



Reparations Task Force Meeting Minutes

Bruce C. Bolling Building
2300 Washington St
Roxbury, MA 02119
Monday, March 18 2024
6:30PM-8:30PM

Meeting called to order at 6:40 PM

Opening Remarks and Language Interpretation Information

- Lori Nelson introduced Embrace Boston, who will be presenting on their newly released “Harms Report”. Elizabeth Tiblanc (Vice President of Arts and Culture at Embrace Boston) and Jenny LaFleur (Senior Research Manager at Embrace Boston) will be presenting today from Embrace.

Present:

1. L'Merchie Frazier
2. Denilson Fanfan
3. Damani Williams
4. Carrie Mays

Absent:

1. Joseph Feaster - Chair
2. George R. Greenidge, Jr.
3. Dorothea Jones
4. Na'tisha Mills

[Presentation by Embrace](#)

- Embrace Boston is a racial justice organization in Boston at the intersection of arts and culture. They employ critical race theory in every step of their work.
 - They are the organization behind the Embrace monument in the Boston Commons.

Minutes taken by: Maggie Kormann



- The origins of Embrace’s reparations work are rooted in the movements against police brutality that took place across the country in the past 10 years. Their reparations work is on the local, state, and federal level.
- 8 Harm Areas, stemming from N’COBRA, NAARC, and the Amherst Reparations Harm Report.
- Harm 1: Housing
 - Key takeaway: following federal policy, Boston’s real estate industry actively supported racial segregation.
- Harm 2: Transportation
 - Key takeaway: transportation policy at the city, state, and federal level have actively displaced and leveled Black neighborhoods, and supported white flight.
- Harm 3: Education
 - Key takeaway: segregation persists in BPS and throughout schools in the Commonwealth.
- Harm 4: Criminal Legal Systems
 - Key takeaway: the roots of the law enforcement and criminal legal systems lie in the Fugitive Slave Law and returning formerly enslaved persons to their enslavers in the South. There is a large overrepresentation of arrests of Black people in Boston to this day.
- Harm 5: Health
 - Key takeaway: today, the life expectancy of residents of Back Bay is nearly 25 years longer than that of residents in Roxbury. Health inequities and disparities are a direct result of Boston’s racist past.
- Harm 6: Income and Wealth
 - Key takeaway: the plunder of Black wealth began in the Commonwealth with the legalization of slavery in 1641, and persists to this day through the quarter-million dollar racial wealth gap.
- Harm 7: Culture and Symbols
 - Key takeaway: Of nearly 80 statues and monuments in Boston, only 8 reflect Black history and voices.
- Harm 8: Climate

FAQ and Reactions to the Presentation

- TFM L’Merchie Frazier raised a correction on the number of “8” monuments that reflect Black history in Boston, noting that there is a higher number and



the Black community is taking their own strides to put more monuments throughout the city.

- Harrison Clark: question about the final slide, which said that reparations is about more than cash compensation, and they feel that Embrace should take a firm stance on cash payouts for reparations and present more recommendations beyond cash payouts.
 - Elizabeth replied that they did not give a number because that is not the main point of the report, it is a literature review that is detailing the harms done to the Black community.
 - Other community members interjected to affirm their support for cash payments and urge Embrace to stop telling people to “look beyond” cash payments.
 - Elizabeth replied that Embrace is working to examine historical, systemic, root causes and policy solutions while also supporting cash payments. Embrace Boston has not made a position on a firm dollar amount for each harm area.
 - Harrison replied that Embrace should take a firm stance on cash payments if they will be informing the City of Boston in this work.
- LaShena Butler: would like to get her nonprofit recognized, the Fly By Movement, and stated that she has been on the frontlines of the civil rights movement. She wanted to add another harm, media, and how it has played a major role in white washing the stories of the Black community. LaShena spoke to the fact that she does not feel represented by Embrace Boston. She spoke to her personal story, work she has done in the community, and how she has been wronged by the city.
- A community member that did not give her name said that those who show up consistently to the meetings are low-income, and are not reimbursed for the costs of coming. She noted that they would like to hear more substantial updates about reparations, and spoke about the presence of Irish monuments throughout the city. She asked if the Task Force will be investigating money owed by the state of Massachusetts, and thanked the Task Force for their effort.
- Heather Cook: stating that organizations are coming into spaces with the community and should understand that interacting with the community on the grassroots level comes with community feedback. She also urged the



Task Force to be more inclusive of the community, and reminded everyone that people in the community are dealing with a lot of trauma.

- Edwin Sumpter: co-director of the Boston People's Reparations commission, he noted that their next meeting is this upcoming week. He asked how the work of the research team will be different from Embrace's presentation.
 - Elizabeth replied that their process is completely separate from the City's process; Embrace began this report in 2022.
 - Edwin followed up by urging that each of the Task Force members attend each and every meeting.
- A community member who did not give her name, noted that she is still living the harms to this day and wonders why the harms still exist despite there being so much research and understanding at the state level that racism is pervasive. She spoke to her personal experiences with the court system. She also asked what Embrace is advocating for, if not cash reparations.
 - Ajay Singh clarified that Embrace is not in a position to speak to the work of the Task Force. Lori Nelson replied to clarify that the City and the Task Force have an obligation to provide background and education to people of all levels of expertise.
- Reggie Stewart: addressing the Embrace team, noted that many nonprofits, organizations, intellectuals, etc. are over five years late to the conversation. He added that the reparations discussion did not begin with COVID-19 nor the George Floyd killing, and instead began many years prior. He noted that entities like Embrace Boston are late, and that is what angers the community. He asked that as Embrace continues to engage, if they would consider what the baseline amount owed would be in Boston based on their data and research.
 - Jenny replied that it may not be on Embrace's agenda, but that they do plan to continue to advocate for someone to do so and will bring that question back to leadership at Embrace.
- Youth Advocate with the Madison Park Development Corp: stated that Embrace did an incredible job informing her, she has learned a lot of similar information in her AP African American History class but this presentation was very helpful for her. She also noted that more Task Force members should be present next time.

Public Comment



- Sharon Hinton: her father's name is on the Embrace monument, and no one contacted her to inform her. She also asked if the Embrace report is open to revisions, and would like to know where they got their information from. She also stated that the public comment is a difficult forum where community members have a lot of pain to share. She also asked if this Task Force is speaking to other Task Forces across the country.
- A community member that did not share her name began by thanking Harrison Clark for his initial public comment. She followed by saying that those who come to give presentations need to understand that this is a charged space and they cannot take things personally. She expressed appreciation for everyone working on reparations currently. She also noted that the core of reparations must be land, giving back what was taken away. She urged everyone to understand that this is a professional, humble, and loving fight.
- Heather Cook: noted the difference between authority and power, and stated that the Boston People's Reparations Commission is mobilizing the community and urged the Task Force to invite their Commission to a future meeting.
- LaShena Butler: she spoke to the difference in statute of limitations on racial discrimination cases versus other types of discriminations and civil suits. She called for the Embrace statue to be taken down. She also wanted to know the state of the mental health of the Task Force members.
- Edwin Sumpter: concurred with Heather's comment, their next meeting is at Dudley Cafe this Saturday. Their goal is to engage, inform, and educate. He also wanted to underscore the importance of accountability and said that this meeting should have been used for productive conversation about reparations.
- Antonia Edwards: stated that she appreciates how the room is packed with passionate community members, and underscored that the community needs to uplift and support the Task Force. She commented that it is disrespectful that not every Task Force member is in attendance, but also stated that the members are extremely forthcoming and committed to the work. Antonia also urged community members to stop working in silos, and urged for people to work together. She also commented that Embrace should come up with a number for what Boston specifically owes. She said that the community must stand behind the Task Force.



- Mandysia Armand-Albert : spoke to her concerns about where certain investments by the City have gone, and why the City does not invest in the people. She also highlighted a young community member who was active at past Reparations meetings, Telisha Gilliard, whose life was cut short by domestic violence. She highlighted [the petition](#) she has created in Telisha's honor.
- David Hester: is part of a group of contractors, spoke to the importance of each of the Task Force members being present in this crucial process. He also underscored the importance of investing into the youth and the construction industry.
- Monica Murchison: she underscored the importance of getting people connected that are not as involved, and asked about a Reparations Task Force newsletter and other means of communications.
- TFM L'Merchie Frazier: thanked everyone for their exchange of ideas and thoughts tonight. She highlighted the importance of the research teams in finding the exact value of the history and what has been denied to Black Bostonians over centuries. She underscored her confidence in the historians hired – we must work with information as the first step. She also noted that the Task Force will regard the public's comments about being present.

Meeting adjourned at 9:07 PM.