her after the reparations committee meeting.

Public Comment Three - She first acknowledged and thanked Chair Simmons for bringing up the option of using a Black Bank. She also requested that moving forward the City does not just pay a check but also stops the behavior that continues to be discriminatory in the city. She hopes that the city does not just give a check and continues discrimination.

Public Comment Four - She shared that the senior community she participates in is very confused about what is going on. Many do not understand the distribution. She requested to be more transparent or more "de-confusing".

Public Comment Five - She shared that she is somehow proud of the reparations program. Her issue is that when she went to sign her mother up for the program she was told she could not because her mother did not have an ID so instead she signed herself up. Since then she has been asking why her mother can not be given her number because she feels as though her mother deserves it more than her. Additionally, she is confused as to why, as a reparations program, they can dictate what she does with the check since she is the harmed so why would the city dictate her needs. Chair Simmons offered to speak with the individual after the meeting with Ms. Kerr

Public Comment Six - She asked when will the process start for direct descendants? Committee Member Lockhart responded that a survey was recently sent out to the Direct Descendants and the results will be discussed later in the meeting.

Public Comment Seven - They asked if the program is going to only consider people who bought homes or also people who can only rent homes in certain parts of Evanston.

Public Comment Eight - They missed the deadline for the descendant survey. Will the deadline be extended?

The survey deadline will not be extended.

Public Comment Nine - They asked how soon will the disbursements be available for the descendants?

Public Comment Ten - They asked how soon will the disbursements be available for the descendants?

The date of disbursements for direct descendants is to be determined

Public Comment Eleven - They lost their mom in May. Where should she submit her form for her rewards?

If they submitted a beneficiary form then it's indicated there and they should speak with Ms. Kerr

Public Comment Twelve - When will the reparations program be reopened?

No current plans to reopen the program

Public Comment Thirteen - She asked where she is on the disbursement list as a direct descendant.

That is still to be determined.

Public Comment Fourteen - When is the next sign up? Also, is there option for people out of state

Public Comment Fifteen - They asked what makes you a candidate for reparations

Public Comment Sixteen - They just said thank you

Public Comment Seventeen - They requested to know their disbursement order

Public Comment Eighteen - They asked if the fund for Northwestern's Ryan Field project be recouped by the reparations initiative.

Public Comment Nineteen - They asked if the committee sees a lack of a quorum as an issue.

At the November 2023 meeting there is a quorum

Public Comment Twenty - They thank First Repair and all the people who volunteer for Evanston Reparations

Chair Simmon thanked them and clarified that First Repair does not do any City of Evanston work

4. CONSIDERATION

5. COMMUNICATION

A. Direct Descendants Selection Process Survey Results

Based on survey results, the distribution order for Direct Descendants will be done electronically.

The IT department demonstrated the electronic process that will be used for the direct descendant process. Chair Simmons requested that as soon as January to move forward in the process to have the random selection.

B. Request for the Deposit of Reparations Funds into a Black Bank

Clayton City of Evanston Budget Manager: The City's financial policies require that whatever bank the Reparations Committee promises a 105% collateral on the deposit. Currently, the city receives 5.5% interest on their checking account for the Reparations fund. If the year ends with \$3 billion dollars then there is about \$165,000 a year in interest through the current bank.

Chair Simmons shared that Liberty One is a Black owned bank in Chicago that has been suggested. She requested to seek 3 Black owned banks and come back to the committee with options. Council member Harris also asked to look into a local credit union Trinity United Church of Christ and Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Incorporated has a credit union as well.

C. Reparations Program Construction Admin Mike Dykes

Mr. Michael (Mike) Dykes was recently hired as the reparations program construction administrator. Their main function is to ensure the recipients that choose home improvement get the best service for their buck.

He also clarified that other Black residents (non-recipients) can also call and ask for contracting guidance.

Contact: mdykes@cityofevanston.org

D. Reparations Newsletter

The Reparation Newsletter has a lot of the answers to the questions that have been asked at committee meetings

E. Ancestor Reparations Recipients Disbursement Update

As of November 1st, Staff has met with 119 ancestor recipients, 12 of those 119 have requested additional time to select which benefits they choose.

F. Reparations Financial Report

As of November 1, 2023, the City has received \$51,207.22 in donations to the Reparations Fund. As of November 1, the City has received \$2,934,993.51 in Real Estate Transfer Tax revenue

G. December 7: Reparations Committee Meeting - To be held at Fleetwood-Jourdain Community Center

At the December meeting action on the selection process and date for the direct descendants.

H. Upcoming Meeting

- Reparations Committee Meeting - December 7
- Educational Initiatives Working Group - November 7; December 5
- Economic Development Working Group - November 14; December 12
- Housing Working Group - November 16; December 21

6. ADJOURNMENT

Committee member Lockhart moved to adjourn the meeting. Council member Harris seconded. The Meeting was adjourned.