



Reparations Subcommittee Meeting
Friday, May 15, 2020
12:00 P.M
Electronic Meeting
Minutes

Called to order/Declaration of Quorum:

The meeting was called to order at 12:03 p.m. by Chair Alderman Robin Rue Simmons. Committee members Aldermen Ann Rainey and Peter Braithwaite were also present. Staff members Kimberly Richardson, Nicholas Cummings, and Tasheik Kerr were also present.

Approval of Minutes

It was moved by Alderman Rainey, seconded by Alderman Braithwaite, to approve the minutes of the March 6, 2020 meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion

Alderman Simmons thanked those who had contributed to the reparations process. She shared that other local and state governments have modeled their reparations policy after the City of Evanston. Alderman Simmons also noted that past Reparations Subcommittee meetings had been cancelled due to the pandemic. Future meetings would be held virtually. Residents are encouraged to utilize the feedback tools on the Reparations' webpage.

Alderman Simmons noted that housing has repeatedly come up as a remedy recommendation in discussions. She added that black homeownership and black residents have declined. Alderman Simmons also acknowledged the memo provided by Clerk Reid. The memo identified and described the history of housing challenges and discrimination in Evanston. Alderman Simmons noted that housing will help retain black residents and invite and welcome back residents that have been displaced. Housing will also help with black wealth building.

Alderman Simmons reviewed the Homebuying Program memo prepared by staff. The memo comprised of the Committee's objectives, historical background, and housing programs for considerations.

The Committee discussed the Homebuyer Assistance Benefit Program with regard to eligibility and terms and conditions. Kimberly noted that the policy was a rough framework and more technical language would need to accompany the document. Nicholas suggested looking at the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) model. Kimberly noted that the Committee would need to decide if the money would be a loan or a direct benefit with no strings attached. Kimberly referenced the City of Chicago's Employee Assistance Program whereby the program pays the down payment assistance directly to the bank at closing. Alderman Simmons added that the money should not be used as an opportunity to flip a house. The money should be used to strengthen residents that are committed to remaining and investing in the community.

Former Alderman, Mrs. Holmes, suggested the Committee review the City's past housing programs including the partnership with the Evanston Housing Coalition.

Alderman Rainey mentioned that she would like to add historical context to the Homebuying Program memo around discriminatory housing policies and the campaign to end discrimination in rental properties.

Clerk Reid shared that he was concerned with the criteria that limited individuals to the west end of Evanston under the Homebuyer Assistance Benefit Program. He noted the criteria would continue the pattern of segregation. Alderman Simmons responded that the reparations program is specific and targeted. Reparations cannot be a catch all program. The remedy should be in the community that was harmed.

Alderman Braithwaite noted that the west end is a place to start. Nicolas noted that the edibility requirements have not been reviewed by the law department.

Alderman Rainey noted that there is a limited amount of money and housing would be one of the largest expenses. There would be a limited amount of projects. Alderman Simmons added that budgetary and other policies need to be more equitable so that there is not a need to target and support the black community.

Communication

Alderman Simmons stated that the Reparations Town Hall is scheduled to be held on May 21 at 7 P.M. The meeting will be held virtually via Zoom. Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee would be speaking at the event.

Public comment

Three individuals spoke via phone. It was suggested that the Committee consider a Community Land Trust model. It was also mentioned that those who currently rent would be left out due to not having the money to buy a home.

Ndona Muboyayi announced there was a newly formed private Facebook group called "Our Village the Black Evanstonians." The group is composed of members whose families have been in Evanston for generations and black Evanstonians that have made

positive contributions to the community. The group meets to discuss issues that affect their community and to come up with solutions.

Clerk Reid noted that he would like to clarify his comment made earlier regarding the criteria limiting individuals to the west end of Evanston. He shared that the program does not solve the issue regarding reparations. He noted that the program should address the harms. Individuals should be given support to buy houses where they like in Evanston.

Adjournment

It was moved by Alderman Braithwaite to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 8:01p.m.