

Reparations Commission

Wednesday, February 11, 2026

6:00 p.m.

Location: Alameda County Training & Education Center

Oakland Room

125 – 12th Street, 4th Floor

Oakland, CA 94607

SUMMARY/ACTION MINUTES

I. Call to Order/ Roll Call

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

Members present:

1. Artavia Berry – noted present at 6:17 p.m. and noted excused at 8:19 p.m.
2. Alan Dones
3. Jennifer Gayden
4. Debra Gore
5. Phillip Gardiner
6. Shenita Hurskin
7. James Knowles
8. Larry McClendon
9. Brandon Sass
10. Shadrick Small
11. Tiega Varlack

Excused: Leo Bazile, Jesse Burleson, Natasha Tripplett

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

None.

III. Approval of Minutes - Action Item

Minutes of January 14, 2026

A motion was made by Commissioner McClendon and seconded by Commissioner Hurskin to approve the minutes of January 14, 2026, as submitted.

Ayes: Dones, Gore, Gardiner, Hurskin, Knowles, McClendon, Sass, Small, Varlack

Noes:

Excused: Bazile, Berry, Burleson, Tripplett

Abstain: Gayden

Motion passed 9/0

IV. Welcome new commissioner – Informational Item

Chair Gore announced that Dee Johnson has been selected as the new commissioner and will be on board for the March 11, 2026, meeting (later rescheduled to March 18, 2026).

V. Debrief of Reparations Commission Retreat on January 31, 2026

Natriece Spicer, consultant, Exceptional Community Connections (ECC) provided a debrief of the Reparations Commission Retreat held on Saturday, January 31, 2026.

The retreat was productive and milestone driven. Subcommittees clarified collective goals and team cohesion. The summary and implementation plan (February–June) were distributed. The focus was to deliver the final report to the Board of Supervisors by June 23, 2026.

Implementation Priorities from the Retreat

Administration & Budget

- Final budget balancing
- Spend-down strategy
- Cost estimates tied to recommendations
- Final balanced budget inclusion in report

Community Listening Sessions (CLS)

- Complete remaining sessions
- Continuing pop-ups and survey distribution
- Host feedback sessions on draft recommendations
- Mobilize community attendance for June BOS meeting

Data Analysis & Reporting (DAR):

- Compile draft report
- Monitor survey collection
- Maintain website and data systems
- Coordinate with Informing Change (report writers)
- Develop submission format and deadline for recommendations

The original proposal was to submit the recommendations by the end of February. Michael Arnold, Informing Change advised the Commission that March may be more feasible to submit Commission Recommendations for the draft report.

VI. Russell City Willow Tree Proposal Response – Action Item

Commissioner Berry reported that a City of Hayward investigation determined that the Russell City Willow Tree removal was due to storm damage, and it was deemed a safety hazard. A permit was required but fell under exception due to hazardous conditions. There is no required mitigation under the city ordinance. The Patterson-Johnson Family remains committed to the Russell City Legacy Restoration Plan.

Commissioners discussed various options for a response to the removal of the Willow Tree, including add recommendations into the Commission’s Action Plan and Final Report, a memorial marker or monument, request for acknowledgment from the City of Hayward and or property owners, register in a historical Black heritage site, fundraising or partnership with property owner. The subcommittees will discuss integration into final report.

A motion was made by Commissioner Berry and seconded by Commissioner Sass to work with Patterson-Johnson Family to support restorative justice efforts related to the Russell City Willow Tree.

Ayes: Berry, Dones, Gore, Gardiner, Gayden, Hurskin, Knowles, McClendon, Sass, Small, Varlack
Noes:

Excused: Bazile, Burleson, Tripplett

Abstain:

Motion passed 11/0

VII. Pop-Up Events – Informational Item

Chair Gore and other Commissioners reported on upcoming Pop-up and other events for the Reparations Commission, including:

- Housing Stability, Healthy Black Families
- Art & Soul, Black Cultural Zone
- Black Joy Parade, booth and vendor outreach
- Criminal Justice Pop-up, Legal Services for Prisoners with Children; Chesa Boudin participating
- Education Pop-up, Berkeley Unified School District
- Live Free USA & Dope Era Initiative event
- Camp Sweeney & Juvenile Hall engagement (mid-March target)

Survey collection continues both digitally and in paper form.

VIII. Speaking on behalf of the Reparations Commission – Informational Item

Chair Gore clarified that recent media invitations by KTVU and CBS Radio were directed to her personally, and not formally to the Commission. If a request is made directly to the Commission, it will be shared with commissioners to determine which Commissioner should respond.

When speaking on behalf of the Commission, members must:

- Avoid representing official votes unless formally taken.
- Avoid articulating official Commission positions unless approved.
- Remain neutral to comply with Brown Act requirements.

If a request to speak is received Commissioners should inform fellow commissioners and consider whether another commissioner may be better suited to participate. Communicate transparently with the requesting party about representation.

IX. Subcommittee Reports

Admin & Budget – Vice Chair McClendon

- Scope of Work and Timeline – Action Item
- Projected surplus remains.
- Two canvassing vendors being onboarded for expanded survey outreach.

A motion was made by Commissioner McClendon and seconded by Commissioner Hurskin to approve the Scope of Work and Timeline.

Ayes: Berry, Dones, Gore, Gardiner, Gayden, Hurskin, Knowles, McClendon, Sass, Small, Varlack

Noes:

Excused: Bazile, Burleson, Tripplett

Abstain:

Motion passed 11/0

Listening Sessions – Commissioner Sass

- Scope of Work and Timeline – Action Item
- Survey distribution continues
- Listening Session scheduled for February 21, 2026
- Community Feedback Sessions for early recommendations will be discussed at the next subcommittee meeting – timeline extended to March

A motion was made by Commissioner Sass and seconded by Commissioner Hurskin to approve the Scope of Work and amended Timeline.

Ayes: Berry, Dones, Gore, Gardiner, Gayden, Hurskin, Knowles, McClendon, Sass, Small, Varlack

Noes:

Excused: Bazile, Burleson, Tripplett

Abstain:

Motion passed 11/0

Data Research, Action Plan Report – Commissioner Varlack

- Scope of Work and Timeline – Action Item
- Survey Distribution: response deadline
- Survey data integrity, monitoring and assessment, potential updates and improvements
- Commissioners individual recommendations submittal deadline
- Final recommendations process – Action Item
- Adjusted timeline: Recommendations finalized March 18, 2026, and draft report by March 31, 2026
- Final revisions by April 30, 2026
- Reschedule March 11, 2026, meeting to March 18, 2026
- Finalize recommendations March 18, 2026
- Allow additional community input where possible

A motion was made by Commissioner Varlack and seconded by Commissioner Hurskin to approve the Scope of Work and Timeline.

Ayes: Berry, Dones, Gore, Gardiner, Gayden, Hurskin, Knowles, McClendon, Sass, Small, Varlack

Noes:

Excused: Bazile, Burleson, Tripplett

Abstain:

Motion passed 11/0

X. Suggested Decision Making Process – Action Item

Chair Gore announced that any action item must be agendaized to allow for a formal vote.

Recommendations will be finalized and voted on March 18, 2026. Additional community input may be incorporated after that date as appropriate.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hurskin and seconded by Commissioner Varlack to reschedule the March 11, 2026, Reparations Commission meeting to Wednesday, March 18, 2026, to finalize recommendations for Informing Change to draft the Action Plan and Report.

Ayes: Berry, Dones, Gore, Gardiner, Gayden, Hurskin, Knowles, McClendon, Sass, Small, Varlack

Noes:

Excused: Bazile, Burleson, Tripplett

Abstain:

Motion passed 11/0

A motion was made by Commissioner Varlack and seconded by Commissioner Hurskin to approve the use of the Google Form "Alameda County Reparations Commission Recommendation Submission" with the following modifications: 1) Two versions of the form, for individual recommendations and for subcommittee recommendations; 2) include an "N/A" option added for non-applicable fields.

Ayes: Dones, Gore, Gardiner, Gayden, Hurskin, Knowles, McClendon, Sass, Small, Varlack

Noes:

Excused: Bazile, Berry, Burleson, Tripplett

Abstain:

Motion passed 10/0

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 8:22 p.m. on February 11, 2026.

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