

Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission

MEETING MINUTES

Monday, March 9, 2020

11:30 a.m.

Commissioners and Staff present: Will Schwarz; Zenita Hurley; Maya Davis; Sonya Osei; David Fakunle; Tim Baker; Iris Barnes; Simone Barrett; Charles Chavis; Omar Eaton-Martinez; Elgin Klugh; Gary Norman; Carl Snowden; Marshall Stevenson; Tamara Wilson; Kirkland Hall;

Participating via telephone: Damika Baker; Nick Creary; Elizabeth Hughes; Kristin McFarlane;

Absent: David Armenti; DeNeen Brown; Roger Davidson;

Members of the public present: n/a

Call to Order: Acting David Fakunle called the meeting to order at approximately 11:41 A.M. Ms. Osei called the role of Commissioners. Members of the public introduced themselves for the record.

Approval of Meeting Minutes: The minutes for the February 10th, 2020 Commission meeting were considered and approved with discussion and revisions.

Public Comments: n/a

Committee Reports:

Logistics' Committee:

- Two documents were circulated to Commission for discussion and review: Draft template for testimony/hearings and timeline for hearings.
- Committee would like input how to validate trauma and pain of those who give testimony.

Research Committee

- Last meeting was held 2/14/2020. Met with MD State Archives to discuss available resources to conduct research and obtain additional information for MD LTRC.
- Discussed using Google Drive to collect information. This can be used to house and vet information collected and submitted. Only commissioners will have access to drive. This

is not intended to hoard information but ensure a safe and secure place to vet information clearly before uploading for the public.

- It is suggested that the Logistics committee schedule 1st hearing in Western MD. (Already in motion) Western MD would be a great first meeting. Gives an opportunity to pilot the hearing and test processes and procedures.
- **Definition for lynching (formed from statutory language):**
(Racial terror lynching is the unlawful killing of an African American by white mob violence, often with the apparent complicity of state and local officials, intended to incite racial terror and subservience to white supremacy.
- This definition gives clarity to the Commission's work.
- Definition and timeline are listed in the MD LTRC Commission Bill. Commission timeline work and specifications will range from 1854-1933.
- A proposed letter on behalf of Commission will go to those with historical records and historical societies. Another letter will go to MD State's Attorneys' Offices and additional agencies. A local coalition letter will need to be drafted as well.
- Include a "facts page" on LTRC website to provide the public with little known lynching facts. Added federal anti-lynching legislation to website under related links so we can include a reference in our final report.

Reconciliation and Justice Committee

- Last meeting was conducted 3/2/2020.
- Discussed possibility of hiring historical trauma specialist. Met with Dr. Christopher, who would be able to assist from Kellogg Corporation. They are willing to assist with proposals.
- Delegation Meeting 3.17.2020. Hope to schedule times to meet with different reconciliations groups.
- Would like to host meeting with larger commissions and get introduced to persons that may be able to give testimony at MD LTRC hearings.

Comment [DF1]: This meeting was subsequently postponed due to COVID-19.

New Business

- Election for Commission Chair- Commissioner David Fakunle was the only nominated Commissioner to accept nomination for the position of Chair. Commissioner Easton-Martinez introduced a motion to elect Commissioner Fakunle as the permanent Chair of the Commission. The motion passed unanimously and Dr. Fakunle was voted as Chair for the MD Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
- **Vice Chair Election-** Commissioners were reminded that March 20th 2020 is the deadline to submit Vice chair nominations. Self-nominations are welcome. Submit a few sentences on why you would be a great vice-chair to Ms. Hurley and Ms. Osei.
- **House Bill** will be heard 3.17.2020 about extension. Delegate Peña-Melnyk would like at least one commissioner available to give testimony. A written support letter was also requested. Must have 2-3-minute testimony on behalf of Commission. Should also speak to the importance of funding the Commission as well.

- **Correspondence-** Make sure local entities are clear that all the work that is done here is on behalf of the MD LTRC. No personal work will be conducted on behalf of the Commission.
- Is Maryland the first State with a Commission? Virginia has a Commission, but it is not investigatory. More so about public knowledge. It is unclear how similar it is to the work done within MD LTRC. We should connect with that organization to learn more.
- **Resources used for LTRC work-** George Mason University would like to provide assistance with graduate students to conduct research on behalf of Commission. MD LTRC would like to also encourage assistance of HBCU's in Maryland to look into funding and resources to provide student workers who can assist with research. Commission is open to working to work with students in MD HBCUs.
- Update the LTRC website to allow members of the public another way to submit recommendations and share insights.
- Bowie State University may have external funding through departmental grants or other resources that can support LTRC work.
- A suggestion was made to have a Commission meeting with MD HBCU Presidents to discuss external funding for research. (student worker research)
- Commissioner Chavis will solicit additional students (2) from George Mason. How many students to do we need? Commissioner Chavis currently has two paid students who started working the week of March 6th, 2020.
- Commission would like to create a pool of students that can assist with Commission research. Being able to articulate the frame of work for the students is important. Commissioner Chavis' students are working with Research committee. They are currently reviewing census records from newspapers to see about lynching trends. Students have begun researching and collecting data for Allegany hearing in July.
- A goal would be to have funding for the Research committee, so that each subcommittee member would have 1-2 students to assist for research.
- Logistics committee will speak and see if they can utilize student workers to fill internship requirements for school.

Contacting the Commission- Use <http://feedback.msa.maryland.gov/lynching-truth-reconciliation/pages/contact.aspx> to submit all feedback and concerns.

- **Meeting Prep:** Meeting host will print all meeting materials.

2020 Meeting/Hearing Calendar

- Holding some hearings during the week to avoid overtime fees.
- Host some hearings University of Maryland Eastern Shore try to cut down costs. Partnering with other organizations to provide food and other beneficial materials.
- A suggestion was made to merge Charles and St. Mary's county hearings because Charles County is so large.
- Allegany County will need its own hearing because of the travel and location. Hearing will serve as tester or pilot.
- There will be separate panels in the hearing for judicial/justice, press, etc. Panels will be a testifiers and testimony; 1st half of the day will focus on the justice and the 2nd half of the

day covering media or other inquiries. Have media at the hearing to notate and publicize the work of the commission.

- Send an invitation to retired judges and to Attorney General's office. Send out information for organizations that had complicity in years previously. Would like to hear from agencies and organizations on thoughts on the information found during research.
- Will need to revisit and look at possible weekend dates. May be hard to get people out during the week.
- Final Report due December 2021.
- Once Bill passes, Commission may revisit the deadlines and hearing schedule dates. Adjustments may be needed. Should hear back with decision mid-April 2020.

Educational Opportunities for Commissioners

- n/a

Announcements

- 105 Anniversary of ASALH Museum- September 2020 (Montgomery, Alabama)
- Harford County Soil Collection /Ceremony- March 28th, 2020 at 11 a.m. - will be held at Shamrock Park.
- Prince George's County coalition may be formed. Updates to be announced.
- Next meeting April 13, 2020 will begin at 10:45am- 1:30 p.m. to accommodate Ethics Training.

Comments from the Public

n/a

Adjourned: 1:51 p.m.