

Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, September 12, 2019
4:00 pm - 6:00 PM

University of Baltimore School of Law
1401 N. Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21201

Commissioners and Staff Present: Elizabeth Hughes; Tamara E. Wilson; David Fakunle; David Armenti; Nicholas Creary; Iris Barnes; Tim Baker; Gary Norman; Elgin Klugh; Simone Barrett; Marshall Stevenson, Jr.; Allie Preston (on behalf of Del. Joseline Pena-Melnyk); Will Schwarz; Kristin McFarlane; Zenita Wickham Hurley

Absent: Jackie Copeland; Carl Snowden; Roger Davidson

Call to Order: Acting Chair Fakunle called the meeting to order at approximately 4:05pm. Commissioners introduced themselves for the record.

Approval of Meeting Minutes: The minutes for the August 12, 2019 Commission meeting were considered and approved without objection.

Review and discussion of administrative procedures documents: The Commissioners approved proposed procedures for public comment at Commission meetings without objection. The Acting Chair clarified that the public comment procedures apply to the Commission's regular meetings; separate procedures will be developed for the public hearings required under the statute. The Commission approved without objection the proposed written statement for closing a meeting under the Open Meetings Act. Acting Chair Fakunle informed the Commissioner that he had completed the required Open Meetings Act training.

By-laws: The Commissioners then discussed the process of developing by-laws. Mr. Schwarz requested that the by-laws include a mechanism to allow for the participation of experts in the Commission's discussions (distinct from public members) at the Commission's discretion. Counsel McFarlane shared other areas typically included in by-laws, including: officers (how chosen and duties); what constitutes a quorum; frequency of meetings; sub-committees; purpose of powers of Commission (as mandated by State law); means for amending the by-laws; and how meeting minutes will be archived.

The Commissioners voted unanimously to create an ad-hoc/subcommittee to develop recommendations for inclusion in the Commission’s by-laws. The following Commissioners volunteered to staff this subcommittee and work with Counsel McFarlane on the development of by-laws: Wilson; Norman; Baker; and Creary.

Discussion of sub-committees: After a lengthy discussion, the Commissioners voted unanimously to create the following additional subcommittees:

1. **Public Hearings** – develops recommendations on all logistics regarding execution of the public hearings (e.g., number and location of hearings; hearing itinerary; engagement of local residents and leaders)
 - a. Commissioners: Baker; Hughes; Norman and Creary
2. **Research** – develops recommendations on process for identifying the historical facts relating to lynchings (and related activities) in Maryland, including the location and date of lynchings, the parties and communities involved/impacted, and the role of media, government and other institutions
 - a. Commissioners: Klugh; Barrett; Barnes; and Stevenson
3. **Reconciliation** – develops recommendations for addressing, engaging and reconciling communities affected by lynchings
 - a. Commissioners: Fakunle; Hughes; Stevenson and Wilson

The Commissioners considered and then tabled for future discussion the creation of a subcommittee focused solely on public outreach and engagement.

Review of applications for “public” Commissioners: The Commission discussed at length the types of skills/qualifications needed to advance the Commission’s work. Commissioners were first asked to describe their own skills/talents. Skills identified by Commissioners in attendance included: research; story-telling; administration; research; writing; public speaking; record-keeping; historian; television writing/production; legal analysis; consensus building; public policy development; curator; educator/professor; museum professional; public outreach; anthropology; community revitalization; speech pathology and community organization.

Commissioners then identified the additional skills that should be prioritized when reviewing the public Commission member applications:

- experience or proven interest in lynchings or other racial/social justice issues;
- restorative justice/community reconciliation experience/training;
- psychology/social work or other experience working with individuals who have experienced trauma,;
- social media design/marketing; and
- public relations.

Commissioners also suggested that racial, gender and geographical diversity be considered to the extent allowed by federal and constitutional law.

The Commission declined to recess to a closed meeting for purposes of reviewing applications for the four public Commissioner positions and instead tabled that discussion until the next meeting, scheduled for September 26, 2019 at 4:30pm. Acting Chair Fakunle asked that Commissioners review all applications submitted consistent with the priority skills they discussed and submit their top 6 ranked applicants to him by the end of the day Friday, September 20, 2019. The combined rankings will be discussed at the September 26th meeting.

Acting Chair Fakunle requested Commissioners to research potential locations for the next meeting and report back to him as soon as possible.

Finally, Acting Chair Fakunle referred Commissioners to the August 30, 2019 email he circulated which included information from Counsel McFarlane regarding compliance with the Open Meetings Act.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:53PM.