

## **Commonwealth of Virginia**

### **Commission to Study Slavery and Subsequent De Jure and De Facto Racial and Economic Discrimination Against African Americans**

**October 8, 2021, 9:00 a.m.  
Main Conference Rooms  
Library of Virginia**

Members present: Delegate Delores L. McQuinn, chair; Senator Mamie E. Locke, vice chair; Delegate Joshua Cole (arrived at 9:20 am); Jody Lynn Allen; Andrea Douglas; John W. Kinney; Cassandra L. Newby-Alexander; Xavier Richardson; and Karen Sherry. Absent: Edward L. Ayers and Daniel P. Watkins.

#### **Call to Order**

Committee chair Delores L. McQuinn called the meeting to order at 9 am and confirmed a quorum of Commission members by a roll call of those present. She welcomed Commission members and guests, especially Dr. Iva E. Carruthers who had travelled a long distance to attend the meeting. She expressed her desire that the Commission would move through its formal business expeditiously as she and Senator Locke had to leave at 10 am to attend another meeting, and she hoped that they would be able to hear Dr. Carruthers's presentation before they left.

#### **Approval of the Agenda and the Minutes of the June 8, 2021, Meeting**

Delegate McQuinn asked for a motion to approve the meeting agenda for the day as well as the minutes of the June 8, 2021, meeting as distributed to Commission members. Mr. Richardson moved to approve the agenda and minutes; Senator Locke seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved by a voice vote.

#### **Report of the Project Manager Subcommittee**

Senator Locke reported that the subcommittee met on July 6, 2021, and developed a position description for a project manager to support the Commission and a time line for filling the position. She asked that the description and time line as recommended by the subcommittee be approved by the full Commission. Delegate McQuinn called for a vote and the subcommittee's recommendation was unanimously approved by voice vote. Senator Locke then made a motion authorizing the Commission chair to proceed with hiring a project manager. Dr. Douglas seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved by voice vote.

#### **Presentation by Dr. Iva E. Carruthers, General Secretary of the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference**

Delegate McQuinn introduced Dr. Iva Carruthers and thanked her for her assistance when Delegate McQuinn was developing the legislation that created the Commission. Dr. Carruthers's help was extremely important in describing the purpose and scope of the Commission. Delegate McQuinn stated that Dr. Carruthers was an outstanding and internationally known speaker whose

work focused on surfacing and preserving African American history and on the topic of reparations. She expressed her profound gratitude that Dr. Carruthers had taken the time to travel to Richmond to speak to the Commission in person.

Dr. Carruthers began her presentation by quoting early twentieth century journalist and activist Ida B. Wells, who stated that “The way to right wrongs is to turn the light of truth upon them.” She expressed her hope that the Commission would shed light on the wrongs of the past and stated that this work was most appropriate for Virginia to undertake. Virginia had played an unparalleled part in the founding of our nation and it could and should play a leadership role in this historic moment when America’s future is at stake. Dr. Carruthers cited several examples from Virginia history to illustrate her point, but emphasized that the Commission had to go beyond the basic facts of history to analyze how systems and individuals of authority and privilege predetermined outcomes. She also emphasized that the Commission’s work should be viewed as part of a global web of ideas, institutional relationships, and strategies that have the potential to transform the world by reversing the growing inequities in the world.

Dr. Carruthers stated that the concept of reparations should be viewed as a process to remember, repair, restore, replenish, set right, make amends, and reconcile and not be regarded as a destination in itself. It should not be reduced to monetary terms but rather should be a process that leads to distributive justice, human atonement, and redemption. She encouraged the Commission to take the opportunity to lead. She closed by saying she saw Virginia as the place to jump start the healing of the nation.

Delegate McQuinn thanked Dr. Carruthers for her remarks. She and Senator Locke then left to attend another meeting. Delegate McQuinn, asked Delegate Cole to preside over the meeting in her stead.

### **Discussion**

Delegate Cole asked for questions and comments from members of the Commission. Dr. Newby Alexander asked what the two or three most important were that the Commission should focus on in the months ahead. She suggested that it might be wise to concentrate on developing an asset map of the work that has already been done so that the Commission focuses on the areas or topics where less is known. All present agreed that it would be important to create momentum in the months ahead and that this would not be accomplished quickly.

### **Public Comment**

Delegate Cole invited questions and comments from members of the public. One member of the public spoke about the importance of working with the faith community and not just political leaders.

In closing, Commission members asked what the immediate next steps would be. Director of Legislative Services Amigo Wade explained that his office and the Library of Virginia were ready to move forward on hiring the project manager just approved by the Commission and hoped that he or she would begin work in the near future. He also reminded the group that Delegate McQuinn would be introducing legislation in the upcoming legislative session seeking to extend the Commission through June 30, 2024.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 10:43 am.

To view a recording of the meeting, please visit <https://youtu.be/msnMhRgfiTE>.