

Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission

MEETING MINUTES

Monday, February 10, 2020

11:30 a.m.

Commissioners and Staff present: Sonya Osei; Zenita Hurley; Maya Davis; Will Schwarz; David Armenti; Danika Baker; Tim Baker; DeNeen Brown; Charles Chavis; Omar Eaton-Martinez; Kirkland Hall; Elizabeth Hughes; Elgin Klugh; Carl Snowden; Marshall Stevenson; Chris Haley; Tamara Wilson via Designee Maya Davis;

Participating via telephone: Kristin McFarlane; Simone Barrett; Nicholas Creary; Gary Norman; Iris Barnes;

Absent; Chair David Fakunle; Roger Davidson; Edith Perry;

Members of the public present: Steve McKenna; Emily Squires; May Lample; PJ Andrews; Michael Reed; Denice Lombard; Nicole Saini; John Muller;

Call to Order: Acting Chair Elizabeth Hughes called the meeting to order at approximately 11:35 A.M. Commissioners and members of the public introduced themselves for the record.

Approval of Meeting Minutes: The minutes for the January 13, 2020 Commission meeting were considered and approved with discussion and revisions.

Public Comments:

- Muller from Washington Informer- wrote article 1/15/2020. Discusses book on Frederick Douglass. The book discusses lynchings in Washington D.C. Contact information and article have been posted to Maryland State Archives website. (Under meetings and publications)

Committee Reports:

Committee Reports: Logistics Committee

- Logistics Committee conducted their first sub-committee meeting January 2020.
- Next Meeting is 2/19/2020 in Crownsville, MD. Maryland Historic Trust (MHT)
- Spoke with other sub-committee chairs to continue working on template for hearings. Will finalize and submit to Commission for further review.
- Would like to call in with videographer to discuss budget and to develop a context of storytelling.

- Timeline for template for hearings. Next meeting 3/9/2020 deadline for template. Document to be shared with commissioners and other coalitions to get input from others. Send out template for review before circulation.
- Draft frequently asked questions and assign them to commissioners to speak. Have mental health staff available.

Committee Reports: Research Committee

- Discussed the idea with operational definition for lynching which can be defined as: **Lynching - murder resulting from unlawful mob violence often with the apparent complicity of local and state officials, intended to inspire terror and subservience to white supremacy.**
- Subcommittee will revisit and discuss further to solidify a clear and concise definition for “lynching” in relation to LTRC work. Commissioners will also submit suggestions on how to define the idea of lynchings.
- A huge focal point with lynching definition is to hold people accountable for actions that occurred.
- **Proposed baseline data we want to collect:**
 - Rationale for the lynching
 - Key Individuals involved
 - Political implications (within local and state politics)
 - Public reaction (black and white communities)
 - Newspaper accounts
 - Government / Court documents
 - Death Certificate
 - Coroner’s report
 - Photographs and any other ephemera
 - Bibliography of writing on the lynching
 - Descendants (of victims, perpetrators, witnesses) – any info that they can provide
 - Local Historical Societies
- A discussion occurred on how to funnel information to make it available to public. Google drive is current central repository. May need to be vetted in the future for privacy and copyright concerns.
- Sub-Committee will coordinate with MD State Archives on best ways to funnel information and vet documents.

- A Proposed letter will be sent to historical societies to introduce and alert them of LTRC efforts and to disseminate information. This work should be conducted before meetings and be done ASAP. The letter will help to formalize our attempts and ideas.
- Letters will be sent to State Attorney's office to contact Local attorneys in various jurisdictions. County executives will be able to inform them of the commission work and goals. To give understanding on what the mission of the commission.
- Archived information- A lot of organizations are not always sure of what information they have in their possession. We will take a look at nonpublic restorative information to see if personal information was donated to other institutions.
- Commissioner Chavis reported that George Mason University will fund two graduate assistants to assist with research.
- Next Sub-Committee meeting will be held Fri. Feb 14, 2020 @ 1pm- MD State Archives building Annapolis to discuss communications and assignments of responsibilities.
- Develop process for extracting information that has already been gathered. Develop process of defining scope and goal to find contractor.
- We would like to discuss research resources, include other commissions, and other organizations to help filter through information that has been found and work that has been done and completed.
- April 18, 2020 meeting with local coalitions.
- It is ideal to complete timeline from now to the first hearing to propose and bring before the committee with ideas for completing necessary tasks. Wouldn't plan for public hearings until after Labor Day 2020.
- Will Add timeline, and other coalitions to subcommittee agenda for next meeting.

Reconciliation and Justice Committee

- Developed framework to help with reconciliation.
- **Minimalist**- Symbolic reconciliation. Monuments, Memorials, Markers
- **Deliberate**: Being vocal about educational reform. Looking at State Reform and looking into what Reparations could be.
- **Maximalists**- Creating a center and be able to create impact that lives on long after the commission.
- Race and Reconciliation institute
- March 17th delegate from Finland will be in Maryland in regards to reconciliation in Finland. This is an opportunity to speak with the potential hearing speakers and experts to vet what they will say and discuss.
- Must ensure that LTRC Commission has structure and timeline for how to get things done. A structure that will allow those affected to be able to express their stories.
- Systemic change that will outlast commission including textbooks and curriculum on how to educate people on this history.
- Logistics Committee should coordinate with the other committees to create template for structure of hearings.

New Business

- a. **Election process-** Adopted a proposed process and timeline for electing the Chair and Vice-Chair. Commissioners may self-nominate or nominate other commissioner for either position of Chair and vice chair. There will be two separate nominations.
- b. There is a desire for a democratic election process and strong leadership. You have until 2.21.2020 for nominations. All nominations should be sent to Mrs. Hurley and Ms. Osei.
- c. Within a week accept or deny, nominees must submit one paragraph document indicating what qualifies you for the position of choice.
- d. There are no limitations to how many to submit for nominations.
- e. Nominations for both Chair and vice chair will be submitted and voted on separately. Vote on chair in March and Co-Chair in April.

Communications Policy

- Adopted a Commission Communications Policy, which among other things, clarified who may speak on behalf of the Commission. Specifically:

The Chairman of the Commission serves as the official Commission spokesperson and conveys the official Commission position on issues related to the mission, goals, policies, and activities of the Commission. Inquiries from the media about such issues should be referred to the Commission Chairman.

Operating Budget and Reporting Requirements

- Most health and mental health workers are volunteer but should be included in the line item in the budget.
- Requested 1 year extension and final report. September 2021 for preliminary report. September 2022 for final report. May need to interview and explain reasons for extension request.
- Once House bill is finalized and shared, Ms. Hurley will share with the Commission.
- Individuals can write a letter to governor regarding the state of funds.
- Budget amount requested is 50K. - See final draft budget. Will be shared with Commission.

Ethics Training

- Commissioners are subject to the State Ethics Law although they are excused from the financial disclosure filing requirement.
- Ethics training will be conducted at April meeting. An hour will be needed to conduct training.

2020 Meeting Calendar

- Maryland State Archives will look into additional venues for meeting locations. Ms. Davis will create Google Drive spreadsheet for sign-up to host upcoming Commission meetings.
- Consider parking, Wi-Fi, Conference Call phone, and other resources needed to conduct meetings.

Educational Opportunities for Commissioners

- - Great Blacks in Wax Lynching exhibition
- “Always in Season” broadcast on MPT on 2/24/20 at 9pm

Announcements

- 2/10/2020 reveal of Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass this evening and official event this weekend. Statue has been installed in the old House Delegates Chamber.
- Oral History Association Conference October 2020. Showing the value of LTRC Commission. May be opportunity for Commissioners to speak about the purpose and progress of organizational work. Contact Commissioner Barnes and Armenti for additional information.
- MD Parks and Planning Exhibition. Black women in Politics. Will be hosted Harmony Hall until March 2020.
- Commissioner Klugh is chairing a task force for the Laurel Cemetery in Baltimore where a shopping center was built over a large cemetery with hundreds of remains. Laurel Cemetery is off of Belair Rd. inside the new shopping center. LaurelCemetery.omeka.net for more information
- On March 25, 2020, George Mason University will host event to discuss anti-lynching.

Comments from the Public

- Steve McKenna- ON 2.29.19 at Miller Branch 11am. Howard County, Steve McKenna will be speaking on local and documented lynchings.
- September in Baltimore “The Moment is Now” play discussing civil rights in Baltimore. Many activists and philanthropists are likely to attend. Show is running from February 29 to March 8, 2020 – themomentwasnow.com
- John Muller will be leading a walking tour of Frederick Lake. Annapolis Dock at 8:15 am. Dates will be announced.

Adjourned: 1:40 p.m.