

Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission

MEETING MINUTES

Monday, December, 9th, 2019

11:00 a.m.

Commissioners and Staff present: Chair David Fakunle; Elgin Klugh; Tamara E. Wilson; Tim Baker; Carl Snowden; David Armenti; Kristin McFarlane; Sonya Osei; Zenita Hurley;

Participating via telephone: Gary Norman, Nicholas Creary, Kendra Ogunshina, Iris Barnes; Simone Barrett; Charles L. Chavis, Jr.; Omar Martinez;

Absent: Marshall Stevenson, Jr, Jackie Copeland, Roger Davidson; Kirkland J. Hall. Sr.; Elizabeth Hughes, Marshall Stevenson; Will Schwarz

Members of the public present: Steve McKenna; David Taft Terry, Maya Davis, Chris Haley, Kathy Glyshaw, Nicole Saini

Call to Order: Acting Chair Fakunle called the meeting to order at approximately 11: 10 a.m. Commissioners and members of the public introduced themselves for the record.

Approval of Meeting Minutes: Acting Chair Fakunle called for the approval of the minutes of the previous meeting. Zenita Hurley responded that she would submit edits for punctuation errors to Sonya Osei. The minutes for the November 16, 2019 Commission meeting were considered and approved with discussion.

Vote for Commission Officers

The vote for the Chair and Vice Chair of the Commission is tabled until all of the four public members of the commission are officially appointed by the Governor. Three public members have been approved for appointment. However, the fourth public member submitted her application later than the others and the Commission expects to receive notice of her approval status by the end of January.

Subcommittee Reports-

Logistics Committee-

- Commission Meetings will be held the second Monday of every month as regularly occurring date of the MDLTRC business meetings from 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM.
- Logistics committee is responsible for arranging and determining how hearings would be conducted.

- The goal is to have had a few Public hearings completed and/or scheduled by April/May 2020 with others for the future.
- The committee has a working draft and analysis of public hearings that will provide insight. The hearings are useful as they promote the idea of healing for the families and those involved. By January 2020, Logistics would like to share draft template to share insight with the committees.
- Expand the word “hearing” to help tell a story and provide people an opportunity to share their experience and story. What is the lasting effect personally and within the community on these events that have occurred? Must create space of safety and accuracy.
- Discussion of the interim report and the need to have public meetings before then. The 1st report should explain a formal process of what the commission has worked on and the beginning process of hearings. Preliminary report due by September 1st, 2020. Begin writing June 2020. August 2020 begin circulating DRAFT.
- Report must include full commission process along with a discussion of the research and hearings completed thus far.
- It was recommended to attempt to have half of the hearings done by the time of the interim report, noting the issues related to the time that it took to get the commission up and running.
- The Commission should be working with well-established coalitions to set up hearings but the report must be work of the Commission.
- A formal invitation will be sent to specific individuals to include victims, sheriffs, courts, and public officials and asked “What do the records show? The goal is help diversify the pool of individuals testifying, stating that the commission needed to hear the totality of all sides.
- There was a discussion of the Attorney General’s Office right to subpoena records and witnesses.
- There was also a discussion of challenges of hearings including time, reluctance to share, etc. It was recommended that speaking times may need to be limited (e.g., similar to the 3 minute hearings of the general assembly) though it is important that witnesses be able to tell their full stories. The research committee could be responsible for follow up in Oral histories.
- Looking at Google Drive, Mailchip, and others for meetings for easy access. MD State Archives will oversee this platform. There is a need for a mechanism of story collecting.

Research Committee-

- Commissioner Elgin Klugh, Chair of the Committee, recommends meeting with the coalitions to establish a research plan. The Maryland State Archives Legacy of Slavery team has resources to assist, which has conducted research in past years.
- Open Meeting Act Training will be obtained by the Committee Chair.
- The plan is to have meetings with representatives for various coalitions to discuss what has already been collected.

- Maryland Attorney General's office mandates that all information should be in compliance with the Open Meetings Act.
- Will Schwartz will be responsible for communications with coalitions.
- Would like State Archives to present on what research has already been complete. Nicole is maintaining online presence. Would like to have them present at January meeting.
- **Upcoming Coalition meetings:**
Prince George's County Coalition would be meeting at the Oxon Hill Manor on Saturday, December 14, 2019 from 2:00 – 5:00 PM.
Howard County Coalition would be meeting on the same date at then Owen Brown Interfaith Center in Columbia from 1:00 – 4:00 PM.
Harford County Coalition would be meeting December 19, 2019.

Commissioner Tim Baker began a discussion on what information should be on the MDLTRC website. He also expressed the need to reach out to the coalitions to gather information on their meetings to share on the website and recommended creating a list of email addresses for a listserv.

- Geological perspectives/expertise needed also to assist with research: January 2020 goal

RECONCILIATION & Justice

- Chair Fakunle shared that this committee has not met yet and needs to meet for the first time.

New Business Discussions

Commission Archives

Commission staff member at Bowie State University brought forth a question from the university. What is the expectation for collecting archives? When are they coming? Special Collections library is currently under construction but will be complete by March 2020. Commissioner Baker recommends the official commission reports, agendas, and minutes be housed at the archives. Copies will be disseminated to other organizations and Universities. Commissioners should figure out the best way to set up folders for collecting.

Commission Budget

The discussion of reimbursement for mileage. It was shared that there is currently no line item budget and that Del. Pena-Melnyk stated that a small modest budget could be submitted. It was shared that if a budget is to be approved during the FY2020 Legislative Session that the funds would not be available until July 1, 2020.

Next Meeting's Goals

- Create Listserv, coalition and public listserv- compile email addresses of those inquiring about commission information and progress
- Research committee should also work with logistic committee in order to secure information and resources.
- Logistics committee put together draft template of what meetings and hearings would look like.
- Set up meeting with coalitions to see how their meetings and such are conducted to better perfect commission hearings
- Formally invite those distinguished guests, victims, staff, police enforcement to testify on their experience. Ask them what their records show to hold accountability to see what research has been done or records on hold
- Archives would like everything to be digitized. Research committee would work together to create a workflow on how to capture, save, and disseminate. Banneker State museum should receive copies of archives.
- Create preliminary budget for funds for commissions to submit and present

Adjournment

Acting Chair Fakunle made a motion to adjourn. Ms. McFarlane from the Attorney General's Office denied the motion to adjourn to take the roll of the remainder of commissioners and public individuals who joined via telephone. Two additional people were announced. Mr. Fakunle adjourned the meeting at 12:17 p.m.