

Reparations Commission

SUMMARY/ACTION MINUTES

Wednesday, December 11, 2024

6:00 p.m.

Location: Alameda County Training & Education Center
Oakland 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 6:03 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. James Knowles
7. Larry McClendon
8. Brandon Sass
9. Shadrick Small

Excused: Jesse Burleson, Shenita Hurskin, Carolyn Johnson, Natasha Tripplett

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

None.

IV. Approval of Minutes – Action Item

A motion was made by Commissioner McClendon and seconded by Commissioner Bazile, to approve the minutes of November 13, 2024, as submitted.

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

Noes:

Excused: Burleson, Hurskin, Johnson, Tripplett

Abstain:

Motion passed 9/0

V. **Vikas Maturi - Liberation Venture Reparations Task Force Presentation – Informational** [Attachment](#)

Vikas Maturi, Director of Grantmaking Strategy and Research at Liberation Ventures presented a PowerPoint presentation focusing on accelerating the Black-led movement for reparations in the U.S., aiming for comprehensive federal reparations while supporting state and local initiatives.

The approach emphasizes building a strong ecosystem of organizations working on narrative change, research, grassroots organizing, and policy development.

Drawing from the UN reparations framework, they prioritize reckoning with historical harms, government acknowledgment, accountability, non-repetition, and compensation to impacted individuals.

Strategic Steps for Task Forces:

- Clarifying deliverables based on funding and feasibility.
- Employing both high-cost (e.g., public opinion polling, paid consultants) and low-cost (e.g., community surveys, participatory research, listening sessions) approaches for community engagement.
- Collaborating with local organizations and researchers for data collection and analysis.

High-Cost vs. Low-Cost Approaches

High-cost methods involve hiring researchers to produce detailed harm reports that analyze extensive data on historical and modern harms.

Low-cost alternatives leverage existing research and local institutional reports, e.g., Evanston, California Statewide Harm Report.

Utilizing Existing Resources - There is potential to use raw data from the state's research to avoid starting from scratch. Local disparity studies, though often delayed or unreleased, could also contribute to harm analysis.

Phased reports can streamline efforts by addressing specific issues incrementally, making it easier to manage partnerships and focus on targeted areas.

Commission Questions & Answers/Discussion

- The county's complexity, with multiple cities and unincorporated areas, necessitates a tailored approach. Identifying 1-5 key policy priorities could serve as a starting point for broader reparations efforts.
- Liberation Ventures offers strategic support through funding (limited and timeline-dependent), connections to funders, research resources, and narrative projects.
- The need for collaboration and leveraging expertise to sustain momentum in reparations efforts.
- The current political climate poses challenges, particularly around DEI initiatives and race-based policies.
- Despite resistance, local and state-level advocacy remains crucial.
- Discussed the need for innovative funding strategies, long-term commitment, and collaborative efforts to advance reparations amidst political and cultural challenges.
- Acknowledgment of the resistance faced in advancing reparations, with a need for a 25-year plan to address systemic issues and changing political landscapes.
- The importance of local and state efforts, especially in states like California, given federal challenges.
- Asheville and Amherst have funded reparations through land sales and general funds.
- Creative mechanisms like tax increment finance (TIF) districts and enhanced infrastructure finance districts (EIFDs) are being explored, which could allocate portions of tax revenue without requiring voter approval.

Commission Questions & Answers/Discussion (continued)

- California, particularly Alameda County, is seen as a leader in reparations work, with potential to influence national efforts.
- Collaboration with state and local agencies is emphasized to spearhead initiatives.
- Support from Organizations:

This item was informational only and required no Commission action.

VI. Commissioner Outreach Fact Sheet – 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.

A motion was made by Commissioner Sass and seconded by Commissioner Berry, to approve the Commissioner Outreach form with the following amendments:

“Established March 28, 2023; Full Reparations Commission seated November 2023”

“The Reparations Commission has been allocated a budget of \$92,340.10 for certain administrative functions and meeting space.”

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

Noes:

Excused: Burluson, Hurskin, Johnson, Tripplett

Abstain:

Motion passed 9/0

VII. Define Capstone Fellow Duties and Establish Project Timeline – Informational Item

Deb Sica, County Librarian, Reparations Commission liaison reported on the onboarding of a Capstone Fellow, a graduate student who will assist in creating guidelines for the harm report.

The fellow will focus on guidelines to assess and prioritize harms discussed by the Commission; the fellow will begin work on January 21st and will end work in May 2025. The student will establish ongoing meetings with the Commission and may attend sessions in person or online. Student will receive a \$9,000 stipend, split between the start and end of the project, funded by the school and county. The research will culminate in a Capstone presentation.

This item was informational only and required no Commission action.

VIII. Set Retreat Date and Discuss Agenda Items – Action Item

Chair Gore-Mann, and Deb Sica, Reparations Commission liaison proposed Saturday, January 25, 2025, from 10.am. to 4p.m. for the Reparations Commission retreat, to be held at the Castro Valley Library. The purpose of the retreat is to define deliverables, timelines, and scope of work.

A motion was made by Commissioner Sass and seconded by Commissioner McClendon to approve Saturday, January 25th for the Reparations Commission Retreat from 10am to 4pm. Location to be determined. Agenda items to be brought to Commission at the January 8th meeting.

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

Noes:

Excused: Burleson, Hurskin, Johnson, Tripplett

Abstain:

Motion passed 9/0

IX. Retreat Facilitator Update– Informational

Deb Sica, County Librarian, Reparations Commission liaison reported that Kad Smith has been recommended for the facilitator for the retreat.

X. Nominate Vice Chair of Reparations Commission – Action

Chair Gore-Mann nominated Commissioner Larry McClendon for Vice Chair, nomination seconded by Commissioner Knowles.

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

Noes:

Excused: Burleson, Hurskin, Johnson, Tripplett

Abstain:

Motion passed 9/0

xi. Subcommittee Reports – Informational Item

Infrastructure - marketing, communication, outreach/community engagement, legal/political

(Leo, Jesse, Larry, Artavia, Shad)

None.

Safety/criminal justice

(Leo, Jesse, James, Carolyn)

None.

Economic - housing, small businesses

(Brandon, Alan, Artavia, James)

Commissioner Sass provided a mission statement for the Economic/Housing & Small business subcommittee.

Health and Education

(Natasha, James, Shadrick, Shenita, Phillip)

None.

XII. Discuss The Current State of USA Administration – Informational Chair Gore-Mann, All

Reparations discussed the current state of the U.S. Administration, including systemic challenges in addressing social and economic inequities, particularly in the context of reparations, homelessness, and local governance.

- Concerns were raised about the rise of divisive rhetoric, including criticism of civil rights leaders like Martin Luther King Jr., and the rejection of empathy and affordable housing initiatives in recent elections. This reflects a broader political shift, even in progressive areas like California.
- Importance of educating communities on local governance and the impact of elections on district attorneys, auditors, and other key offices. There is a lack of civic understanding and voter turnout among marginalized groups.
- The role of wealth disparity and corporate responsibility. Examples included disproportionate CEO pay and its effects on community wealth, as well as developers prioritizing green buildings over equitable investments in people.
- Concerns were voiced about policies like California's Prop 36, which could disproportionately harm vulnerable populations.
- The need for robust, actionable programs that address inequality, coupled with a commitment to advocacy and education, was emphasized. Attendees encouraged vigilance and proactive engagement, especially in progressive states where challenges persist despite perceptions of safety.
- "State of Black California" event may be an opportunity to gather information and strengthen advocacy efforts.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 7:57 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for January 8, 2025.

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