

Reparations Commission

SUMMARY/ACTION MINUTES

Thursday, September 26, 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 6:00 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Members present:

Leo Bazile
Artavia Berry
Alan Dones
Phillip S. Gardiner
Debra Gore-Mann
Shenita Hurskin
James Knowles
Larry McClendon
Brandon T. Sass
Shadrick Small

Excused: Jesse Burleson, Lori Cox, Carolyn Johnson, 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 McClendon and seconded by Commissioner Sass, to approve the minutes of August 14, 2024, as submitted.

Ayes: Dones, Gardiner, Gore-Mann, Hurskin, Knowles, McClendon, Sass, Small

Noes:

Excused: Bazile, Burleson, Cox, Johnson, Stephens, Tripplett

Abstain: Berry

Motion passed 8/0

V. Dr. Adams and Dr. Weissinger, Northeastern University, Black Reparations Project, Presentation - Reparations 101 and Trauma/Healing – Informational Item [Attachment](#)

Dr. Ashley Adams, Public Policy professor at Mills College, now part of Northeastern University and Dr. Erika Weissinger, Professor, Goldman School of Policy, University of California at Berkeley, also co-directors of the Black Reparations Project, presented a PowerPoint presentation on the Black Reparations Project.

The Black Reparations Project involves collaboration between students, staff, and faculty from Mills College and UC Berkeley, which unites scholars, policymakers, and activists to drive change through education.

Presentation Highlights

- The presentation shared an overview of the reparations landscape, including recent reparations bills (Sb 1403, SB 1331, and SB 1050) in California, including those that were vetoed (SB 1007, SB 1013).
- Local reparations efforts include Alameda County, Berkely Unified School District, City and County of San Francisco, cities of Hayward, Richmond and Vallejo. There are varying educational models, which is helped by partnerships between higher education institutions and reparations task forces. Reparations frameworks, drawing from the United Nations' guidelines for reparations. The frameworks emphasize restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, emotional satisfaction, and preventing repetition.
- Concepts of reparations, including cash payments (both conditional and unconditional), how reparations can benefit both individuals and communities and clarify that unconditional cash reparations (where recipients can use the money freely) were strongly favored by some groups they worked with. However, conditional payments, such as for education or housing, often receive more support in surveys.
- Importance of an "abundance" mindset and cross-racial solidarity. Although public support for reparations is growing, it remains low compared to other social movements like same-sex marriage.
- Emotional and psychological toll of reparations work, both on communities and those leading the efforts, recommending trauma-informed approaches to community engagement
- Importance of public memory and historical documentation, specifically in Oakland, as part of the reparations process. The UN model's focus on memorializing history and using commemoration as a crucial component. Encourage the inclusion of history and commemoration in reparations efforts.
- Importance of collecting data that correlates inequality with economic costs to build a case for reparations
- Genealogy events aimed at helping individuals research their ancestral roots, particularly for descendants of formerly enslaved people, which is an often overlooked but crucial part of the reparations process.
- Projects from the Goldman School of Public Policy, where students assist with reparations research and related projects. Various studies, including strategies for wealth transfer, local public engagement for reparations task forces, and funding strategies for reparations efforts.
- Highlight that inequality hurts not only marginalized groups but the entire community by increasing public costs. They suggest using data and economic arguments to help convince those who might be resistant to cash reparations.
- Significance of education, research, and data in shaping effective reparations policies and encourages ongoing collaboration with educational institutions to explore innovative solutions.
- Importance of Healing and Human Stories: highlights the need to focus on healing through understanding the human stories behind injustices and their intergenerational effects. Requires connecting these stories to current hardships experienced by descendants of victims of systemic racism.

VI. Subcommittee Reports – Informational Item

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

Safety/criminal justice

(Leo, Jesse, James, Carolyn)

Economic - housing, small businesses

(Brandon, Alan, Artavia, James)

Commissioner Knowles attended two (2) meetings of the County's Housing and Community Development Department.

Health and Education

(Natasha, James, Shadrick, Shenita, Phillip)

VII. Debrief - Board of Supervisors September 17, 2024, Meeting - Informational Item**Item #28.1**

President Miley and Supervisor Márquez - Approve the following recommendations: A. Adopt the Ad Hoc Committee on Reparations' recommendations to: i. Retroactively extend the term of the Reparations Commission for two additional years from June 2024 until June 30, 2026, to develop a comprehensive action plan; ii. Retroactively extend the terms of the 15 commissioners from June 2024 until June 30, 2026; iii. Increase the Commission budget by \$92,340.10 to support additional public meetings through June 2026; iv. Invite academic institutions to collaborate with the Reparations Commission on research and other investigative aspects to develop the action plan; and B. Approve the Ad Hoc Committee request to: i. Appoint Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion as the sponsoring unit for the Commission; ii. Direct the County Administrator to collaborate with the Librarian and Health Director to identify by October 2024 the most suitable department to serve as the interim sponsor until Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion assumes responsibility; iii. Direct the sponsoring department to define and develop an allyship plan with the Reparations Commission; iv. Direct the sponsoring department and County Administrator's Office to work with the Reparations Commission to submit a proposed budget for January 2025 to June 2025 to the Ad Hoc Committee by December 2024 for this Board's adoption; and v. Direct the Chair and Vice-Chair of the commission to provide a list of potential philanthropic entities by September 2024 to seek grant funding for the Reparations Commission's work

Chair Gore-Mann summarized the Board of Supervisors' decision on the Reparations Commissions requests.

Extensions and Sponsorship: The Commission request for an extension until June 2026 for both the commission and its 15 members was granted. The librarian will serve as the interim sponsoring department while the search for a DEI director continues, facilitating collaboration with county administration on budget matters.

Budget and Funding: The Commission's proposed budget was reviewed, with a request for a refined, itemized budget to be submitted by December for a six-month fiscal period. They received an initial allocation of \$92,000 but did not secure the desired \$4 million. The importance of having a sponsoring department for potential funding was stressed.

Racial Equity Work: The Commission discussed previous initiatives and assessments undertaken by the library to integrate racial equity into their services, including the allocation of resources and programming.

There is a commitment to work on a detailed budget proposal and seek support from potential philanthropic entities, while also stressing that public foundations should not be listed publicly for fundraising purposes.

In a meeting of the Reparations Commission, a member expressed gratitude for the extension of their work and highlighted the importance of aligning the budget with their goals. They emphasized the need for clarity regarding available resources to enhance the effectiveness of their meetings and discussions.

Detailed research might be necessary to determine the specific needs of the Commission and to ensure proper allocation within the county budget timeline.

Additionally, the Commission addressed the importance of showing the community the benefits of the reparations work, highlighting both financial returns and healing benefits.

Supervisor Nate Miley, District 4, reported that the Board of Supervisors approved Deb Sica, County Librarian to work with the county and the Reparations Commission for the foreseeable future because the DE&I person hired left for another job. In addition, Burt Jones, District 4, will also staff the Reparations Commission. The commission's budget request of \$2.5 million per year for two years is still under review, and grants are being explored.

The Reparations Commission members agreed to continued engagement with the Board of Supervisors and planned to attend upcoming meetings to advocate for the Commission's initiatives, while also emphasizing the significance of ongoing subcommittee work.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for October 9, 2024.

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