

Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission
Logistics Subcommittee Meeting
2255 Rolling Run Dr, Windsor Mill, MD
November 6, 2019

Present: Tim Baker, Elizabeth Hughes, Tamara Wilson, Will Schwarz

Meeting Notes

Meeting convened at 10:00 AM

The Subcommittee considered what questions should be addressed with members of local lynching remembrance and reconciliation organizations attending the November 16th conference “Lynching in Maryland: The Journey from Truth to Reconciliation” to inform development of the Commission’s upcoming schedule of regional hearings.

Feedback should be sought on the following issues:

- Hearing venue: Where should these hearings be held? What type of venue would be most welcoming for informants? Are there particular venue suggestions? Do any of these venues have live streaming/audio visual capabilities?
- Outreach: How should these hearings be marketed? How can we ensure that effected communities are made aware of these hearings and come out to provide testimony? What local organizations can assist the Commission in spreading the word about the hearings?
- Timing: What is best day/time for these hearings? Is it okay if the day/time for hearings vary from region to region if each region’s needs and conditions are different?

The Subcommittee discussed development of a single program and approach that would be implemented at each hearing event to ensure consistency. All agreed that the program should consist of four components:

1. Opening: The first speaker (a Commissioner) will provide background information regarding why and how the Commission was created, describe the Commission’s mission and expected outcomes of the Commission’s work, and outline hearing goals, ground rules and procedures.
2. History Overview: The second speaker (possibly a member of the Commission’s Research Subcommittee) will provide an overview of the lynching events in the region/counties where the hearing is taking place. This overview will include specific details of the lynching occurrence, including victims’ names, conditions surrounding the lynching event (location, timing, etc.), and what we know about those institutions complicit in allowing the event to proceed and perpetrators to go unpunished.

Question: Can the Research Committee prepare the summary history documenting these lynching events which will be presented at the hearings?

3. Testimony: The third speaker (ideally a professional facilitator) will solicit public testimony from the audience regarding what is known about local lynching occurrences and what the impact of the legacy of lynching has been on the local community. Members of the public will be invited to sign up to speak in advance of the meeting; once those members of the public have had their say, the facilitator will invite others in the audience who did not sign up to speak to provide testimony if they so desire. Written testimony will also be solicited.

Question: We need to give people space to tell their stories but how do we place appropriate time limits on the speakers? How will we record the event to ensure we will have a record of the proceedings that is archivally stable?

4. Next Step Recommendations: The fourth speaker (possibly a member of the Commission's Reconciliation Committee) will ask audience members to propose recommendations for addressing the legacy of lynching in their communities – suggesting the wide range of outcomes that could be considered. For this part of the hearing, the audience could be divided into working groups with group leaders to brainstorm and record ideas on a flip chart. After a period of time, each group leader will report out their group's recommendations to the audience. Alternatively, audience members could be given post-it notes to record their ideas, post them on a large sheet of paper where they are reorganized by category of proposed action, and reported out to the group at the end of the hearing.

Question: Could the Reconciliation Committee help us think through this component of the hearing?

Other hearing considerations included the following:

- Security: How will we provide security for these events? Local police should be made aware of the event, etc.
- Accessibility: All hearing venues must be accessible.
- Recording of the event: How will we record the event? It would be ideal to contract with an audio visual professional to set up and record the hearings. Some venues may provide this service. Will Schwarz can research options for AV support after the November 16th conference.
- Transcription of the hearing recording: Is this desirable in order to ensure access and archival stability? What would this cost and who would do it? Tim Baker will reach out to Barry Lanman, Director of the Martha Ross Center for Oral History at UMBC, regarding best practices for the recordation and preservation of oral testimony gathered as a part of this process.
- Collection of materials: How will we receive other materials such as newspaper articles, photos, objects, etc., that are delivered as paper or electronic files to Commissioners or presented at the hearings? The Commission should establish a formal workflow to ensure these types of crowdsourced research materials are recorded and made accessible to all. Tim Baker will develop a draft policy for consideration. \

- Refreshments: Some form of refreshments (water bottles, coffee, cookies, etc.) should be provided for these meetings since it is likely that they will last for 2-3 hours depending upon the number of participants.

Based on previous discussions at the October 28th meeting of the Commission, the Subcommittee identified the following hearing locations to ensure that all parts of Maryland feel they have access to the public hearing process.

1. Lower Eastern Shore
2. Upper Eastern Shore
3. Harford and Baltimore counties
4. Southern Maryland
5. Prince George's County
6. Anne Arundel County
7. Frederick County
8. Montgomery and Howard counties
9. Allegany County
10. Baltimore City

All Commissioners are not expected to attend all hearings.

The Subcommittee agreed that in order for these hearings to be successful, all of the many details must be finalized before the hearing process can begin. It is preferable to delay the hearing process rather than begin the process prematurely.

Future meetings of the Logistics Subcommittee will take place every other Wednesday from 10-11 AM. Meetings will alternate between the Maryland State Archives offices in Woodlawn and Annapolis. The next meeting will take place on November 20th at the MSA Annapolis office located at 350 Rowe Boulevard.

Meeting adjourned at 11:05 AM