

Introductions and discussion of responsibilities of task force 5:41

Members Present

- Dorothea Jones
- Damani Williams
- Denilson Fanfan
- Damonte Williams
- Natisha Mills
- Chip Greenidge
- Carrie Mayes
- Chair Joseph Feaster

Chair Feaster–

- Ordinance passed December 14, 2022 by City Council and signed by Mayor, members appointed/took oath in April
- Ordinance speaks about responsibilities of the task force and the City of Boston's involvement in reparations issues and to address the role of the COB during the diaspora and it's lasting impacts on the Black population of Boston
- Per ordinance required to have report by June 30th and but Chair asked the Mayor to extend that date because they have just been sworn in and began working in April
- Process begins by obtaining experts and want to gather the views and opinions, issuing an RFP for persons who are knowledgeable in the study of Black history, looking at reparations issues so the TF can leave to the Historians to tell us what has happened, want to begin with getting the facts, not what you know and what you believe
- RFP will be reviewed by members of the Task Force and City of Boston Staff to identify scholars in the area to develop the framework for which we will operate and will then engage with the public to discuss the facts and develop the process based on input, thoughts and ideas to develop recommendation in December of 2024
- End product is report on what should be reparations stance that the City of Boston should understand, there is no roadmap
- Many task force members wanted to have this first meeting here to get understanding and get to know one another and the community
- Information about the Task Force members and the ordinance are available on the City of Boston website
- Person who was handling administration of the Task Force, no longer employed and working with the Task Force and Ajay Singh is going to be working with the group in the future in making sure that notices and minutes are published appropriately and timely, work with subgroups of the TF that will be created to carry out responsibilities in partnership with Lori Nelson's office to respond to questions that members of the public may have
- Chair Provided copy of letter asking for postponement of phase one report to the members of the task force
- RFP Committee is going to begin meeting with the city to prepare an RFP that will go out widely to engage scholars in order to give some of the historical information that will be needed, will happen sometime in the fall to begin the dialogue and any information and updates to be shared to the City

Public Comment 6:06

- Aware of the issue with contractor and was hoping for some transparency for any meeting that is going to be held, only found out about this meeting 24 hours ago
- Asked Mayor for involvement of the community but feels like the community has been shut out and not involved, know there was issue with staff person but believe they have not been involved prior to that
- Stop using the red, black and green, it does not represent everyone and is disrespectful to those descendants because it denotes that there is domination from one ideology—put other colors representative of June 19th, not acknowledging that this about blood sweat and tears of ancestors
- Chair Feaster clarified that Task Force has not issued any such documents and was published by a member of the Task Force and that the research is going to be broader than the Pan-American, invited the public to provide information if they are interested in being considered during the RFP phase
- Ensure that Mayor and City Council is educated on why reparations are important, need to make sure that those who descend from U.S. chattel slavery, discussion about the diaspora and including American Freedmen and looking at Congressional documents that have the history and that history is not being white washed
- Microphone requested
- We know there were people enslaved in the 1500s and going to take the historic approach, 1638 was the first time in Boston harbor and was when those from the caribbean were brought here, and many markers in place
- Lack of inclusion of Pan-African movement and Black nationalist movement, concern that there is new conversation about reparations that are away from foundation and members and the public should re-educate themselves on reparations, reference Claude Mumford and What Does America Owe us
- Always discussing how far back slavery was, but in reality only two generations back for some families
- Have mixed background- Jamaican, Cape Verdean, etc and all converged in Boston because it is a port city
- Lack of communication— including no notice on the website, website lacking information
- Member of public submitted themselves and names of others to Task Force and have not heard back
- Chair Feaster— the Task Force is prepared to listen but clarified on the process of historians giving landscape to set foundation for the work, knows that the lack of information has not been effective and is going to change and not be tolerated
- As you put together the experts and academics, would you make sure that they are from different areas of this argument? Sometimes the statement of reparations come in many different forms and we as community in understanding the argument and supporting need to know the depth of why we are making such demands, agree James Jennings should be on the panel
- Chair Feaster— All recommendations are the Mayor's responsibility and send any information on that directly to Mayor Wu
- Recommend Dr. Kennedy of Anti Racist Center at Boston University

- BPL maps with history of redlining in Boston's Black community and will help with the narrative as it relates to housing and economics
- Joy in hear to see members of the committee who are of all generations
- Requests– identifying ways to incorporate trauma-informed practices and art and cultural practices because people survived based on cultural expressions- keep art and artifact
- Every moment of the way, remember that the damage did not happen in this room and will not happen in any of the rooms that are convened by this committee, the damage happened hundred of years ago and this is space of repair
- Economic repair and having money are two different conversations
- Young people know about the true history and the true meaning of reparations according to the UN, they hold the revolution
- Repair America collective is able to offer researchers and support through partnerships in response to the RFP
- Community outreach and education about the Task Force being known, partnership to make things happen and increase formal transparency of communication
- Lineage and race based ideologies- Lineage is heritage– we all can identify as Black but the reality is that it is social racial construct and need to start identifying by heritage because culture is what makes up heritage
- Reparations is based on lineage, If American Freedmen do not get their reparations here, no one else will in this country
- Jamaica started their own reparations, eligibility
- We are agreeing to disagree but must all respect one another, highest form of regard for ourselves, this is all of us and we cannot do it unless we respect ourselves, no one else will if we do not respect ourselves
- Families came unwillingly off the boat and this is the only place we know
- Business owner, want to make sure that RFP includes information about impact on businesses and how it translates into policy and policies that the COB currently has
- When a business applies as business that not minority owned, less information is required, have to show taxes that force to have to legitimize as opposed to not having to do so when not being woman/black/etc have to look at language and the bars that are set to disparage, scare business owners from pursuing what they want to do and pursuing part of the economy
- Took more effort to get less \$\$ from the City of Boston than it did with the Dept of Defense
- Impact economically of present day and economic impact of reparations
- All about access, for example when there is a business being opened, Black women sent to office of economic empowerment or other offices, compared to if was white male would be sent directly to the people who hold the information necessary
- City of Philadelphia and other places do it differently
- Dorothea– there needs to be justice for those who lost homes in 50s and 60s in Roxbury
- There are maps that can be obtained from the Leventhal Map center at BPL and mapping of early Black Boston and Prince Hall and 66 other men were aligned to have property as means of being able to vote and be active as they were becoming freed

- Territory should be given back and to see would be nice but is heartbreaking to go down there and be surrounded by people who do not look like who were once in the area
- Things in the research are not clicking, there was Haitian living at Rose house but there is no information available about her. Can we know our history?
- Chair Feaster– Chip Greenidge produced the flier and it is not the flier of the TF
- Reparations is year long discussion that is being forced into schedule of the City
- Legislation to create witness protection program for elderly, black disabled head of households
- Looking at other challenges, being squashed like roaches through family court, housing court, taking DNA for shoplifting, retaliating against us for things that have not even happened yet. Where is our protection? Until we figure this out people are going to be sheltered in place, etc. and on task forces
- Request chair be removed from position for not respecting time
- Chip– Reparations@boston.gov if you want to share, a staff person will be in touch
- Understanding process of enslavement could not have happened without legitimization of medical institution and how that has contributed to the harms of our communities
- 23 year life expectancy difference between Roxbury and Back Bay
- Medical institutions are supposed to pay when they expand, should be used as form of financing for reparations, holding medical institutions accountable for their role
- Showed maps of massacre of Black Americans, no other minority group will ever understand what has happened to us and even with all of the groups in the country are placed at the bottom of the totem pole
- Black Americans reading well below the reading level, still being affected
- Using universal basic income as the framework to build upon
- Money spent on Ukrainians and others coming in to the City, demand that money be given to them
- Councilor Mejia– Encouraged by creating space for the community to define for themselves what reparations looks like to ensure that those living realities can define for themselves what the paychecks are going to look like and who will qualify for them. When asked by media- does not matter what I think, was my job to issue the policy through for the people to decide for themselves
- Lack of communication about the meeting, would not have seen without post of TF member
- Building the infrastructure to be sure that communication is out to the streets, otherwise people are not going to trust the process, if we need more money we are in budget season
- Chair Feaster–Thanked Councilor Mejia for passing the ordinance, discussing that the work only just began, and will make sure that notices are done timely so people are aware of their meetings, if does not happen contact Chair

- No mics, this process is being undermined at the highest levels of our city government and believe what we should do is everyone in the room should email mayor's office tonight and call her office in the morning and ask for the money if the Task Force is fully
- The City should be communicating in timely fashion and allow for working people to be able to get here and be involved
- Meetings from over a month ago are just posted
- Mics should work or else indicates do not want to hear from public
- Task Force member was threatened and there is no security here– indicates priority
- This is the most consequential and contentious policy discussion had since end of Civil War and Civil Rights movement in which our people have been threatened and terrorized there needs to be some sort of security presence here to protect the people, listen to what the TF members are asking for
- Plurality of different arguments and perspectives, charge is all of the voices need to be heard and there is a systematic effort across the country in localities to shut out certain voices from conversation
- Questions of compensation even though it will exceed COB budget
- Cannot talk about rep without talking about schools
- Black Americans are the only group who have not seen reparations from other countries
- Wealth transfer in this country to those who have never been considered full citizens
- Free college tuition, land back, free health care, and the money for Black people
- Have to define who my people are– mandating who is required to be teacher
- 6 educators suing BPS and nothing is happening, leaders pushed out of this building and need to move collectively or is going to be a waste of time
- Power in unity and why we were so powerful in the Vietnam war
- Joe MaConnell should be in here, is historian doing Faneuil Hall tours in the future and use the book povernomics
- Reparations should be thought of not as \$ but as future generations, education, housing, healthcare, all for free because there is not enough money in the system to pay for what is overdue
- Systematic oppression and mass incarceration
- Communications issues need to be addressed
- Communication with other groups doing reparations work
- Not everyone can get to the conversations– children, no transport, etc.
- Developers moving into Mattapan
- Do not want to wait for more grants
- Taking time to educate the young people
- Ask the people in power–What have you been doing for months, who are you going to give the RFP to? What about the organizations who were shut down who could not receive funding?
- Task Force members should go into the streets and understand what is happening
- Discussion about people whispering and being asked to stop but people have not seen each other and important to be connected
- Differences across Mass ave for communities

- Unmarked graves of family members but we are speaking about reparations but cannot name the ancestors who came here enslaved
- Laws not applied fairly related to housing
- Development coming in was not considering what community wanted, so created petition to build life skills training and development center that is coming in October 2024
- Why do we have to continue fighting so hard for basic resources inside of our community? What resources are there to help them work through their trauma? Have to come out to community to understand what the issues are
- Encourage listening to elders in their life, can learn from their experiences
- Chair Feaster– Ordinance guides the work, history will be examined by the historians which will guide the framework for us to operate from, information will be gathered and given to the Mayor/Council
- Accountability after the task is done
- Dorothea– that is what we are doing, make sure past and present is happening, it is up to everyone on the other side of the room to make sure there is accountability
- Councilor Fernandes Anderson– clarify processes and what is happening moving forward, this is a task force, not a commission- they are not paid salary but receive stipend which is unclear currently. The members of the Task Force have nothing to do with the ordinance and structure of the work, and asked for FTE to assist in administrative processes. Onerous is on Council and the City to provide quality. Body is tasked to contract someone to do the study to understand what it looks like. The power is in the purse, ask the Mayor to put more money to this effort
- San Fran \$1.2 million per Black resident who qualifies
- COVID-19 pandemic was horrible but Black people have been living through pandemic since the first boat
- System is breaking down
- Break the generational curse, not a curse have to continue to educate and have to continue living and buy a business and buy land
- Reparations is far fetched, nothing is going to change until education is going to
- Families forced to resort to begging to be treated like humans, begging for housing, for food stamps for housing
- Reparations is going backwards, have to educate future generations to create their own wealth and continuing to
- Power in coming together