



**Reparations Task Force Meeting
Thursday, June 6, 2024, at 6 p.m.**

Location: Fulton County Government Center Assembly Hall, 141 Pryor St SW, Atlanta, GA
30303

Zoom:

https://zoom.us/rec/share/QCdtGXVqfuSoTATWT2ZKBdDCsct_T7-AX8IH3SI8Ww2C1uqZpIKe1R_YkXtiRw8.oEVAAu8YOjoTysDd

POST AGENDA MINUTES – RATIFIED

This document has been ratified or approved by the Fulton County Reparations Task Force and is not binding on the County or any officer.

****A QUORUM WAS PRESENT****

Roll Call Karcheik Sims-Alvarod, Marcus Coleman, Amanda Meng, Mike Russell, Elon Butts Osby, Donte' Thompson, Rodney Littles, Greg Fann, Carole Sykes. Excused: Michael Simanga

Staff Present: Jordana Arias, Jessica Corbitt

Adoption of June 6, 2024, Meeting Agenda

Motion to adopt by Mr. Rodney Littles. Motion seconded by Mr. Mike Russel. Motion passes.

Approval of May 2, 2024, Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve by Mr. Rodney Littles. Motion seconded by Vice Chair Coleman. Motion passes.

Old Business

- Research updates
 - Convict Labor Research

- Chair Sims-Alvarado: Yes. So we were able to get into probate court. And what we were able to do. Christopher Smothers got permission from Probate judge Kenya Johnson to scan the estates of individuals who were slave holders. And we have now a digital record of that. And that information was not digitized by the National Archives. We also have what the National Archives have. So we now have a complete record of the years of people who were enslaved. You will not find Black people who have estates in probate courts during that period because they were the property. But what those records do provide are the names of descendants of people who were enslaved, sold, passed on to other family members. So we do have that. But we did speak to the superior court. The clerk's office. And they shared with us that there are additional records that are in a warehouse. And yes. They're in the process of moving everything. So if we can get hold of those records, there's no telling what we're going to be able to find. Our challenge is that we don't have enough time. That's what we're up against.
 - Financial Report
 - Mr. Rodney Littles: AUCC received second payment. Cash receipt to date \$140,000. Balance to be invoiced \$70,000. Spent to date \$77,793.89. Cash balance \$62,206.11.

New Business

- Invited Guest Speaker: Chairman Marvin Slaughter of the African Descent-Citizens Reparations Commission, State of Illinois
 - Question from Mr. Donte' Thompson: Thank you so much, Chairman Marvin, for speaking to us today. What are some of those tough conversations that you mentioned?
 - Response: Yes, indeed. You know, there are tough conversations regarding, you know, the eligibility criteria. Cash payments is often something that is brought up in conversation with many other citizens here in Illinois. You know, the conversation around what qualifies as a reparatory policy. And those conversations are tough conversations, primarily because as a commission, we are both a quasi-governmental body, but we are also the mouthpiece and the voice of individuals of the impacted community. We are walking a very kind of tight, tight rope in balancing the priorities of being, you know, a quasi-governmental body with making sure that we're good stewards of the narratives and the stories and the righteous anger and the passion of the communities that we serve.
 - Question from Vice Chair Coleman: Thank you Chairman Slaughter, you know, me and you talked from time to time. So we, you know, kind of use the method of

iron sharpens iron. Can you tell the people, give the people a little insight about the way that you guys are conducting your study? And I know you mentioned using basically like a two prong study system. Could you explain, could you explain that a little bit further?

- Response: Yeah. So we wanted to first be able to introduce into the legislative record a harm report. And we wanted to make sure that that harm report was something that was easily digestible by individuals who are in our legislature. And one of the most common and effective ways to produce good policy is critical literature reviews. So we've instructed our research team to conduct a critical literature review into the 11 harm areas that were adopted by California. We've adopted those same 11 harm areas. So in each of those harm areas, we're doing a critical literature review on the impact of those harm specifically for Black citizens in Illinois. After we submit that harm report, we're going to be doing some quantitative analysis on census tracts in Black communities in and around the state of Illinois to determine things like what, what is the racial wealth gap in Illinois for those who are Black citizens. As I mentioned earlier, we currently do not have administrative or have access to administrative data. That will actually tell us who that community is. So we're looking at potentially having a bill that would allow us to start tracking data for individuals who are descendants of child slavery. Because like I said, that is who by statute we are bound to create these remedies and recommendations for. So we're combining both quantitative and qualitative. So we're making this a mixed method study. In addition to collecting the narratives by interviewing individuals from the impacted community on their experience living in Illinois or being descended from those who were enslaved in Illinois. And that is also another thing that is a common misconception is that Illinois was a free state so slavery did not exist here. And we are going to be illuminating the very real reality that slavery did exist in Illinois. That we actually had counties that were dedicated to being slave counties where individuals were forced into forced labor in the salt mines downstate in Galena in places like that. So we're actively trying to uncover into, you know, expose true history so that we can get to a point of truth and reconciliation in our state.
- Question from Mr. Rodney Littles: I'm very impressed and pleased that you are in the leadership. And it's great to see a young generation participating in this initiative. So some of us OGs can kind of sit back a little bit. I have a question. In terms of those who may have benefited from the act of child slavery in your state. Are you also looking at the private sector?
 - Response: Yes, yes indeed we are. So we are tasked with four specific items in addition to, you know, other remedies and recommendations that will ensure equity equality for African American descendants of slavery of those four. We're tasked with the preservation of African American

neighborhoods, the creation of a vocational training center for people of African descent, ensuring equity equality and parity and all state contracting for those who are African American descendants of slavery, as well as the creation and enforcement of a slavery era disclosure bill. And that is exactly what I think that you are referring to. So we are actually in the process right now of creating the policy for the slavery era disclosure bill Chicago actually piloted this policy, where they would ask a private organizations, corporations, or nonprofits to disclose if they had ties to slavery. And it would impact what type of contract they can get with the city. I mean, if they did not reveal those ties to slavery, they could be fined and they could be precluded from ever having a contract with the city. And then if they were found to not give the full history of their attachment to slavery they can also be penalized in those ways. So we're currently looking right now on ways to expand upon that bill. And what the enforcement mechanisms may look like.

- Question from Dr. Meng: Thank you so much. Commissioner Slaughter I was curious just what recommendations you would have for us as a county body but also as people who have been working at the state level as well.
 - Response: That is a tough question, primarily because we see we're learning a lot of lessons, both from California, Illinois, New York, different contexts, different political contexts. One thing that kind of remains the same across each of those bodies is making sure that we center the voices of those that we're attempting to serve. And my voices are those that will be impacted. In my case, I am an individual that hopes to benefit from a reparatory justice and reparatory frameworks in the future. I am a descendant of chattel slavery on both sides of my family. I have done the lineage work to be able to trace my family lineage back to the early 1800s right. Making sure that individuals who kind of have that level of blood equity in these United States of America, make sure that we care about the narratives that they share that we're good stewards of the narratives that they share. And that ultimately some of the recommendations that they may think are most important kind we give good thought to. I believe that that is probably the most important, important recommendation that I have for any reparations body is to center the people. And then from the narratives and the recommendations that the people give you you can build out real policies, utilizing individuals who are practitioners and experts in the space.

Announcements

- Vice Chair Coleman: If anyone's been paying attention to see Evanston, Illinois, who is already paying out reparations, they're facing the class action lawsuit. If you read into it a little bit, it seems a little bit frivolous, but these are some of the games that are coming. As it relates to the recent federal. Ruling on the fearless fund, the company that grants or

gifts in the form of grants of the \$25,000 to predominantly black women, but women of color. And of course the same person responsible for gutting affirmative action. And that's what we're doing at the collegiate level is responsible for this lawsuit that is now successful. But there's a misconception out there as if that recent ruling is a direct linkage to what we're doing and what others are doing across the country. And it's not. But I do want to encourage those of us who are truly in this, the witness. Also in Tennessee, they failed, but in their legislative session, they actually, I can't remember if they got it through one chamber, but I know the legislation was okay. Right at the one chamber died in the second. But this legislation was, and if anybody remembers Tennessee, they're the second Shelby County, Tennessee is the second County Task force behind us. And they got a \$5 million ticket or budget, excuse me, to do their studies. But the bill was to not just prevent counties in Tennessee from paying reparations. The bill included that the counties couldn't even study reparations. Now we live in red clay Georgia. Legislative session starts back January by that time we will have finished with all of our work and we have made, we will have made our presentation in the form of political needs. So please, let's just have some foresight on what's coming for us in the very near future. And the good thing about it is the chronological order that we are, we can literally, we don't have to make some of the same mistakes, or, you know, fight some of the same battles the exact same way. We really have an opportunity to lead the nation. So it's my two cents. And that's for those who are truly looking towards the future, because we're approaching the end of this work. Thank you, ma'am.

- Chair Sims-Alvarado: The County will be closed during the first Thursday of July, so the next meeting will be Thursday, July 11th.
- Chair Sims-Alvarado: (in response to a question from the public asking about the research timeline) So with the, as it relates to genealogy, the slavery research, we are looking at, we are actually, we've documented the names of the slaveholders in Fulton County, and we have captured the number of individuals that were enslaved. One of the challenges of any research dealing with slavery, as you know, familiar with genealogy, is that the names of these individuals have not been documented, unless you're looking at the financial records of the slaveholders. If the slaveholders die, you look at their wills, if they commit crimes, or if they run away, these are various ways in which, oh, if they join the military, these are ways to capture the names of individuals. We are capturing some of those names. Other ways that we are gathering it is by looking at the Freedmen's Bureau records, and looking at individuals who may have stayed in Atlanta or Fulton County after the war. Not everyone took flight. There were many individuals who left, stayed, hid. We had the names of some of those individuals, but you also had individuals who came to Atlanta because Atlanta was being rebuilt. We have the names of some of the earliest residents of Fulton County. Other ways that we've been able to capture names of individuals, convict labor camps, that's another one. We have the names of children, names of adults who were convicted for crimes. We have those names, like again, I say court records, it's another way. As you move further into, as you move out of slavery, move out of the antebellum years, you look at how the Freedmen's Bureau documented people. You get those names there, but then you begin to see them like in the Freedmen's Bureau records. Then there's this big gap again between 1870 and 1880. How do you find those names of some of the earliest residents? You can look at the Atlanta city directories. Once again, newspapers. There's ways to capture it. If you're a really good researcher,

you can find ways in order to glean through the records in order to start extracting names. Unfortunately, we don't have enough time in order to capture the names of every single individual, but what we do have are the numbers that we do have. But it's coming together. I think that this research can go on for a very long time. The challenge is that we don't have enough time. And the question becomes, do you really need a whole lot of time in order to make the argument? I'm coming to get you justice. That's what I'm coming to do. We will present our findings to the county commissioners and make recommendations. We had talked about having a town hall, two town halls to present our meetings. So to present our findings, that will be coming up really soon. But what we want to do now is to start taking that data and responding to it by writing to the data that we've retrieved. But we feel good about it.

Public Comments

Jumoke Ifetayo

My name is Brother Jumoke Ifetayo. Today I'll be representing Reparations United. Reparations United is an organization that was created a few years ago to bring about unity in the reparations movement. And they have launched a campaign. I know this is on a local level, but we often talk about how important it is to support the national campaign for reparations. Right. So when the house right before the house became Republican, we had pretty much the support of all of the Congress people, Democratic Congress people there, 2,017 people, you need 2,018 to pass a bill. And we had their support. They said they will support HR 40, the national commission, the national bill to create a commission for reparations. Right. But once the house flipped Republican, then we had to come up with a new strategy. So the new strategy is basically to get the President of the United States, President Biden, to create a reparations commission by executive order, which he can do. And basically could do the same thing that HR 40 as a bill would have done. So we've been putting pressure on the President. There's a, we hired a very expensive company that specializes in research and marketing. And these, this is company works for Disney and Walmart and other elected officials and things like that is very high level company. And they spent over \$100 million in AI technology and stuff. And so what they did was they were able to craft for us a marketing campaign that directly targeted Biden's inner circles, his, his advisors, his friends, his college buddies, people live within the zip code that he lived in, and we targeted them with messaging around the fact that every Democratic president that's been elected since the 60s was elected because of the Black vote. And there's no Democratic President who could get an office without the Black vote. And so the idea is that if you want to get the Black vote because right now there's a lot of conversation. There's a lot of documentation that shows that the Black vote is not

as supportive of Biden this time around. Some people talk about voting third party some people just talking about not participating or what have you. And so we've actually calculated that number is about 2.9 million Blacks that ordinarily would have voted for Biden in the last time are disenfranchised and not feeling Biden. So we asked them would they vote for Biden if he was to set up this executive order for reparations. And they say yes, surveys that we've done and said yes. So we basically have a national campaign, it's a marketing campaign. And so what we have is a couple aspects to it. So one is we have these postcards. We ask people just to sign your name on and put a stamp on and send it to Biden. We send in thousands of postcards like this every week. And we also if you go to our website earntheblackvote.net and you can go to the sections that have messaging and it'll show you the specific messages that we ask people to send out is posted on your social media. Because right now we're coming. Okay, so posted on your social media, and we encourage you to because now we're moving the message beyond just President Biden but getting it to the Black. Thank you. Thank you for the great work that you can do.

Wendy Goff

Hello, my name is Wendy golf I am with N'Cobra female co chair supportive of Reparations United and the postcard and the whole idea that you know Biden needs to earn our vote. Right. He can act. He can do an act. He just did an act in terms of immigration, right. So okay do an act for reparations for African Americans. So, you know, money to Ukraine, money to Israel. So, yeah, I am very much in support of that. Um, I was at the last meeting online, and I asked in the chat, because when I looked online they say there were three task force positions. And so I asked, but it doesn't say the, because I do live in Fulton County. It doesn't say with who because I know you have to match it to your commissioner. And I just I never got an answer, and I asked in an email prior, and I asked in the chat. Why do we have people in the chat if you're not going to acknowledge them or answer their questions? So that's really, you know, what I wanted to say. And then I'm, I'm not sure I think it is Fulton County that you are that you're tracking the slave owners, if I am correct, in Georgia. And so I was interested in maybe connecting with them because I'm a, you know, ancestry genealogy buff and I think I have ancestors in Georgia so you know I wouldn't mind getting a little help from them. I don't, you know, I think their names are online or whatever but I was hoping they would be here or something I can ask them a couple of questions about that because I think my great great grandmother was from Georgia. I was so sad too when I heard, when I learned that, because I'm from New Orleans, ooh, my people are from Georgia. But anyway, that's all I had to say I was wondering about the commissioners that I

never got an answer I did a online email and then I asked in the chat but I never got an answer. I was wondering, you know, how does that work.

Eric Curtis

I just wanted to make sure that we are keeping the language airtight on our lineage, making sure that we're specifying that we are a foundation of Black American freedom. Because as we've seen in Evanston Illinois, during race-based when our work, African-American can be remixed and reused for different people. Obama was African-American, so that's kind of out the window. We want to make sure that this lineage-based reparations, I think I spoke on this before, but I just wanted to make sure I read it right there. And that would be awesome, thank you.

Destinee Marbley

Hello, my name is Destinee Marbley. I'm actually not even supposed to be speaking. I'm doing some documenting for the meeting, but I was just very impressed. This is my first time knowing about the reparations task force and something somebody I think it was Mr. Little, you said you're ready for the younger generation to come in so that you all can take a step back. And I was asking there anything that my generation can do because I feel like that is a big missing gap. And a lot of this we're not taking lead as we supposed to. I just made a thought the other day. My generation is the only one without a leader. You know, everybody had someone to lead the masses. We're just here. So if there's anything that I can do to try to get the word out to my generation, please let me know. I'm a documentary for canopy Atlanta. So I just come to different meetings. I'd give a gist of what's been going on, you know, who's presenting what's going on in the community. So people who can attend or who just can't come can know what's going on. We provided on the canopy a lot of site, the documentary site. So you can go and read all the way back to, you know, months and months and months. We do different meetings. I typically do the public council meeting and public safety meetings on Monday. So this is new. Big on reparation, big on our people. So I was like, this is the perfect meeting to come to. I'm a little nervous. It's my first time talking into the mic. I'm normally just in the background, but yeah, I'm happy to be here. Thank you. I'm a little nervous, but it's okay. I'm just happy to be here, but please let me know. I'm going to try to leave like a card or something. I'm also a healer in the community for Lakewood, Lakewood Heights. I work at the Kendra healing center. I'm the massage therapist. I do all the holistic healing as far as massage stretch, cupping, pre, prenatals.

And I got you need some help. I got you. And I work on the healing floor. So we have acupuncture, Reiki therapist, sound therapist, um, regular mental counselors, a meditation room. And our big thing is just to bring healing and real healing to our people, to our communities. Cause not aesthetically, not something that we're talking about it. That's really pushing our community. So we try to provide that. So between that and this, I'm trying to heal the community through the ears, through the body, whatever way I can do. So that's just what I'm here for.

Adjourn