

PUBLIC MEETING
Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission (LTRC)

August 12, 2019, 1PM-3PM

Maryland House of Delegates, Rm 240 (and live-streamed)
Annapolis, MD 21401

Meeting Minutes

- Host:** Delegate Joseline Peña-Melnyk, bill sponsor
- Present:** See attached August 9, 2019 list of Designated Representatives; and Derrick Coley, Bowie State University; Kristin McFarlane, Assistant Attorney General (Counsel to the LTRC)
- Absent:** Jackie Copeland, R. Lewis Museum of African American History and Culture
Nicholas Creary, Ph.D., Maryland Lynching Memorial Project
Edith Perry, Office of Delegate Joseline Peña-Melnyk
Carl Snowden, NAACP Maryland State Conference
Marshall Stevenson, Ph.D., University of Maryland Eastern Shore
- Materials:** Agenda (attached)
Commission Roster (August 9, 2019)
House Bill 307 – Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission
House Bill 307 Fiscal and Policy Note – 3rd Reader

This Commission meeting was live-streamed; the video is the official record for archival purposes and can be found here:

<http://mgahouse.maryland.gov/mga/play/65964bce-a04b-46c7-8425-ad1f7a3e9abd/?catalog/03e481c7-8a42-4438-a7da-93ff74bd4a4c>

GENERAL SUMMARY:

Delegate Peña-Melnyk: welcomed all; reviewed bill which is very prescriptive as to what the LTRC is charged to do. Offered her assistance should additional legislation be needed. She explained she is not a member of the LTRC, but as the bill sponsor, she wanted to attend the first meeting to answer any questions.

The Delegate noted the commissioners may elect to establish subgroups to distribute workload. She suggested: (1) monthly meetings; (2) public be offered time for comments at the end of each meeting; (3) and commissioners be present as much as possible rather than dialing-in.

Commission mandate: convene regional hearings; receive recommendations from the public; make recommendations for addressing lynching in the spirit of restorative justice.

Reports: Interim report is due by September 1, 2020. Final report is due by December 1, 2021. The law ends on June 30, 2022.

Will Schwarz, President, Maryland Lynching Memorial Project: gave a presentation on lynching in Maryland and community remembrance projects. Shared Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) information about Community Remembrance Projects: Some communities collect soil. EJI has a formal protocol for doing this. Montgomery County and Leonardtown are planning upcoming soil collection ceremonies. Others place historical markers. Anne Arundel County will be the first location in Maryland to install a marker on Saturday, Sept 7 in Annapolis. Another option is to retrieve a vertical column from the EJI facility and place it in a suitable location within their communities

The Commissioners made several decisions during the meeting, including:

Interim Chair:

Dr. David Fakunle, Great Blacks in Wax Museum (david.fakunle@morgan.edu) by unanimous vote.

Meeting Schedule:

Monthly; will alternate between Annapolis and Baltimore. The Archives has office space in both locations. Next meeting will be Thursday, September 12. Details to be determined.

Transparency: <https://www.mdlynchingmemorial.org/md-ltrc> will be the repository of materials and files for the Commission, until further notice. Commissioners received advice from Counsel regarding what electronic communications are subject to the Open Meetings Act and which are not, as well as instructions for work group meetings. When a majority of Commissioners meet, the meeting must be public.

The following action items were assigned:

Delegate Peña-Melnyk: Receive Ethics Office response to August 1 request for exemption from filing annual disclosure statements. Status: DONE. Aug 22 email message from Annette Johnson says the LTRC exemption request has been granted. Will Schwarz copied.

Chairman Fakunle:

- Complete Open Meetings' training.
- Approve web page posting for self-nominations for public commissioner appointments.
- Finalize logistical details and agenda for September 12 meeting. Some topics:
 - Deliberation: Candidates for public commissioner appointments;
 - Procedures for public comment; use of technology for witness testimony;
 - Workgroup formation; and
 - Regional hearing schedule and location.

- Follow-up with Bowie State University concerning LTRC support staff.

Zenita Hurley: Work with Will Schwarz to draft text for self-nominations and send to Chairman for approval.

Will Schwarz:

- Distribute the EJI power point presentation to the Commissioners and staff
- Ensure each Commissioner has a copy of the book he distributed, Lynching in America – Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror, 3rd Edition, from the Equal Justice Initiative. Note: Del. Peña-Melnyk requests a copy. Note: There were two copies of the book left with the Delegate. Edith will bring them to the September 12 meeting
- Maintain the LTRC web page.
- Post the self-nomination instructions for public commissioner positions (4 to fill)
- Work with the University of Baltimore to organize the September 12 meeting on the rationale for the Commission. Speakers include: Delegate Peña-Melnyk; Ms. Kelebogile Zvobgo, a political scientist at the College of William & Mary Global Research Institute and the author of a recent article in the online journal, The Conversation, about prospects and pitfalls facing the Maryland Commission and the keynote speaker, Ms. Sherrilyn Ifill, President and Director-Counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund and author of the article "Creating a Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Lynching;" and the 2017 book, On the Courthouse Lawn: Confronting the Legacy of Lynching in the 21st Century.
- Work with the Chairman and Derrick Coley of Bowie State regarding support staff.

Derrick Coley: Meet with Dr. Diarra Robertson and identify support staff for the LTRC.

Edith Perry: Bring tent cards and extra books to September 12 meeting.

Possible topic for future Commission meetings: Schedule a briefing on restorative justice. Identify whether models are in place that are suitable for framing the LTRC's work. Suggestion: Request a speaker from the Maryland Law School's Dispute Resolution Center.

At the end of the Public Meeting, all present commissioners voted unanimously to go into closed session pursuant to General Provisions Art. §3-305(7) to obtain legal advice regarding compliance with the Open Meetings Act. The commissioners and legal counsel remained in Room 240 for the closed session. No action was taken by the Commission.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 3pm.