

Commonwealth of Virginia

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

October 19, 2022, 1:00 p.m.
Virginia Union University

Living and Learning Center

Members present: Delegate Delores McQuinn (Chair), Senator Mamie Locke (Vice-Chair), Dr. Jody Allen, Dr. Edward Ayers, Dr. John Kinney, Mr. Xavier Richardson, Dr. Karen Sherry, and Daniel Watkins (virtual).

Call to Order

Commission Chair, Delegate McQuinn called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. and confirmed a quorum of Commission members present in person.

Approval of the Agenda and Previous Meeting Minutes

Delegate McQuinn asked for a motion to adopt the agenda, which was made by Dr. Ayers and seconded by Senator Locke. With no contention, the Commissioners unanimously voted to approve the agenda. Delegate McQuinn then called for a motion to approve the consent agenda which included approving the minutes from the January 6, 2022 meeting and the June 23, 2022 meeting. A motion was made by Dr. Sherry and seconded by Mr. Richardson. With no contention, all Commissioners voted to approve the Consent Agenda items.

Dr. Cleve V. Tinsley IV, Executive Director of the Center for African American History and Culture at Virginia Union University welcomed Commissioners and guests to Virginia Union University.

Discussion of the Agenda Action Items

Delegate McQuinn invited Ms. Luster to present on the updated two-year project plan. Ms. Luster explained that the updated plan followed the same research of original six-month plan as presented and approved in January 2022. The difference of the updated plan is to extend the research phase over 24 months.

The Commissioners then discussed Commission Subcommittees. Delegate McQuinn shared that the purpose of the Subcommittee was to provide specialized expert advice on each of the five subsections as identified in the originating legislation. Delegate McQuinn reiterated a question from Dr. Newby-Alexander during the June 2022 meeting regarding adding endangered sites as a new subcommittee. Dr. Kinney recommended including endangered sites, property, and land within the Housing section. Dr. Ayers proposed whether there should be a subcommittee related

to criminal justice. The Commissioners agreed and voted for the new subsection to be titled “Justice and Equity”. Dr. Ayers additionally asked if the economics subsection should be kept, removed, or merged with another section. The Commissioners agreed to keep economics as a subsection.

The subcommittees were approved as follows:

Justice and Equity: Dr. Ed Ayers, Sen. Mamie Locke
Education: Dr. Cassandra Newby-Alexander, Dr. Andrea Douglas
Healthcare: Mr. Xavier Richardson, Dr. Karen Sherry
Housing: Dr. John Kinney, Mr. Daniel Watkins,
Voting: Delegate Delores McQuinn, Dr. Jody Allen
Economics: Dr. Ed Ayers, Mr. Xavier Richardson

Commission Website

The Commissioners needed to forgo a discussion of the Commission website due to technical difficulties. However, the project manager shared that the website is live and hosted within the Library of Virginia domain. The project manager further shared that the website should be referenced for all public-facing information regarding the Commission.

Electronic Meetings Policy

In reference to § 2.2-3708.3 of the Code of Virginia, the Commission voted to adopt an Electronic Meetings policy, with no objections. In its current capacity, the Commission requires six members to be physically present to establish a quorum. The newly adopted policy allows for the Commission members to participate in meetings of the Commission to Study Slavery by electronic communication as permitted by § 2.2-3708.3 of the Code of Virginia.

Updated Project Plan

The Project Manager reminded the Commissioners that the final report would be submitted to the General Assembly in January 2024. Mr. Richardson noted that the topic of healthcare should be added to the work in Phase 3. The Project Manager agreed to present an overview of research conducted towards Phases 1-3 in next meeting.

Following, Mr. Richardson asked if the Commission needed a subcommittee on employment. Dr. Ayers offered that the current subcommittee on Economics could be expanded to Economic Equity to include Mr. Richardson’s concerns. Chair Delegate McQuinn instructed each of the subcommittees to meet with the Project Manager to set parameters and issues related to each subcommittee.

The Final Report

Commission Chair, Delegate McQuinn asked for the Commission’s input on the size and scope of the final report. The Commissioners discussed that the final report should be both in a physical and digital format. Dr Ayers added that the physical format should be in a digestible book form and that digital version should be able to be updated. Dr. Sherry advocated for a

standard recap at the end of each phase with the goal of demonstrating long-term consequences and connections to modern-day.

The Project Manager then presented a list subject matter experts. Mr. Richardson offered to suggest additional names from the University of Virginia. Senator Locke added Anthony Parent to the list of subject-experts.

A Public Event:

Following a brief discussion, the Commissioners decided that a public event would be desirable towards the conclusion of the Commission's work and agreed to discuss the matter further at the next meeting.

Closing

The Project Manager shared that the next meeting is currently scheduled for Wednesday, December 7, 2022 at William & Mary. Delegate McQuinn asked for a motion to adjourn, which was made by Dr. Ayers, and seconded by Senator Locke. The meeting concluded at 2:49pm.