

Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission



Chair
David O. Fakunle, Ph.D.

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

Staff
Joy Ayomiposi Sarimakin
Zenita Hurley, Esq.
Kristin McFarlane, Esq.
Stephanie Thompson, PMP

Commissioners
David Armenti
Iris Leigh Barnes, Ph.D.
Simone Barrett-Williams, Ph.D.
Nicholas Creary, Ph.D.
Roger Davidson, Ph.D.
Maya Davis
Teisha Dupree-Wilson, Ph.D.
Omar Eaton-Martinez
Christopher E. Haley
Kirkland Hall, Sr., Ph.D.
Elizabeth Hughes
Izetta Mobley, Ph.D.
Carl Snowden
Marshall Stevenson, Ph.D.
Stephanie Suerth

Business Meeting Minutes – April 2023

Date: Monday, April 10th, 2023
Time: 11:35am-1:05pm Eastern Time
Location: Virtual

Attendance

Commissioners	
David Armenti	X
Iris Barnes	ABS
Simone Barrett-Williams	ABS
Charles Chavis	X
Nick Creary	X
Roger Davidson	X
Maya Davis	X
Teisha Dupree-Wilson	ABS
Omar Eaton-Martinez	X
David Fakunle	X
Chris Haley	X
Kirkland Hall	X
Elizabeth Hughes	X
Izetta Mobley	X
Carl Snowden	ABS
Marshall Stevenson	X
Stephanie Suerth	X
Staff	
Joy Sarimakin	X
Zenita Hurley	X
Kristin McFarlane	X
Stephanie Thompson	X

Members of the Public Present

Elaine Rice Bachmann, Tail la Lola, Will Schwarz, Rev Diane Teichert, Auset Reid, Michelle Gewerc, Amy Millin.

Call to Order

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

Approval of Minutes

The March 2023 business retreat minutes were accepted by the Commission.

Public & Chair's Comments

Chair Fakunle thanked the members of the public present and asked them to introduce themselves.

Logistics Committee Report

N/A

Research Committee Report

Commissioner Armenti said he is working in collaboration with the Prince George's County and Queen Anne's County coalitions. Prince George's Lynching Memorial Project is moving forward on Saturday, April 15th to identify three perpetrators' descendants, meet with them and consider what work to prioritize. Heritage Associates is talking with a descendant of Asbury Green. Research of John Fields' lynching in Queen Anne's County is still ongoing. Commissioner Armenti said he will be sending out details for the April meeting to talk more about genealogy and the case study. Commissioner Creary said the commissioners need to set up their work so that the coalition is working to bring attention to the other 3 cases.

Reconciliation & Justice Committee

Commissioner Creary was able to get a site for public comments regarding reparations and is open to suggestions and recommendations from the commissioners and the public.

New Business

Chair Fakunle mentioned that the extension bill passed the Maryland General Assembly with signature to come from Gov. Moore, and thanked Delegate Jennifer White and Senator Charles Sydnor for their championing of the respective bills.

The selection of the new commissioners and their time requirements were discussed with a list of new questions generated for candidates and current commissioners to provide answers in two weeks:

1. How do they approach conflict in a way that resists white supremacy and upholds equitable approaches to conflict and the ethical interpretation of history?
2. Which models of equity or which historians are they inspired by or who have models they found useful?
3. What is their understanding of the work, the mission of the Commission, and how they can contribute to that mission?
4. What does it mean to share power and the reparative process with descendants?
5. What inspires you to engage in this work, are there people or philosophies that resonate with you?

Chair Fakunle discussed the leadership structure in the case of his or Vice-Chair Chavis' absence. He thanked Commissioner Armenti who has been doing it, and asked if there are others who are interested, to which Commissioner Mobley said yes. Vice-Chair Chavis said the committee chairs are the first to take the lead in the case of their absences then in case they too are not available, then it can go to other commissioners. The motion to accept this chain of command was moved and accepted by the commission.

Chair Fakunle mentioned the commissioners' county coalition liaison assignment list to which commissioners have been assigned. This was mentioned in Commissioner Armenti's report about commissioners' regions of assignment, as the commissioners have been encouraged to cultivate relationships in different aspects so that every commissioner can have a liaison assignment. Commissioner Haley said commissioners can change their assignment if it does not align with the county coalition where they live and what network they have within their geographical proximity. Commissioner Davidson asked to be put in Prince George's County because of his affiliation at Bowie State University. Chair Fakunle said the primary assignment list for the commissioners will be updated and sent out. Commissioner Creary asked about the project manager position, to which Zenita Hurley replied that it has been a challenge to get one because it is not a full-time position. Zenita added that she is working on getting someone from the AAG's Office to help the

commission in the meantime. Commissioner Davis said the logistics committee can take up some of the hearing planning for the time being and Chair Fakunle encouraged that we should not allow the lack of a project manager replacement to stop us from planning for the hearings so the work can move faster when we have the replacement. He also mentioned that the counties we will be focused on for the hearing for this year 2023 will be Prince George's County and the Upper Eastern Shore.

Commissioner Mobley reminded the commission of the importance of memorial elevation with the public regarding hearing session dates, especially around important dates in the counties of interest, if possible.

Commissioner Haley proposed implementing a "soul check," 15 minutes during each business meeting for commissioners and the public to decompress and talk about the larger context of racial justice/injustice in the U.S., particularly as it occurs in real time while engaged in the commission's charged work. The motion to implement was moved and accepted.

Announcements

Will Schwarz mentioned that he was going to be posting a link to a short documentary film entitled [*Lynching Postcards: "Token of a Great Day"*](#)

Vice-Chair Chavis said he has been working with the Wicomico County coalition, and that a recent situation emerged from the trip with student about documenting and digitizing document and materials in George Town historic district that was displaced and destroyed, including records pertaining to Matthew Williams. There was a request for the MLTRC to meet with the coalition in Wicomico County to help them interpret the incident.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:05pm Chair Fakunle moved for adjournment. It was seconded by Commissioner Armenti and seconded by Commissioners Creary and Davis.