

Reparations Commission

SUMMARY/ACTION MINUTES

Wednesday, November 13, 2024

6:00 p.m.

Location: Alameda County Training & Education Center
Hayward/Union City Room
125 – 12th Street, 4th Floor, Oakland, CA 94607

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by the Chair, Debra Gore Mann at 6:05 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Members present:

1. Leo Bazile
2. Artavia Berry
3. Alan Dones
4. Debra Gore Mann
5. Phillip S. Gardiner
6. Shenita Hurskin
7. Carolyn Johnson
8. James Knowles
9. Larry McClendon
10. Brandon Sass
11. Shadrick Small

Excused: Jesse Burleson, Lori Cox, Vickie Stephens, Natasha Tripplett

III. Public Comment (items not listed on the agenda)

None.

IV. Approval of Minutes – Action Item

A motion was made by Commissioner Bazile and seconded by Commissioner McClendon, to approve the minutes of October 9, 2024, as submitted.

Ayes: Bazile, Berry, Dones, Gardiner, Gore Mann, Knowles, McClendon, Sass, Small

Noes:

Excused: Burleson, Cox, Stephens, Tripplett

Abstain: Hurskin, Johnson

Motion passed 9/0

V. Commissioner Outreach Fact Sheet – Informational Item

[Attachment](#)

Chair Gore-Mann presented a draft of the Commissioner Outreach Fact Sheet. The document would serve as a one-page resource for community engagement, summarizing the objectives, scope, and principles of the Reparations Commission. It includes the Commission's purpose, established goals from the Board of Supervisors, and principles of reparations defined by the UN, emphasizing a holistic approach beyond financial compensation.

Key discussion points

- **Edits:** Updating the deadline for the draft action plan and possibly including the budget details.
- **Budget:** Concerns about including specific budget amounts and how they would be used, public interpretation and sensitivity around funding allocations.
- **Use and Distribution:** Commissioners discussed whether the document should be used strictly for talking points or actively distributed electronically and in print. Suggestions included creating a version suitable for external sharing with appropriate approvals.

The next steps involve incorporating feedback, finalizing the document, and voting on its approval and distribution at a subsequent meeting.

VI. Commissioner Outreach Form – Action Item

[Attachment](#)

Chair Gore-Mann presented a draft of the proposed Commissioner Outreach Form. The purpose is intended for commissioners to report on their community engagement activities. The form would track when and where commissioners are engaging with the public, the nature of the engagement, and the topics discussed.

Key points include:

- Tracks public engagement to monitor the commission's outreach efforts.
- Encourages reporting back from forums, town halls, or other events in an official capacity.
- Suggestions included digitizing the form for easier storage, archiving, and adding features like digital signatures.
- The form should act as a guide rather than a strict checklist, with flexibility to summarize discussions when necessary.
- Some commissioners suggested reducing the amount of data collected and clarifying its purpose.

The form is meant for official engagements rather than casual or personal conversations. The primary function is to provide insight into public interest areas and avoid duplication of effort across engagements.

The form will be digitized, and members will implement streamlined data collection methods. The Commissioners are supportive of the form as a tool for better tracking and organization.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bazile and seconded by Commissioner Sass to update and approve the use of the Commission Outreach Form by the Commission.

Ayes: Bazile, Berry, Dones, Gardiner, Gore Mann, Hurskin, Johnson, Knowles, McClendon, Sass, Small
Noes:

Excused: Burlison, Cox, Stephens, Tripplett

Motion passed 11/0

VII. Goldman School of Public Policy UC Berkeley – Informational Item

[Attachment](#)

Chair Gore Mann reported on finding research support and collaboration with students from UC Berkeley's Goldman School of Public Policy. A capstone project proposal has been submitted, with some adjustments to a prior version.

Students have expressed interest, and final confirmation of their participation is expected within a week. The collaboration will develop a framework for countywide research to guide future initiatives and prioritize efforts effectively across multiple jurisdictions. The Commission will be updated if the proposal is approved.

VIII. SharePoint Portal – Informational Item [Attachment](#)

Deb Sica, County Librarian and liaison to the Reparations Commission reported on the SharePoint Portal. SharePoint is a secure, centralized document storage system that will be used for the commission. It will enable members to submit, store, and access various materials such as research, history, and filled forms. It aligns with county operational standards, ensures compliance, and allows asynchronous collaboration.

Key points:

- All members will have access, with training provided if needed. The portal will be user-friendly and comparable to systems like Google Drive or OneDrive.
- Security and Compliance: SharePoint ensures data security and is publicly accessible via records requests, making it a transparent solution for managing commission documents.
- Transition: Existing documents, such as those on Google Drive, can be transferred to SharePoint.
- Website Differentiation: A separate website, distinct from SharePoint, could be developed for public-facing materials like surveys.
- Policy Considerations: There will be guidance on document deletion and retention policies to maintain compliance with regulations, such as the Brown Act.
- Further details, such as retention schedules, are to be confirmed with County Counsel.

VI. Subcommittee Reports – Informational Item

Infrastructure - marketing, communication, outreach/community engagement, legal/political
(Leo, Jesse, Larry, Lori, Artavia, Vickie, Shad)

No new items to report.

Safety/criminal justice
(Leo, Jesse, James, Carolyn)

The subcommittee has not met, will meet soon. Commissioner Knowles reported that the Juvenile Justice Commission meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 20, 2024.

Economic - housing, small businesses
(Brandon, Alan, Artavia, James)

Commissioner Knowles reported that the Housing and Community Development Department shared details about a Request for Proposals (RFP) for funding through Community Development Block Grants with a total of \$700,000 available to allocate to qualifying projects.

Health and Education
(Natasha, James, Shadrick, Shenita, Phillip)

Nothing new to report.

The Commissioners discussed the possibility of reframing the Reparations Commission's subcommittees and their focus areas. Highlights of the discussion:

Reassessing Subcommittee Mandates: There is a need to revisit and potentially reframe the subcommittees' original mandates, including clarifying their goals and ensuring alignment with the broader objectives of the commission.

Developing Mission or Thesis Statements: Each subcommittee should create a thesis statement or mission to guide their work. This would include defining research priorities, identifying goals, and establishing the focus areas essential for making progress.

Current Challenges: The subcommittees have been in a holding pattern due to budget constraints and uncertainties, which has stalled research and other planned activities.

Importance of Data and Research: Gathering data to support the commission's work is critical. For instance, health disparities among African Americans in Alameda County, shaped by systemic issues like redlining and economic inequality, require substantiated research.

Cross-Committee Coordination: Infrastructure and other subcommittees rely on the output of research-focused groups to develop tools like websites and educational materials. Collaborative efforts between subcommittees are essential to streamline efforts.

Broader Context: Some commissioners expressed interest in framing the commission's work within the current political and societal realities, including issues like systemic racism and the criminalization of poverty.

Subcommittees are encouraged to draft their focus statements and determine actionable research questions. This will enable better resource allocation and future planning.

Strategic Retreat and Proactive Planning: The commission members suggested a retreat to develop a clear strategy for meeting the Board's expectations, even if definitive guidance is not received beforehand. The overarching message is to reestablish clarity and direction for the subcommittees, ensuring their activities align with the commission's objectives while overcoming current operational hurdles.

Budget Constraints and Requests:

Supervisor Nate Miley reported that he plans to meet with the Commission Chair and the County Administrator and analysts to clarify budget elements, enabling a more structured and meaningful conversation during the retreat.

Discussions on solidifying budget guidance and finalizing retreat dates and logistics, including facilitator selection and room availability, will be addressed in December's meeting.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 7:49 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for December 11, 2024.

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