

Fulton County Reparations Task Force

Thursday, July 14, 2022 at 6pm

Zoom Meeting Recording:

https://zoom.us/rec/share/WAohL4vqVyoikE1O1amkwzC6Ms_E6JjJnqZzaz0IhYQUBQ64ApM_Crzz3VgR8oAzR.uvHKgB62TK-ljP2g

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.

Call to Order

- The meeting was called to order at 6:11 p.m.
- **Marcus Coleman, Vice Chair** introduced Attorney Benjamin Crump and encouraged members to watch a recent Netflix documentary on his life titled “Civil”

A QUORUM WAS NOT PRESENT

- **Present:** Dr. Karcheik Sims-Alvarado; Marcus Coleman; Olivia Reneau
- **Absent:** South Fulton Mayor Khalid Kamau; JaNay Wilborn
- **Staff Present:** Commissioner Marvin S. Arrington Jr. (District 5); Fran Calhoun (External Affairs); Jasmine Campbell (External Affairs); Denval Stewart (County Attorney)

New Business:

1. **Attorney Benjamin Crump**

- Mentioned several current cases that are related to reparations in locations across the country including Gary, Indiana; Bruce Beach in California; and Black Wallstreet in Tulsa, Oklahoma.
- Discussed in detail a historic victory won in Massachusetts Supreme Court last month: Tamara K. Lanier vs Harvard. The case presented evidence from a black woman who traced her ancestry and discovered her family was used in a Harvard slavery experiment. The case took six years and included claims of: unjust enrichment, property law claims, and negligent emotional distress. Additional case highlights include:
 - White Harvard scholars looked for a pure African, in Charleston, South Columbia in 1850 despite slavery being illegal in Massachusetts since 1799. Scholars took naked photos of participants to prove that biological measurements and features make black people inferior so they should remain enslaved.
 - Initially lost case in lower State Court but the Massachusetts Supreme Court victory was a unanimous decision.
 - There is no court date at this time but believes Harvard will resolve the claim and the family will have a landmark decision for others across the country to use as a basis to make claims on how enslaved Africans and their descendants were treated and potentially receive reparations.

Discussion

- **Marcus Coleman, Vice Chair** requested members send questions for Attorney Benjamin Crump to him and he will obtain answers.

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- **Commissioner Marvin S. Arrington Jr** thanked Attorney Benjamin Crump for all his work across the country.

2. Intern Update

Fran Calhoun

- Introduced the intern, Olivia Reneau from Duke University, and discussed informal sponsorship by Commissioner Marvin S. Arrington Jr.'s office. Fran will write welcome letter to and help with onboarding.
- Members have requested additional members be added to the task force through an amendment to the establishing resolution.
 - **Commissioner Marvin S. Arrington Jr.**: Open to amending the resolution to two appointees from each District.

Denval Stewart

- Only action by Fulton County Government will be to write a letter to Duke University and confirm Olivia served in her capacity as an intern.
 - **Olivia Reneau**: As a fellow, she must provide one to two monthly updates to the fellowship director including personal reflections and work assignment updates. At the end of term, she will create a brief summary of work and relationships built during the internship.
 - **Commissioner Marvin S. Arrington Jr.** confirmed he will sign letter.

Olivia Reneau

- Expressed gratitude to work with Reparations Task Force and mentioned relevant skills such as property deed review.
- Requested MOU from Reparations Task Force related to any intellectual property and allows her to receive author credit for research. Fellowship would like to be included in author credit as well.
 - **Denval Stewart**: Task Force does not have contractual ability but will work with the Board of Commissioners to write a MOU and place it on the consent agenda.
 - **Commissioner Marvin S. Arrington Jr.**: Believes MOU would have to be with Fulton County Government and welcomes it being added to consent agenda for approval.
- Will need access to Fulton County records and databases used by the Georgia Superior Court Clerk's Cooperative. Confirmed she would prefer to use a laptop provided by Fulton County instead of personal laptop during internship.
 - **Denval Stewart**: Will follow-up with IT department on providing loaner laptop. Legal office has some members that have access to the databases mentioned.

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- **Chairwoman Karcheik Sims-Alvarado:** Fulton County Library has access to the databases and subscriptions already. Would like her to meet librarian John Wright to help with research.
- **Commissioner Marvin S. Arrington Jr.:** An open records request to the County Attorney's Office could be used to access court records, including Macedonia Park. Offered to provide personal password to state databases, if necessary.
- **Fran Calhoun:** Clerk to the Commission has Board of Commissioners' meeting minutes for the last 150 years and research librarians are willing to aid.

Next Steps:

Commissioner Marvin S. Arrington Jr.:

- Evanston, Illinois' reparations payments helped spark his interest to start this task force.
- Suggested the Reparations Task Force begin creating a timeline and schedule to present recommendations to the Board of Commissioners that involve reparations payments or a detailed supporting study from a third party.
- Requested website for Reparations Task Force.
 - **Fran Calhoun:** Website page is already in the works and will double check on status following the meeting.
- Black Buckhead Heritage Facebook group has a lot of land information from 1870s-1940s including what Fulton County did with purchased land.

1. Fulton Counties Jurisdictions

Chairwoman Karcheik Sims-Alvarado: Task force must remain focused on what Fulton County do within jurisdiction. Will share a rubric with members to help identify greatest area of interests and what the County will be able to approve.

Olivia Reneau

- Watched all task force meeting but would like to know what the priority area is for the first stage of research.
 - **Commissioner Marvin S. Arrington Jr.:** Fulton County gets most of funds from property taxes. Research should include property ownership examples where Fulton County systematically bought land from black owners. Macedonia Park is a good starting point.
 - **Marcus Coleman, Vice Chair:** Task force has discussed numerous areas of interests and agrees that land Fulton County has taken from black people should be the starting point with Macedonia Park as an example.
 - **Chairwoman Karcheik Sims-Alvarado:** Discussed documents recently found by John Wright regarding convict labor after slavery, slave owners, and related material.

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Marcus Coleman, Vice Chair

- Macedonia Park is former name, and the park is now called Bagley Park. Bagley Park sits in affluent area where Fulton County bought land due to water quality and irrigation issues.
 - **Commissioner Marvin S. Arrington Jr.**: Believes there should be records of these purchases. One of the oldest African American Methodist churches also can be found in this area.
 - **Fran Calhoun**: Posted that the name of the church is the New Hope AME Church at 3012 Arden Road, NW, Atlanta, GA 30305.

2. Creating Phase I & Creating Achievable Goals

- **Chairwoman Karcheik Sims-Alvarado**: The task force needs to narrow focus and create a short list of Phase 1 research goals that can be fulfilled by Fulton County government. Other areas of interests can be reviewed later.
 - **Fran Calhoun**: Encouraged members to build their Phase 1 goals and use initial research achievements to expand recommendations to the Board of Commissioners in later years.

Adjourn

- The meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.