

Reparations Commission

SUMMARY/ACTION MINUTES

Wednesday, September 10, 2025

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

The meeting was called to order by the Chair, Debra Gore at 6:11 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Members present:

1. Leo Bazile
2. Artavia Berry
3. Jesse Burleson
4. Phillip S. Gardiner
5. Debra Gore
6. Shenita Hurskin
7. James Knowles
8. Brandon Sass
9. Sheldon Small
10. Tiega Varlack

Excused: Alan E. Dones, Larry McClendon, Natasha Tripplett

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

None.

IV. Approval of Minutes - Action Item

[Minutes of June 11, 2025](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner Varlack and seconded by Commissioner Gardiner to approve the minutes of June 11, 2025, as submitted.

Ayes: Berry, Gardiner, Gore, Hurskin, Sass, Small, Varlack

Noes: None

Excused: Dones, McClendon, Tripplett

Abstain: Bazile, Burleson, Knowles

Motion passed 7/0

[Minutes of July 9, 2025](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner Varlack and seconded by Commissioner Gardiner to approve the minutes of July 9, 2025, as submitted.

Ayes: Bazile, Berry, Gardiner, Gore, Knowles, Sass, Small, Varlack

Noes: None

Excused: Burlleson, Dones, Hurskin, McClendon, Tripplett

Abstain:

Motion passed 8/0

[Minutes of August 13, 2025](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner Varlack and seconded by Commissioner Gardiner to approve the minutes of August 13, 2025, as submitted.

Ayes: Bazile, Berry, Gardiner, Gore, Knowles, Sass, Small, Varlack

Noes: None

Excused: Burlleson, Dones, Hurskin, McClendon, Tripplett

Abstain: None

Motion passed 8/0

V. Resignation of Commissioner – Informational Item

Chair Gore reported that there are two (2) open seats on the Reparations Commission; two Commissioners have resigned, Haley Hester and Carolyn Johnson. Chair Gore stated that if there are qualified individuals interested, please encourage them to apply for the Commission.

VI. Restructure of Subcommittee & Work Assignments – Action Item

Chair Gore provided information on the proposed restructuring of the eleven (11) subcommittees down to three (3) subcommittees.

The Commission voted to transition from 11 subcommittees to 3 consolidated subcommittees

- 1) Community Listening Sessions – Engage districts for promotion
(Artavia, Shenita, Shadrick, Phillip, James, Brandon)
- 2) Administration & Budget – includes website, social media, fundraising/budget projections
(Larry, Debra, Tiega, Artavia, Leo)
- 3) Data Collection, Analysis & Reporting – focus on harms report, thematic analysis, final recommendations
(Jesse, Alan, Leo, Debra, Shadrick Tiega)

A motion was made by Commissioner Hurskin and seconded by Commissioner Berry to approve restructuring the eleven (11) subcommittees to three (3) subcommittees: 1) Community Listening Sessions; 2) Administration & Budget; and 3) Data Collection, Analysis & Reporting.

Ayes: Bazile, Berry, Gardiner, Gore, Hurskin, Knowles, Sass, Small, Varlack

Noes: None

Excused: Burlleson, Dones, McClendon, Tripplett

Abstain: None

Motion passed 9/0

A motion was made by Commissioner Hurskin and seconded by Commissioner Varlack to approve the Commissioners assigned to the subcommittee groups.

Ayes: Bazile, Berry, Burleson, Gardiner, Gore, Hurskin, Knowles, Sass, Small, Varlack

Noes: None

Excused: Dones, McClendon, Tripplett

Abstain: None

Motion passed 10/0

VII. Work Plan Process: Data/Evaluation/Action Plan, Admin./Budget, Listening Sessions – Informational Item

[Attachment](#)

Facilitator Letitia Henderson presented a four-month Work Plan outlining objectives, tasks, milestones, and deliverables for each subcommittee. The plan is to serve as a document for progress tracking and alignment across all subcommittees. Printed and digital copies to be shared with all commissioners.

VIII. Website Updates and Approval – Action Item

The Alameda County Reparations Commission’s official website has been guided by a collaborative website development effort. Commissioners previously contributed input, which was refined by the chair and co-chair, and then used to create the first draft of the homepage. The website is considered a living document; the developer is available on a monthly retainer for continuous updates.

The homepage includes:

- Logo and Navigation Menu (Home, Commissioners by District, Meetings, Resources, Contact)
- Commission Overview: Vision, mission, and scope of work drawn from the Board of Supervisors’ resolution.
- "What We Do" Section: Simplified description of the Commission’s duties.
- Listening Sessions: Placeholders for upcoming sessions, with suggestions to feature them prominently and add RSVP or Eventbrite links.
- Milestones Timeline: Key achievements from 2022–2025, including formation, funding, and listening sessions.
- Russell City Redress Fund: Overview and external link to the related article.
- Media Section (“In the News”): Articles tracing the Commission’s development.
- Stay Connected: Social media links (to be activated).

To be added:

- Resources Page: Currently blank; members proposed adding links to data, other reparations commissions (Evanston, Palm Springs, North Carolina, etc.), and relevant state/federal materials.
- Contact Page: Includes a form for public inquiries. Plans to require zip codes for local data tracking and establish a dedicated monitoring email.

A motion was made by Commissioner Sass and seconded by Commissioner Gardiner to approve the Reparations Commission website to go live.

Ayes: Bazile, Berry, Burleson, Gardiner, Gore, Hurskin, Knowles, Sass, Small, Varlack

Noes: None

Excused: Dones, McClendon, Tripplett

Abstain: None

Motion passed 10/0

IX. Social Media handles and launch – Action Item

Commissioner Varlack reported that the Reparations Commission has an Instagram (IG) & Facebook (FB) handle: “Alameda County Reparations Commission.” The social media site “X” (Twitter) was not launched due to concerns about platform climate; may revisit. LinkedIn was also suggested for later.

Commissioners discussed adding the website URL to IG/FB bios and include social links on flyers/listening-session materials.

For the Facebook account additional admins will be added with their own access. The County IT department has determined that Gmail is acceptable if it is not a personal account. A County email is possible later.

Will define cadence, post types (photos, reels, event announcements), tone/themes, and hashtag set (draft list includes: Alameda County, Reparations, community justice, civic engagement, “Reparations now,” “Equity for Alameda,” etc.).

Commissioners were cautioned about liking/commenting on posts to avoid Open Meeting Act issues (group engagement may be considered a meeting and a violation of the Brown Act).

A motion was made by Commissioner Gore and seconded by Commissioner Hurskin to officially launch the social media sites.

Ayes: Bazile, Berry, Burluson, Gardiner, Gore, Hurskin, Knowles, Sass, Small, Varlack

Noes: None

Excused: Dones, McClendon, Tripplett

Abstain: None

Motion passed 10/0

X. Development of Outreach Took Kit: digital surveys, social media, website, listening sessions, pop ups, print marketing (post cards) - Action Item – *Continued to future meeting*

XI. Commissioners to meet with their designated Supervisors & staff to build support and gain information about community partners - Action Item

Chair Gore proposed to reaffirm the plan for commissioners to meet with their district supervisor (or staff) to brief them on progress, ideally tied to upcoming listening sessions.

Multiple commissioners have already met with staff and received positive feedback and offers to help promote events.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hurskin and seconded by Commissioner Varlack that each commissioner will meet with their supervisor or staff before the Thanksgiving break to update them on the significant progress that has been made by the Reparations Commission.

Ayes: Bazile, Berry, Burluson, Gardiner, Gore, Hurskin, Sass, Small, Varlack

Noes: None

Excused: Dones, McClendon, Tripplett

Abstain: Knowles

Motion passed 9/0

XII. Approval of Listening Sessions, Timeline, Recommended Approaches and Partnerships – Action Item Attachment

A motion was made by Commissioner Varlack and seconded by Commissioner Gardiner to approve the dates of the Listening Sessions as follows:

- October 25, 2025
- November 15, 2025
- December 6, 2025
- January 24, 2026
- February 21, 2026

Ayes: Bazile, Berry, Gardiner, Gore, Knowles, Sass, Small, Varlack

Noes: None

Excused: Burluson, Dones, Hurskin, McClendon, Tripplett

Abstain:

Motion passed 8/0

Commissioner Gore presented four (4) “Pillars of Focus” to guide subcommittees, facilitation, and analysis:

1. Experienced Harm & Inequity (lived experience across housing, education, policing, health—code into harm categories)
2. Community Assets & Resilience (surface cultural/community strengths; avoid deficit-only framing)
3. Reparative Needs & Priorities (generate concrete ideas grouped into policy areas for the action plan)
4. Vision for the Future (shape measurable outcomes and long-term recommendations)

Subcommittees should consider all four pillars to keep work aligned.

A motion was made by Commissioner Varlack and seconded by Commissioner Hurskin to adopt the four pillars as guiding framework for subcommittee work.

Ayes: Bazile, Berry, Burluson, Gore, Knowles, Sass, Small, Varlack

Noes: None

Excused: Dones, McClendon, Tripplett

Abstain: Gardiner

Motion passed 9/0

XIII. Legislation update on Reparations Bills - Informational Item

Chair Gore reported that the four reparations bills noted last month have made it out of appropriations and is now at the Senate.

XIV. County Anti-Harassment Training - Informational Item

The Clerk of the Board’s Office will follow up on any required anti-harassment training for Commissioners.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:11 p.m. on September 10, 2025.