

NOTES OF REPARATIONS TASKFORCE PUBLIC MEETING

July 13, 2023

5:30 PM to 8:00 PM

Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building

Present: Joseph Feaster Jr., L'Mechie Frazier, George Greenidge, Carrie Mays, Dorothea Jones

Absent: Damani Williams, Denilson Fanfan, Na'Tisha Mills

Action Items

- Structure out the community engagement piece of the Reparations Task Force including what are our capacities, what subgroup(s) need to be formed, etc.
 - Consider looking into the financial resources mentioned from Black Voters Matter
- Log testimony from Rev. Kevin C. the Peterson into public record
- Schedule meeting to further discuss what the subgroup and 'procedurals'/By-laws would look like; preferably including all taskforce members; continuing discussion around attendance and accountability
- Revisions to the RFP draft as follows:
 - Adding 'foundations' to the list of targeted institutions
 - Clarify the language surrounding the 'Units of study' portion of the Scope of Work section in the RFP, specifically clarifying expectations of each applicant to speak to their own expertise and whether firms or scholars should expect to eventually have to work with an assembled team of people
 - Clarifying or adding language around the desired community engagement requirements of the scholar regarding prior experience and continuous engagement
 - Amending requirement for journal publication or other higher-education related landmarks i.e a degree in favor of options that might recognize non-academic experience such as community organizational work.
 - Consider including some language about the black church and oral history in the Scope of Work

Notes:

- 5:30 Meeting was called to order
- 5:40 Roll call was completed.
- 5:44 Lori Nelson and Ajay Singh were called to introduce themselves and updates
 - Lori shared general building information, as well as team members and their roles
 - Ajay shared that they will have meetings scheduled up until December moving forward
 - Lori introduced the presence of Laura Everett and Courtney Mark-Grant
- 5:49 Chair Feaster acknowledged the disorder of the previous meeting; informed public that they intend to have these meetings live streamed in the future

- 5:51 Chair Feaster stated that there will not be time for robust discussion today as well as the purpose of this meeting
- 5:52 Dorothea Jones shared that she was apart of the subgroup with Ajay
 - ‘What We Are Looking For’ portion shared on projection
 - RFP will be the blueprint for the work that will be done by the taskforce
 - RFP and report speaking specifically to Boston’s legacy in the slave trade amd transatlantic slave trade
 - The language in this portion is straight from the December 2022 City Council Ordinance
- 5:55 Ajay stepped in to present and clarify the timeline of the standard RFP
 - Chair Feaster clarified how the subgroup operated: couldn’t communicate with one another as a full body outside of the public meeting due to open meeting law
- 5:59 Carrie Mays shares the targeted time ranges listed in the Scope of Work
 - Scope of work projected on screen and available in distributed packets.
 - Shared the process of getting to this draft:
 - Meetings that were meant to be 1 hour lasted 3 hours; devoted a lot of time and work to this draft
 - Clarified the terminology of the Global South: encompasses undeveloped and exploited countries in Latin America, Asia, Africa, etc.
 - Justified the reasons for using the terminology ‘freedmen/freedwomen’: consulted a plethora of legislative languages, wanted to be specific about the demographics covered; referenced bill H.8921 (?)
 - Intended to be specific about the institutional agencies
 - Ajay shared that they had consultations with an academic consultant, Dr. Kerrie Greenridge in writing this RFP
 - Intention to get an original work of primary research; recruiting historians who will submit previously published journal or historical work as part of their application.
 - Carrie noted that we are the first city to have community engagement as apart of the process.
 - 6:08 Carrie reads the Vendor Background and company qualifications
 - Want the best and brightest from Academia but also highly value experience with community
 - Stated that the preference would be to have someone black
 - Emphasized lived experience and oral history; talked about the significance of capturing the experience of our elders
 - 6:10 Chair Feaster asked the Taskforce members to share any questions that they may have about the RFP
 - Dorothea shared that reparations is something that has been in process for years; acknowledging the work of city councilors who got this ordinance passed as well as Jabari Brisport who drafted the language for the reparations act

- George ‘Chip’ Greenridge raised a question about ‘Phase Two’ from the Background section of the RFP
 - Chair Feaster clarified that the language is taken directly from the city ordinance
- George Greenridge wanted to add an amendment to include ‘foundations’ to the list of the institutions listed
 - George Greenridge said that yes it could be added but they want to also let the historians have the opportunity to work
- George Greenridge acknowledged that the document would never be 100% perfect
- o 6:18 Chair Feaster laid out the process for the RFP:
 - There will be a committee comprised of subgroup members and city members to review that the applicants meet the requirements listed
 - When they have the final product, they will present {publicly?} and the taskforce will vote on who gets the RFP
 - Carrie requested that when public comment commences that slide 18 be presented
 - L’Merchie made the comment of wanting to be mindful of what lens these institutions are examining this history are using: are they looking at a diminished or triumphant people? Intention to have a reparative process
 - Chair Feaster noted that L’Merchie was on that subgroup and that this will require continuously going out into the community; encouraged her to take that language into the subgroup to include it into the RFP
 - George Greenridge noted that there may be a lot of people who may not have a peer-reviewed article and suggested the inclusion of another substitute such as community organization, etc.
 - Carrie agreed that using a degree as the sole evaluator for intelligence or qualifications is harmful
 - Carrie asked whether or not that this being recorded
- o 6:28 Public Comment commenced
 - Citizens asked what methods we’re using to promote these meetings.
 - Chair Feaster refused to acknowledge this issue
 - Citizen shared that she believes that having a passion for this cause and fluency in AAVE, etc should be requirement for potential partners;
 - Dissatisfaction with the terminology of the term ‘African slaves,’ important to use ‘African enslaved people’
 - Dissatisfaction with the ‘African-descendent’
 - o Carrie agreed that the language ‘American Freedmen’ should be consistent throughout the document
 - Urban renewal not acknowledged in RFP
 - Chair Feaster said that the historian will bring forth the specifics

- L'Merchie said that the terms and language will have to be determined by the researcher; attempting to put it into the guidance doc would yield a more verbose document than intended
- 6:35 Jaelynn from Repair America Collective asked whether the RFP would consider the loss of cultural and historic landmarks i.e. Harriet Tubman house
- 6:37 Citizen shared that they have worked in grassroots organizations; From Repair America Collective and read a letter that stated this work will need to include grassroots work; will need to consider the diverse needs of the community, offered up the support of Repair America
 - Suggested that the community engagement process is apart of the process i.e. griot history, researchers being on the ground;
- 6:41 Jawaun Steins; candidate for city council suggested that we reach out to former and retired BPS teachers; working with city and mayor's office and neighborhood organizations; also including the history of the churches in the black community in the RFP
- Chair Feaster clarified that we are still in phase 1 and everything may not be covered
- 6:44 Heather Cook requested her public record be entered into testimony
 - Organizer; member of the New Democracy Coalition
 - Work towards reparations has not been fully funded
 - Asking that the partners chosen to be black
 - 6:46 Chair Feaster interrupted and asked that she keep her questions to RFP and she turn in the printed testimony
 - George Greenridge requested the electronic copy be sent to Reparations email
 - Citizen asked when we will know when the task force would be renewed
 - Chair Feaster stated that this is the responsibility of the Mayor; everything has been pushed back; pointed out unclear about the timeline
 - Citizen asked when phase three would start
 - Chair Feaster said that he is unsure but it's up to the subgroup
- 6:52 Reggie asked emphasized that there needs to be community engagement; asked whether or not we could get archivists who are skilled in recording community stories; shared that he doesn't think that the bar should be a degree for academic partners; thinks that there are people who may be able to contribute a lot who may not be black; asked to what extent the community would guide the partner in this work.
 - Chair Feaster stated that this is the intention, but the mechanics will be the job of the subgroup. Stated that he was a part of the group HFE who had done similar work recording oral history for

race considerations in affordable housing; all of these things will be considered if not included.

- Carrie shared that a factor in the process was considering the accessibility of the archives. Stated that the city of Boston should be able to support the access to these exclusive and gate kept materials
 - George Greenridge agreed that community engagement should be prioritized; shared that he'd like to pursue funding outside of this RFP to fund community members to do their own work and record their own stories; expand on what they've already done;
 - Chair Feaster shared that community engagement is included in the ordinance but into the
- 7:01 Tayla Douglas from Helping Village Happy Communities asked that elders be included as a priority in seeking information; partner must have a multi-generational experience; asked that we consider reaching out to Boston residents that have moved away because their histories are so important
 - 7:04 Curtis said that the process needs to be expedited; displeased with the oversight of the timeline of the research concluding at the end of their term; said that this is very sensitive topic with precedence of neglect
 - 7:05 Chair Feaster stopped a citizen from taking a second comment; brief dispute occurred; issue was resolved peacefully
 - 7:07 Former senator asked why the document said this is an excerpt?
 - Ajay said that they omitted the legal and technical portions of the RFP
 - Senator asked for clarifications about the units of studies
 - Ajay stated that they would expect multiple people to work together; intention to have people speak to their expertise areas;
 - Asked whether we expect one person to be able to address multiple units of study or are we compiling a bunch of applicants? What is someone applying for—one unit or several?
 - L'Merchie clarified that it's up to the committee to decide whether they want to hire one firm or multiple; not expecting just one person to be able to cover all of the listed time areas
 - Chair Feaster stated that this is an opportunity for discernment; give us your best shot;
 - Senator noted that the timeframe that doesn't make sense; no way to shorten it; can't consider phase 2 w/out phase 1;
 - Senator asked that Taskforce consider that Commonwealth of MA also had a sizeable role in the slavery and racism in Boston; they are flush with cash right now that they don't know what to do with; so is the City of Boston; Mayor has stated that the city would expedite the process to give away vacant land—mostly in the

Roxbury, where homes were forcefully demolished; by the time that the timeline is done, the city will be out of money and land; worries that the Taskforce will be too late; suggests that they put the Mayor on notice to halt this process

- Senator noted that she'd worked with Black Voters Matter who'd started a fund for cities for the reparations process; pledged \$150k for the city of Boston;
- CG thanked Senator for her words
- 7:23 Deborah Jackson made a suggestion for the scope of work: asked that TF ask that people that are responding have community engagement experience be one of the required proponents; asked that TF reconsider the logistics of how having 6 people with multiple units of study will come together cohesively
- 7:26 Mickayla Dornberry asked that we consider including foundations in the institutions Taskforce address because she has personally witnessed how foundations have erased the black community through BIPOC
- o 7:30 CF concludes public comment; reaffirms the process and the opportunity for future conversations
 - 7:32 Carrie acknowledges that in regards to erasure, a lot of us have the last names of our enslavers, known as ppl w/out
 - Pointed out that we don't have a camera at this meeting
 - George Greenridge asked that the RFP be sent out to different scholars including Ibrahim X. Kennedy, Kerrie Greenridge specifically
 - 7:34 Maya Getter begins presentation and explains the purpose of by-laws and their functions, categories;
 - By-laws are separate from the ordinance; italics are language taken from another document
 - Chair Feaster raised the question of what the need of this is since this is not a commission like the BMA
 - Maya clarified that it usually depends on the type of membership; she says that if Task Force decides that they don't want them they don't have to
 - George Greenridge asked who put this on the agenda
 - Chair Feaster said that it was the city who put Bylaws on the agenda
 - Ajay stated that this was a suggestion for the TF to consider an alternate method of decision-making
 - George Greenridge suggested that there should be procedurals instead that the Taskforce agrees to; states that it's at the discretion of the Chair right now

- George Greenridge said that there should be an official procedural; explored via a subcommittee; brought up that some members had wanted for there to be an emergency chair as well
- Chair Feaster suggested that we defer this discussion
- George Greenridge says there should be a vote on whether there will be a subgroup that will examine the bylaws
- L'Merchie asked whether the subgroup would be separate from the RFP subgroup
- Chair Feaster said that they will continue this discussion through Ajay and decide who will be on the subgroup later
- Maya questions whether the Taskforce would like to vote on having a subgroup for bylaws now; George Greenridge volunteers to be apart of the subgroup but Taskforce decides that it would be unfair to vote since not everyone is there.
- Carrie brought up the issue of attendance, accountability, and involvement---do they exist?
- Chair Feaster clarified that they currently don't exist right now
- George Greenridge said that rules of orders may be insensitive to the complex issues of the black community; meeting notices and fliers should include more clear information about what we're discussing and its importance
- Brief back and forth between Chair Feaster and George Greenridge concerning whether the meeting notice included flier
 - Lori Nelson clarified that based on feedback from last meeting, there were multiple forms of information distributed including meeting notice and flier
- 7:57 Citizen asked whether some Taksforce members have previously resigned,
 - Chair Feaster shared that Dr. Kerrie Greenridge and David Harris resigned from the first iteration
- 7:58 Citizen asked if there was a way to change the by-laws so that Taskforce members can talk to one another outside of public forum
 - Chair Feaster shared that there are certain workarounds such as the sub-group
- 8:00 Reggie shared that he thinks that regular consistent attendance should be mandatory; asked to what the extent the Taskforce members can personally call people to submit to RFP
 - Chair Feaster clarified that the solicitation process would be broad
- 8:02 Curtis said that he felt that the by-laws should've been covered first to give the RFP discussion more time; emphasized priorities
- 8:04 Jessca shared that Taskforce should be mindful of how they penalize attendance especially considering that there are teenagers on this taskforce; not that they don't care

- Carrie said that the responsibilities of absent members end up falling on other members
 - George Greenridge brought up that there are multiple items that Taskforce members would've liked to put on the agenda but were excluded from the agenda but the city was able to add items
- 8:10 The Meeting was adjourned by Chair Feaster