



CITY EXPERIENCE
Mayor's Office of Resilience and Equity

Beyond Apology Commission

Regular Meeting | January 17, 2025 | 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm

City Hall at One Technology Center | 10 North Meeting Room

Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present: TheRese Anderson Aduni, Phil Armstrong, Jacqueline Evans, Vanessa Hall-Harper, Keith Mayes, D'Marria Monday, Krystal Reyes, Greg Taylor, Taylor West, Kristi Williams, Corinice Wilson

Commissioners Listening via Call: Mattece Mason

Commissioners Absent: Damali Wilson

City of Tulsa Staff Present: Lexi Bollis, Jack Blair, Krya Carby, Carson Colvin, James Wagner

I. Call to Order

- a. Chairwoman Williams called the meeting to order at 1:08 pm.

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- a. Chairwoman Williams entertained a motion to approve the November 22 meeting minutes.
 - i. Commissioner Armstrong made a motion, Commissioner Aduni seconded.
 1. Aye: 11, Nay: 0
 - ii. Motion carried, November 22 meeting minutes approved.

III. Commissioner Oath of Office

- a. Lexi passed around a document for commissioners to sign the oath of office. Chairwoman Williams read the oath aloud. All commissioners present signed.

IV. Guest Speaker: Damarion Solomon-Simmons, Justice for Greenwood

- a. Chairwoman Williams introduced Attorney Damarion Solomon-Simmons.
- b. DJ Mercer with Justice for Greenwood passed out a handout to commissioners highlighting key reparations recommendations from the organization.
- c. Justice for Greenwood Mission: Get justice and reparations for victims, survivors, and descendants of 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre.
- d. Justice for Greenwood's four programs:
 - i. We Are Greenwood: document & highlight descendant stories
 1. Assembled 1,000 individuals in descendant network
 2. 4 genealogy experts on staff
 - ii. Fight for our Rights and Dignity: legal advocacy



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- iii. Justice for Greenwood Legacy Fund: donations, grants, and scholarships to survivors, descendants, and institutions essential to Greenwood's recovery
- iv. Booker T Washington Initiative: education about history of Greenwood and Black Wall Street
- e. Project Greenwood: Reparations Recommendations
 - i. Promotes true healing & conciliation for the Greenwood community.
 - ii. Tangibly improve lives of survivors and descendants.
 - iii. Good for survivors & descendants as well as the whole of Tulsa.
 - 1. Promote true healing.
 - 2. Remove dark cloud of the massacre.
 - 3. Attract new private investments, residents, and tourists.
 - 4. Positive coverage of 105th anniversary of massacre and 250th USA anniversary.
 - iv. Harm based, not race based.
 - v. Aspects of Project Greenwood include:
 - 1. Must immediately pay survivors.
 - 2. Establish victims compensation fund.
 - a. Valued property losses at over \$200 million, according to the Brookings Institute.
 - 3. Create descendant business support program for verified descendant-majority owned businesses based in Tulsa.
 - 4. Descendant scholarship program.
 - 5. Surviving entity grant program.
 - 6. Descendant employment preference program.
 - a. Provide an employment preference to verified massacre descendants who seek employment within the City of Tulsa.
 - 7. Descendant contracting preference program.
 - a. City of Tulsa should establish a contracting preference for verified descendant-majority owned businesses.
 - 8. Immunity from all City of Tulsa taxes, fees, assessments, and/or utility expenses for survivors and descendants for a specified period of time.
 - 9. Historic Greenwood land record audit.
 - 10. Build Level 1 Trauma Center Hospital in north Tulsa
 - a. The absence of hospitals in north Tulsa drives severe health disparities compared to south Tulsa.
 - 11. June 1 Official Holiday in City of Tulsa in recognition of the massacre and host appropriate commemoration activities.
 - 12. Release of all Tulsa Race Massacre Records.
 - 13. Open criminal investigation of known murder victims.
 - vi. Legal precedents for this work:
 - 1. Palm Springs reparations for Black and Latine families



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2. Oklahoma City Bombing victims compensation fund
 3. 9/11 Bombing Fund
- f. Commissioner Q&A
- i. Commissioner Armstrong: What do you see as the biggest pushback?
 1. Damario: Many people don't think others deserve reparations. Good faith individuals will agree these measures make sense. There are legal pathways for this to occur, and projects happening right now in Greenwood that can serve as revenue sources. Public-private partnership is needed, people want to support if the framework is there.
 2. Armstrong: City should take the lead with public dollars.
 3. Damario: Absolutely. The City is responsible and must take the lead. The worst thing that can happen is for our two living survivors to pass away without ever seeing anything happen for them.
 - ii. Vice Chair Wilson: It's important to tell the story through data. Appreciate framing through harm instead of race. We know that this framing can be repaired, we have to carry that consistent message in basing it in harm.
 - iii. Councilor Hall-Harper: Mentioned needing access to City records. What about other institutions (TU, Tulsa Chamber) that have kept records from the community?
 1. Damario: We have plans to do this. DOJ report was disappointing harm on many fronts. Confirmed some of what we already knew, but they chose not to use subpoena power or investigate mass graves.
 - iv. Commissioner Aduni: The database you have could be vital for this commission's next steps. Is that data available to the commission to use to identify descendants?
 1. Damario: Depends, there are some things that are private. Individuals have to agree to make their information available. Have identified about 7,000 descendants who live in historic Greenwood
 - v. Commissioner Taylor: Has there ever been a descendant land trust where land from the City can go that's governed by descendants?
 1. Damario: Great idea, this has been discussed at Justice for Greenwood. Trying to make things as clean and simple as possible. Excellent idea and willing to discuss further.

V. Chair / Vice Chair Report

- a. Chairwoman Williams discussed the importance of the recently released Department of Justice report as a federal acknowledgement of the Tulsa Race Massacre, despite the disappointment that they will not prosecute. Naming that the massacre was a coordinated military attack is powerful. This report will be important in our work.
- b. Chairwoman Williams read select quotes from the report that focus on the City's role in the destruction during the massacre.



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- c. Lexi included the report in the commission's shared Dropbox folder.
- VI. Discussion: Application for Zarrow Families Foundation Commemoration Fund and Potential Nonprofit Partner, Black Wall Street Chamber of Commerce**
 - a. Chairwoman Williams shared that Vice Chair Wilson, Commissioner Reyes, Lexi, and she discussed applying for the Zarrow Families Foundation Commemoration Fund grant.
 - b. Vice Chair Wilson shared ideas about what the funds could be used for, including programmatic support, future travel to the reparations conference, hosting a mini-conference in Tulsa to amplify First Repair's work, creating a public portal for Tulsa Race Massacre descendants, and conducting research. Black Wall Street Chamber of Commerce is a potential partner because the grant requires 501c3 status to apply.
 - c. Chairwoman Williams underscored her desire of creating a database of descendants to help with all current and future reparations efforts. She would like to pay Dr. Angela Raji to do that work. Wants the City to continue to pay for programmatic aspects of reparations and for commissioners to attend the First Repair conference in Evanston.
 - d. Chairwoman Williams opened the floor for discussion.
 - i. Commissioner Monday agrees the responsibility of sending commissioners to conference should fall with the City.
 - ii. Commissioner Armstrong shared that this fund is Zarrow setting aside funds annually and a BIPOC-led board decides where the funds go. Agree City has responsibility; however, we are not the only commission and this could open the door to other commissions to expect similar things from the City. Never leave money on the table, City money is not guaranteed.
 - iii. Councilor Hall-Harper: If accepting funds will compromise the commission's purpose, then that needs to be considered. Sometimes money has strings attached, which happens frequently with the philanthropic community.
 - iv. Commissioner Taylor: Will Chairwoman Williams and Vice Chair Wilson need support with writing the grant?
 - 1. Chairwoman Williams assumed Commissioner Reyes would write the grant with commissioner involvement.
 - 2. Commissioner Reyes: Happy to support if Chairwoman Williams already has a draft. There is a very quick turnaround and we will need to work with Black Wall Street Chamber as the nonprofit partner.
 - v. Commissioner Taylor asked to clarify distinction between the database Chairwoman Williams envisions and the database Justice for Greenwood mentioned in their presentation.
 - 1. Chairwoman: Dr. Angela Raji did research for Justice for Greenwood to identify descendants, but they still need a place to house that information. A searchable database be helpful when it comes time to deliver the housing program. The grant can also



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pay for consulting with Dr. Raji to help craft vetting process for descendants with the housing program.

- e. Chairwoman Williams reiterated that her opinion is to include the database creation as the main part of the grant. Vice Chair Willson brought back up the First Repair retreat programming in Tulsa, program evaluation, and data/research.
- f. Chairwoman Williams entertained a motion to apply for the Zarrow Commemoration Fund grant to fund a descendant database, partnership with First Repair, and further data and research.
 - i. Vice Chair Wilson made a motion, Commissioner Mayes seconded.
 - 1. Aye: 10, Nay: 0
 - 2. Commissioner Armstrong left the meeting prior to the motion.
 - ii. Motion carried, Commission will apply for the grant.

VII. Housing Reparations Program Recommendations: Feedback Review and Next Steps

- a. Chairwoman Williams shared that Mayor Nichols will come to the March 21 commission meeting. Between now and then will have further conversations about how to fund recommendations.
- b. Mayor Nichols is interested in releases the program recommendations publicly. Commissioner Reyes noted that the recommendations can be published on the City's website on the Beyond Apology Commission webpage.
- c. Vice Chair Wilson suggested that in the February meeting the commission takes time to coalesce on the recommendations prior to releasing publicly and having the Mayor at the March meeting.
- d. Chairwoman Williams noted that when things are released publicly, it opens everyone up to backlash.
- e. Chairwoman Williams entertained a motion to publish the recommendations on the City's website.
 - i. Commissioner Evans motioned, Commissioner Taylor seconded.
 - 1. Aye: 8 (Chairwoman Williams, Councilor Hall-Harper, and Commissioners Evans, Taylor, Mayes, Monday, Reyes, and West)
 - 2. Nay: 2 (Vice Chair Wilson and Commissioner Aduni)
 - 3. Commissioner Armstrong left the meeting prior to the motion.
 - ii. Motion carried.
- f. Commissioner Aduni raised her hesitation to publish the recommendations publicly because the commission has not discussed the recommendations enough amongst the group, nor has the commission discussed with the mayor yet. Wants to have common talking points for when the public asks questions.
 - i. Chairwoman Williams pointed out that the minutes reflect that a discussion was had in the November 22 meeting and each commissioner read the recommendations individually before voting to submit them to the mayor.
- g. City staff will coordinate with Chairwoman Williams to determine a plan for releasing the recommendations.



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VIII. Old Business – no old business

IX. New Business

- a. Commissioner Monday recommended creating an acknowledgement of the ancestors to read at the beginning of each meeting.

X. Announcements

- a. Commissioner Mayes congratulated Commissioner Reyes for being named Deputy Mayor. He shared that the commission is proud of her and expecting greatness with the new administration.
- b. Vice Chair Wilson shared that Tulsa Community College (her employer) published a piece on the commission's work and her involvement.

XI. Adjournment

- a. Chairwoman Williams entertained a motion to adjourn.
 - i. Commissioner Monday made a motion, Vice Chair Wilson seconded.
 - 1. Aye: 10
 - 2. Commissioner Armstrong left the meeting prior to the motion.
 - ii. Motion carried, meeting adjourned at 2:56 pm.