

# Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission

**Chair**  
David O. Fakunle, Ph.D.

**Vice Chair**  
Charles L. Chavis, Jr., Ph.D.

**Staff**  
Sophie Asike, Esq.  
Trish Boyle  
Zenita Hurley, Esq.  
Kristin McFarlane, Esq.  
Marinda Stafford



**Commissioners**  
David Armenti  
Lindsey Baker  
Iris Leigh Barnes, Ph.D.  
Simone Barrett-Williams, Ph.D.  
Michelle Coles, J.D.  
Nicholas Creary, Ph.D.  
Roger Davidson, Ph.D.  
Maya Davis  
Teisha Dupree-Wilson, Ph.D.  
Christopher E. Haley  
Elizabeth Hughes  
Amy Millin  
Izetta Mobley, Ph.D.  
Carl Snowden  
Marshall Stevenson, Ph.D.  
Stephanie Suerth

## Commission Meeting Minutes – June 2024

**Date:** Monday, June 10, 2024  
**Time:** 11:30am-1:30pm Eastern Time  
**Location:** Virtual

### Attendance

<b>Commissioners</b>	
David O. Fakunle	X
Charles L. Chavis	X
David Armenti	X
Lindsey Baker	X
Iris Leigh Barnes	X
Simone Barrett-Williams	ABS
Michelle Coles	X
Nicholas Creary	X
Roger Davidson	ABS
Maya Davis	ABS
Teisha Dupree-Wilson	X
Christopher E. Haley	X
Elizabeth Hughes	X
Amy Millin	X
Carl Snowden	ABS
Marshall Stevenson	ABS
Stephanie Suerth	ABS
<b>Staff</b>	
Sophie Asike	X
Trish Boyle	X
Zenita Hurley	ABS
Kristin McFarlane	X
Marinda Stafford	X

## **Members of the Public Present**

Hannah Lane, Diane Teichert, Will Schwarz, Michelle Gawerc, Stephanie Franklin, Hess Stinson, Jimmy Reid, DJ BeLove

## **Call to Order**

The meeting started at 11:30 but a quorum was not initially achieved.

## **Public & Chair's Comments**

Commissioner Creary volunteered to lead the meeting in the absence of the Chair and Co-Chair. He expressed his frustration and the shortness of time to complete the commission's work. He reminded the group that there is a vacant seat with a count of seventeen, which means that we would still need nine commissioners for a quorum. Commissioner Hughes also voiced her frustration. She asked if there was a way to work around the lack of engagement by appointing an executive committee that can act in the absence of reaching a quorum. She asked if the commission should explore changing the bylaws to accommodate these types of changes. Commissioner Creary agreed and asked Kristin McFarlane for input from the Office of the Attorney General. Attorney McFarlane refrained from giving advice in the open forum. She suggested that the commission should hold a special meeting to try to address the lack of participation.

Commissioner Creary then reached out for public comment. Stephanie Franklin expressed her serious concern with the lack of participation from the commissioners. She stressed how important the work of the commission is for the state. She requested that the meeting that Attorney McFarlane suggested should be held as soon as possible. Hess Stinson added that she agreed with Ms. Franklin. She suggested that the timing of the meetings is inconvenient for individuals who are doing other work. She suggested that the meetings be scheduled outside of work hours, including weekends. She also recounted a conversation with an individual from Fredrick County that was initially part of the hearing planning process. She was told that they felt "disposed of". They shared with her that they helped to shape the hearing and then were replaced by other community members, and they were relegated to speaker roles. Commissioner Creary addressed the comments by acknowledging that the commission had decided not to work with that group after experiencing challenges. He also noted that those members were present at the hearing and had expressed the concerns shared with Ms. Stinson. He noted that some of the lessons learned from the situation is that the commission must engage with the community early and often. In response, the commission has laid out a better run-of-show and other documents that lay out the role of the committee and the expectations for the local community. Commissioner Armenti corroborated Commissioner Creary's perspective.

Commissioner Haley noted that a commissioner had joined the call and inquired if the meeting had achieved quorum. Commissioner Millin pointed out that the Vice-Chair

had left the meeting, so the meeting was still short one member for the quorum.

Hess Stinson also added that she felt like the commission might have an issue with capacity, but she would like to see a special project person to help in building descendant relationships in the community. She also wanted to note that the gentleman that shared their negative experience with her was willing to sit down and have a conversation with the goal of mending the relationship. Ms. Stinson admitted that the conversation might be difficult but hoped that it could still be arranged. She shared her contact information should she be needed to facilitate any communications with the group.

Sophie Asike announced that the meeting had achieved quorum. She also planned to send a poll to schedule a special meeting to discuss participation.

### **Approval of Minutes**

The minutes from the May meeting were approved and adopted.

### **Research Committee Report**

Commissioner Armenti reported that the Research Committee did not have a general meeting in May. He reported that work is ongoing on collecting collaborative information from prior meetings. The committee is also working on enhancing descendant outreach and communication. He reminded the group that the work of connecting with the community after the hearing helps to build out the public record for the final report. He noted that the Research Committee is collaboration with the Logistic committee and the local community as the hearing are scheduled, to ensure that their goals are aligned. He noted that they are in a constant refining process to make sure they are communicating effectively.

### **Logistics Committee Report**

Commissioner Millin reported that the Logistics Committee met on May 20<sup>th</sup>. They discussed the timelines and reiterated that the hearing should be completed by the end of 2024. She also noted that the committee is also working with the local counties to ensure that hearing dates work with them. The next meeting of the Logistic Committee will be held on June 17<sup>th</sup>. She reminded the group that it is the Commissions responsibility to hold hearings for every county. She reported that they have encountered counties that insisted that they did not need a hearing. She wanted to make it clear that all counties must have a hearing. She reported that St. Mary's, Calvert and Charles Counties will have their hearing on November 16<sup>th</sup>. Prince Georges Counties hearing will be held on January 25<sup>th</sup>. Hartford and Cecil Counties are in conversation about a joint hearing in September. Kent, Caroline and Queen Anns Counties are planning on a regional meeting this fall. Montgomery, Carroll and Howard County are in discussions around their hearing plans. Commissioner Baker

suggested that as soon as dates are confirmed that an invite be sent to the commissioners. Commissioner Barnes clarified that Hartford and Cecil Counties were looking to schedule a hearing in September or October depending on the availability of the venue (Hartford Community College).

### **Reconciliation & Justice Committee**

Commissioner Creary reported that the committee had met last Friday, discussed reparations, and realized that they would need to define reparations. They also felt like they needed to clarify why the hearings must be completed by the end of 2024. Commissioner Creary noted that they are still working on the job description for an author of the final report. He shared that they are aiming to begin the search in August and have a candidate available and ready to start on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2025.

### **County/Region Engagement Updates**

The updates for the hearing schedules were provided by Commissioner Millin during the Logistic Committee Report.

Will Schwarz updated the group about the Carol County soil collection. He noted that it had been rescheduled to September 8<sup>th</sup>.

Trish Boyle asked that Commissioner Barnes give her and Commissioner Millin an update about the upcoming coalition meetings so that Commissioner Millin and herself could join those meetings. She also noted a June 26<sup>th</sup> meeting for the Kent and Queen Anne Group. She added that Commissioner Cole has a planning meeting scheduled for June 24.

### **New Business**

Commissioner Haley asked that we raise the question again about whether this current time for the Commission Meeting is the most convenient for the group.

Commissioner Creary asked the group to review the scope of work for the report writer.

Commissioner Armenti asked about the Reginald F. Lewis Museum exhibition plans. Will Schwarz announced that the museum has hired someone who they intend to name as their representative. He also shared that they are working on the exhibition with a plan for a September opening. Adding that they are working on a permanent exhibit on lynching in Maryland and a memorial to all lynching victims known and unknown.

## **Announcements**

Will Schwarz announce that the Maryland Lynching Memorial Project is sponsoring a Civil Rights Bus Trip this fall. Sharing that there is an information session tomorrow evening.

Commissioner Hughes announced that the African American Heritage Preservation Grant Program is partnering with the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture and the Maryland Historical Trust. They are accepting applications now until July 1<sup>st</sup> for capitol projects that involve sites significant to African American history or the African American experience.

Commissioner Barnes invite everyone to the Hosanna Schools eighth Annual Juneteenth Festival. Noting that Commissioner Coles book “Black Was The Ink” will be featured. This event will be held on Saturday, June 15<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioner Baker shared that Maryland Humanities will be holding a summit called “When We Are All Engaged” focusing on media literacy and mental health at the Newton White Mansion on July 17<sup>th</sup>. There will also be a virtual session on July 16<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioner Armenti drew attention to the Juneteenth holiday and encouraged the participants to find a way to acknowledge the importance.

Commissioner Barnes announced that the Lilly Carol Jackson Civil Rights Museum is holding an event on June 19<sup>th</sup> from 11:00 am to 2:00pm.

Commissioner Haley noted that there is an event on June 10th at 6:00 pm at the Severna Park Library called “The Path to Juneteenth”.

## **Adjournment**

Commissioner Creary made a motion to close the meeting. The meeting was adjourned without opposition at 12:34pm.