

Greenbelt Reparations Commission Meeting Minutes
Greenbelt Municipal Building, 25 Crescent Road, City Council Room
Tuesday, June 18, 2024, 7:00 p.m.

Agenda

Welcome
Adoption of Agenda/Minutes
Contractor Decision
Community Engagement & Education Subcommittee Proposals
Introduction to Tribesy
Commission Ethnic Composition Survey
July Meeting Dates
Other Business/Subcommittee Updates
Public Comment
Adjourn

Commissioners Present

Tom Adams
Rhema Bjorkland
Gail Crichlow
Francis DeBernardo*
Chiquita Jackson*
Konrad Herling (alternate)
London McCloud
Mark Miller*
Shabnam Mojtahedi*
Denise Nadasen
Robert Rand
Lois Rosado
Jonathan Taylor
James Williams, Jr.

(*indicates virtual attendance)

Commissioners Not Present

Adriane Harris
Chelsea Barnes
Lorena Ferdinand
Yahshuah Ford
Mark Wilson
René Sewell-Raysor
Sarah Wampler
Note: Former Commissioner Joseph Hamlin has resigned from the Commission

City Staff Liaisons Present

Megan Searing Young
Tyra Smith

Guest

Tribesy representatives Reena Doyle and Gail Watts

Chair Lois Rosado noted a quorum present and called the meeting to order about 7:05 p.m.

Adoption of Agenda: Lois Rosado requested a modification to the agenda to add an introduction to Tribesy. James made a motion to adopt the revised agenda; Denise seconded. The agenda was adopted unanimously.

Approval of the Minutes: Rhema requested a minor clarification of the May minutes under Resolution 2 – roles and expectations for members – members are expected to attend all meetings without missing three or more consecutive meetings “without notification”. James moved to approve the minutes with the one change. Konrad seconded. The May 2024 minutes were unanimously adopted with one change.

Contractor Decision: The Executive Committee made a recommendation to close its engagement with the contractor, imPACT. They helped us identify our goals, provided a pathway to achieve our goals, and developed governance structure to guide our work. James made a motion to ask the contractors to complete their work by the end of June and bill us for any extra hours they worked. Denise seconded. The decision passed unanimously.

Community Engagement and Education Subcommittee Proposals

Subcommittee members include Gail, James, Tom, Konrad, Frank, and Mark W. They propose the following:

1. Prepare a postcard for the Labor Day festival that describes the work we do and invites individuals to join our mailing list. James has a resource. He will order 1,000 cards for \$250. We should keep the postcard simple. Side one to provide information and the back is how to reach us. We don't need to provide definitions on the postcard.
2. Create a website to share information with the community. Discussion was to use a simple URL such as www.greenbeltreparations.org. This should not be the only portal to the community. We can also use the New Review, email, Facebook, and TikTok. The website would be linked to the City's website, but we would control the content.
3. Create a set of definitions to be clear by what we mean by various terms. The Reparations Policy Research subcommittee will prepare a list of definitions for the Commission. It was pointed out that Indigenous people don't identify with the word reparations. They identify with repatriation of artifacts and ancestral remains. They would like to have their land back.
4. Meet with different groups such as faith-based groups that want to be involved with reparations.
5. Create a list of events. A draft of this list was shared.
6. Develop a public forum to talk about reparations across groups. This is currently being considered for October 14.

There was discussion about whether HRS or CEES will do the interviews of Indigenous Peoples and African Americans. HRS has a list of contacts. On Friday at 12:30, the HRS and CEES will meet jointly to collaborate on this activity.

Tribesy Introduction

Gail Watts and Reena Doyle shared on phase 2 of their project: community outreach. They will target marginalized populations (disabled, immigrants, younger adults, African American, Latin X, and Africans) between August 10 and 17 via focus groups and interviews. The topics will include what's best/worst about living in Greenbelt, participation in government, what changes they would make (which reflects their experience), who do you think is marginalized, experiences with local government, and communication preferences.

They added that reparations commissions across the country have to be careful of causing individual to relive trauma. Focus on “tell me your story”, limiting questions. Some people may not know they have trauma and asking question may cause them to realize their trauma. Tribesy will invite the Commission to share topics that we want to know about, but they will create the questions in a way that will not cause harm.

A discussion of Indigenous Peoples ensued. Focus groups is not the way to have conversations with Indigenous Peoples. You need to be invited into their community. Need to have trust. Elders have a lot of responsibility. Land acknowledgement is proforma gesture and doesn't acknowledge stolen land or murders of their people.

Tribesy has done research on employment records, but not specifically looking for harms for these two populations. They will ask questions for the Commission during their community outreach as part of their existing contract with the city. They shared a list of 9 tasks that they can do for us for an additional cost. A motion was made requesting a proposal of three items related to training and foundational knowledge when speaking about reparations, training in dialogue skills and facilitation folks, and how to conduct interviews. The motion passed unanimously.

July Meeting Date Change

Lois informed the Commission that we would like to move the July 16 meeting to July 23 due to the July 4 holiday.

Public Comments

One member of the public commented that we should keep separate the work of the Commission from the work of Tribesy.

The meeting adjourned at 9:14pm

Minutes are respectfully submitted by Denise Nadasen.