

Russell City Reparative Justice Project Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, July 12, 2023 (6:00 PM-8:00 PM)

Location: Zoom

Russell City Reparative Justice Project (RCRJP) Committee Members in Attendance:

Elizabeth Sanchez, Francesca Thomas, Michael D. Johnson, Aiyana Knowles, Carolyn Johnson, Gloria Moore, Cindy Torres, Michael V. Johnson, Toni Wynn, Marian Johnson, Velda Goe, Deborah Harris, Aisha Knowles

Member(s) Absent: Cathy Rodriguez, Priscilla Figueroa

Facilitators in Attendance: Dr. Kerby Lynch and Aisha Canfield, Ceres Policy Research

1. Meeting Opening & Roll Call (6:00 PM-6:10 PM)

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 PM and roll was taken. A quorum of the steering committee was confirmed.

2. Retreat Debrief and Introduction to Revised Recommendations (6:10 PM-7:00 PM)

This part of the agenda included debriefing the retreat and presenting updated recommendations influenced by the retreat. There is a presentation summarizing the conversations and exercises from the retreat that have led to a set of preliminary recommendations that can be submitted. There are discussions related to eligibility criteria for reparations, including property ownership as a criteria and being a direct descendant of property owners or residents in Russell City between 1963 and 1968 to account for the harmful actions of the Russell City Redevelopment Project. There are discussions about defining direct descendants more concretely and the timeframe for eligibility. Other factors mentioned include residency duration, prioritizing elders, and handling document requirements to prove residency. Committee Members share their perspectives and concerns about the eligibility criteria, such as the impact of racially restrictive covenants and the need for further research to help qualify that into the RCRJP harm framework. The conversation then transitions to breakout groups, where committee members discuss eligibility further and provide feedback on specific recommendations assigned to each group.

2. Introduction to Subcommittees and Revised Work Plan (7:00 PM-7:30 PM)

Committee members discussed the importance of community engagement, gathering input from former residents, conducting research on Russell City's history and relocation impacts, examining existing policies, and developing recommendations for reparations initiatives in the City of Hayward. Two subcommittees have been formed - the Community Engagement Subcommittee and the Research and Policy Subcommittee - to focus on specific tasks related to the overall objectives in the draft action plan. The Community Engagement Subcommittee will work on involving the

community in the reparations process and gathering input on desired restitution, while the Research and Policy Subcommittee will conduct research, assess feasibility and legality, and create a framework for implementing fair and just reparations. To facilitate the work of the subcommittees, additional one-hour meetings will be scheduled in the weeks where a regular steering committee meeting or a public community meeting is held.. The next meeting is proposed for next week where breakout groups will be formed to discuss specific tasks and report back to the larger group. Participants are encouraged to come prepared with any additional concepts, feedback, or literature related to the discussed topics during a committee meeting.

3. Feedback Session: Descendant Survey (7:30 PM-8:00 PM)

The committee discussed a survey for descendant engagement and feedback to understand community-wide perspective on harm related to forced relocation from Russell City. Feedback from committee members is provided for the survey questions, including the need for clarification of terms, additional options for certain questions, and more simplified language. Committee members are highly encouraged to take the survey (as participants) to gain a better understanding of the user experience and to provide additional feedback for the researchers.