

Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission

MEETING MINUTES

Monday,

April 13th, 2020

11:30 a.m. (Virtual)

Commissioners and Staff present (Via telephone/Virtual): David Armenti, Timothy Baker, Iris Barnes, Simone Barrett, DeNeen Brown, Charles Chavis, Nicholas Creary, Roger Davidson, Omar Eaton-Martinez, David Fakunle, Elizabeth Hughes, Elgin Klugh, Gary Norman, Carl Snowden, Tamara Wilson, Zenita Hurley, Will Schwarz, Maya Davis, Sonya Osei

Absent: Damika Baker, Kirkland Hall, Marshall Stevenson, Kristen McFarlane

Members of the public present: n/a

Call to Order: Chair David Fakunle called the meeting to order at approximately 11:40 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 March 9th, 2020 Commission meeting were considered and approved with discussion and revisions.

Public Comments: n/a

COVID-19 Updates:

- **Chair-**Prepare for virtual vote for vice chair during May virtual meeting in association with all rules and regulations.
- **Chair-**All hearings are paused until further notice. During this time, Commission will continue to build contacts and further organize for when we can host hearings. Commission must still be prepared during this time.
- Please send COVID-19 information updates and ideas that you think should be included to Commissioner Chavis and Ms. Davis to help maintain social presence for those that may utilize this information during this time. The Commission wants to ensure the public has access to this information.
- A suggestion was brought to the floor for the Commission to host hour long virtual discussion to help maintain dialogues with the community and other interested organizations during this time of COVID-19. The goal is to maintain communication with the community and local organizations and to bridge the work of the Commission with some African-American geographical areas associated with COVID-19 and how COVID-19 affects poverty and racially targeted areas. A virtual Town Hall meeting is another suggestion on how to keep the public updated on Commission progress. The Commission is seeking to issue a press release indicating that the commission is still working and dedicated to this cause amid the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Commissioner Wilson- MD Commission on African American History and Culture wrote letter connecting their work and COVID-19 to the Governor regarding disparities that are occurring in

African American communities. The MD LTRC can use this as opportunity to write a letter to make connection between Commission work and the effects of COVID-19. There are relatable aspects to show long-term effects in the African American community. The letter can focus on issues that continue to plague the community.

- Maryland Lynching Memorial Project is having historical marker placed in May 2020 for the remembrance of Howard Cooper, who was lynched outside the old Baltimore County Jail in Towson in 1885. This event will be delayed to Fall 2020 due to COVID-19. The Maryland Lynching Memorial Project is planning a series of these programs that the Commission can collaborate on. Possibly create a panel to discuss various topics. (Mr. Schwarz will provide additional updates.)
- The Commission wants to connect with county coalitions to discuss the work being done to participate with Town Hall. To goal is to inform the public and other organizations that the Commission is still working dedicated to our mission. The Commission is interested in collaborating with local coalitions and organization. Members of the Commission will reach out to see what organizations are interested in collaborating. The Commission is here to help. We would like to collaborate if possible or at least inform the progress of the work being done on behalf of MD LTRC.
- Meeting with county coalitions this Saturday April 18, 2020 to discuss (Will Schwarz) on the state of things and the continuance of work affiliated with the Maryland Memorial Lynching Project. Please identify objections to be called on behalf of the Commission to Mr. Schwarz.
- Send email to Chair Fakunle and MD LTRC Commission members to update calendar of upcoming events and opportunities for possible collaboration.

Committee Reports:

Logistics' Committee:

- The subcommittee received no conditional feedback on draft template on hearing testimony. Hearing Schedule may not dictate accuracy of Commission work that can be done. Will be revised to reflect a more comprehensive calendar. Would like formal approval of draft template for hearing testimony.
- Next meeting Wednesday, April 15, 2020 at 10 a.m. to discuss upcoming coalition meeting for Saturday, April 18th, 2020 on how best to engage coalitions from another perspective. Memorial Lynching project meeting on Saturday, April 18th, 2020; Commissioners are encouraged to dial in.
- Committee is asking for additional discussion or formal approval of draft template on hearing testimony draft.

Research Committee/ Reconciliation and Justice Committee:

- April 3rd, 2020 meeting was held to check in with Commissioners regarding processes and procedures. The committee officially approved baseline Data to focus on research.
- Discussed Google Drive as central repository to vet information before making it open to the public. Committee members will have access to Google Drive. The research will be divided amongst subcommittee members based on different areas in MD. Designated responsibilities. Making sure information in added to drive from their region.

- Commissioner Chavis is working with George Mason University students who will assist with MD LTRC Commission research. Students have done great work and are working research on primary materials such as newspapers.
- Student work is currently focused on 3 regions. Easter Shore research has been tabled and will be reserved for the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. Students have compiled 95 primary source articles on Prince Georges County cases. Students are working on creating reports and annotated bibliographies documenting what these sources are saying and information discovered. Looking at additional work that students from Maryland HBCUs can complete.
- Letters will be sent out to local coalitions (via email). Shriver Center at UMBC. Shriver Center Meeting will occur in a few weeks to discuss potential partnerships.
- Subcommittee will reach out to Afro American Genealogical Society to see about gaining support from their organization on genealogical research. They may be able to assist with research and reconciliation. Both have received literature from commission. Ms. Hurley and MD State Archives have copies of communications that were sent out currently.
- **Website discussion-** There is flexibility on how information can be displayed on the website. Subcommittee will check with UMD African American Humanities Digital Department to discuss design of website. Commission wants to ensure there are no copyright infringement issues from different sources. This will provide clarity on what the Commission can post and what we cannot post.
- In coordination with Commissioner Armenti and MD Historical Society to use their historical library for information. Commission is looking to sort from text, video, and audio conversations. UMBC student has volunteered to assist Commissioner Armenti. Virtual town hall meeting with Maryland Historical Society will be held and hope to have virtual meeting surrounding around one of Memorial Lynching Project meetings in May. (Mr. Schwarz and Commissioner Klugh)
- Next virtual meeting will be listed TBA.
- Virtual workshop may occur. Zoom call or WebEx with content expert to help prepare for hearings.

New Business

- Tabled

Announcements

- Draft template- Propose waiting until May MD LTRC meeting for final vote. April 18th, 2020 Memorial Lynching Project meeting can provide additional feedback on draft hearing template. Please let Chair Fakunle know who from Logistics committee will represent the Commission.
- Update Damika Baker for all invites. She replaced Jackie Copeland.

Comments from the Public

n/a

Adjourned: 12:29 p.m.