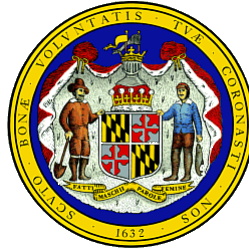


Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission



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.
Joy Sarimakin

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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

Business Meeting Minutes – November 2023

Date: Monday, November 13th, 2023
Time: 11:35am-1:20pm Eastern Time
Location: Virtual

Attendance

Commissioners	
David Armenti	X
Lindsey Baker	X
Iris Barnes	X
Simone Barrett-Williams	X
Charles Chavis	ABS
Michelle Coles	X
Nick Creary	X
Roger Davidson	X
Maya Davis	ABS
Teisha Dupree-Wilson	X
David Fakunle	ABS
Chris Haley	X
Elizabeth Hughes	X
Amy Millin	ABS
Izetta Mobley	ABS
Carl Snowden	X
Marshall Stevenson	ABS
Stephanie Suerth	X
Staff	
Sophie Asike	ABS
Jourdana Claiborun	X
Zenita Hurley	ABS
Kristin McFarlane	X
Joy Sarimakin	X

Members of the Public Present

For more information on the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission, visit
<https://msa.maryland.gov/lynching-truth-reconciliation/>

Will Schwarz, Rev. Diane Teichert, Hannah Lane, Tiffany Tolbert, Hess Love

Call to Order

Commissioner Creary called the meeting to order at 11:35am.

Approval of Minutes

The October 2023 business meeting minutes were accepted by the commission.

Public & Chair's Comments

Commissioner Creary expressed gratitude to all members of the public for their presence, time investment, commitment, and active participation. He urged everyone to introduce themselves and specify their affiliations in the comment section.

Commissioner Creary informed the public that Chair Fakunle would be absent because he was traveling, as well as Vice Chair Chavis due to a transition in his family.

Commissioner Creary recognized Tiffany Tolbert, Senior Director for the African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund at the National Trust for Historic Preservation, as the driving force for the Emmett Till Monument and an attendee of the Maryland Lynching Memorial project conference. He had invited her to discuss her work at the National Trust and share some of her thoughts and experiences, although she had to be moved up on the agenda because she had a limited window to join. Ms. Tolbert expressed her gratitude for the invitation and stated she would talk about the monument as it exists today, its point of creation, and give a brief introduction to the Action Fund.

Ms. Tolbert introduced the Action Fund as a program of the National Trust that started in 2017 with a goal to support projects across the country associated with African American resilience, education, and life achievement. She gave a brief background overview of the Fund and explained how their involvement with the project began in 2020 when the Roberts Temple Church of God in Christ, located in Chicago and the site of Emmett Till's funeral, reached out to the trust for some assistance regarding some structural issues that were mostly due to water and settling. Through the Action Fund, a plan was developed for a full rehabilitation of the building with an awarded grant of \$150,000. They were also able to get a signed proclamation by President Biden on July 25th, 2021 to designate the church as a National Monument with the support of the Till family. She then presented a slide showing a video of the proclamation signing, visuals of the other possible sites to be designated as National Historic Sites, and details of the church with improvements they have made thus far. They are partnering with the National Park Service to work on particulars on factors like staffing, and the Mellon Foundation also provided support in the form of a \$2.9 million grant for site restorations. She closed out by emphasizing the importance of memorializing, preservation, and making monuments of these spaces to help people better understand racial trauma, civil rights, and guide people's understanding of this history and their

continued role.

Commissioner Armenti asked if she could elaborate on where some of the support for the education and staffing for the sites came from. Tiffany explained that the Emmett Till Interpretive Center in Mississippi has already been doing education and tours for years, and it was important for them to stay in that role because she was not confident in the Park Service properly interpreting the history of the space. Regarding Roberts Temple Church, given there was no pre-existing tourist program, they included funding to hire a consultant to develop how the story would be told, and this involved community engagement with church members, leaders, and stakeholders. Though the Park Service will still develop their interpretive and management plan, the hope is that they follow what the local partners and stakeholders have developed. She provided a link that can be visited for more information: savingplaces.org/till and stated anyone can reach out if they have any questions about the trust fund or any of their programs like their national grant program, which will be opening in December for any projects that might need any funding.

Soul Check

Commissioner Creary commended Ms. Tolbert for her insights. Additionally, he expressed excitement to introduce the three new MLTRC public commissioners: Lindsey Baker, Michelle Coles, and Amy Millin, and asked them to talk a bit more about themselves and what drew them to the commission. Commissioner Coles shared enthusiasm in the chat section, and Commissioner Creary said he wants her on the Reconciliation & Justice committee.

Research Committee Report

Commissioner Armenti took time to express appreciation for former commissioners Dr. Kirkland Hall and Omar Eaton-Martinez, and their efforts as well as those of colleagues and associated staff at Maryland State Archives. He referenced the committee meeting on November 6th, which focused on making sure collaborative workflow is understood and reiterating the utilization of the collection's donation platform hosted on the commission's page for all to use or emails to provide source material. He stated that meeting notes will be available on the commission website and scheduled monthly meetings to take place every first Monday at 3:00pm, which is stated on the website.

Commissioner Coles asked if there were any advertisements to provide the public with information on the efforts and work of the committee, and a means to reach out if necessary. Commissioner Armenti answered by acknowledging some steps put in place by the committee like thought pieces for soliciting collaborations, especially within genealogical organizations, but a comprehensive marketing plan is not yet in

place and there is still room for growth. Commissioner Coles volunteered to explore other potential leads like civil rights organizations, private African American attorneys or their descendants, and the Civil Rights division at DOJ which may have records. Commissioner Creary followed up by highlighting the \$175,000 received last month from the Emmett Till Cold Case Investigations and Prosecution Program, of which part is allocated to hire a public relations consultant specifically for this. He recommended the commission put together an RFP to dispatch with enough time to review the proposals and have someone on board by December.

Ms. Claibourn added that she had some people on standby to submit proposals depending on when the committee is ready. Ms. McFarlane stated the process is cost-dependent, and a commissioner must work with them on the description and cost estimate. Commissioner Creary provided some insight on what the deliverables might entail, such as generating PR for the hearing in Frederick County in February, collaborating with local media, national networks, and social media presence to get information out about the commission. Considering this, Commissioner Hughes volunteered to work on the RFP and Commissioner Baker was happy to assist because it seemed in line with her interest in the Logistics committee. Commissioner Creary highlighted details regarding the Frederick County hearing session, stating the tentative date is in February to leverage Black History Month, and a possible venue identified by the local coalition is a historic elementary school where possible access to the site is in the works. Commissioner Creary followed with a quick overview of the reasons behind the liaisons, adding that the list of select commissioners in that position needs to be updated. Commissioner Haley asked for present commissioners to state what coalitions they are affiliated with. Mr. Schwarz advised the commissioners, especially the new ones, to review the video of the last conference of the four coalitions on the website. Rev Teichert provided some clarity on what is needed, appreciated Commissioner Haley and Commissioner Davis, and then advised the other liaisons to provide directions for Commissioner Baker and Commissioner Dupree-Wilson. Rev. Teichert also commended Mr. Schwarz on the MLMP conference. Commissioner Dupree-Wilson requested specifics on what is required of an assisting commissioner, and Mr. Schwarz explained that liaisons are to work with local coalition to put on and provide content for the hearing session. Commissioner Creary broke it down further, explaining they are to work with the coalition and Project Manager to ensure the planning and requirements for a successful hearing session are met. Commissioner Dupree-Wilson asked for the list of allocated commissioner-coalition affiliations to be published for the benefit of everyone, including the public. Commissioner Creary agreed and went further to reiterate that some counties where racial terror lynchings happened do not have coalitions, and that had to be resolved. Mr. Schwarz added that there were counties that have not had hearing sessions yet as well. Commissioner Haley then shared his

screen to show the 2021 county liaison list, which was updated during the meeting with the counties lacking in liaison highlighted in red. The issue regarding the combination of Carol and Frederick counties was brought up, and Commissioner Armenti suggested it should be handled by the Logistics committee. Commissioner Coles volunteered to be the liaison for St. Mary's County and tentatively Queen Anne's County. The document is to be shared with Commissioner Creary and Chair Fakunle. Commissioner Haley asked if the updated list was fine, and Commissioner Creary suggested the counties to be separated rather than leaving them in their current grouping to make the process more seamless and start planning a tentative calendar for next year. Commissioner Barnes asked if the commission is still working with the AG office and Mr. Schwarz explained they will be coming back into the community remembrance project but just not as hands-on.

Logistics Committee Report

N/A

Reconciliation & Justice Committee

N/A

New Business

N/A

Announcements

Mr. Schwarz shared details on a monograph written by Dean Haron of Frederick County. He also commended the Montgomery County Commission for installing two markers for two of the three racial terror lynching victims at the Reconciliation Remembrance. He also mentioned digital archives of racial terror lynchings in Maryland expected to be available by Summer 2024.

Adjournment

The meeting concluded at 1:15 pm. Commissioner Creary made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Barnes and Commissioner Haley.