



Reparations Task Force Meeting, Tuesday, October 25, 2022, 5:30 pm *Hybrid Meeting* 10/25/2022

Reparations Task Force
October 25, 2022 5:30pm Eastern Time (US and Canada)□

Green Mountain Room, 1st Floor, 149 Church Street, City Hall, Burlington VT□

Minutes□

Attendance: Isaac, Christine Hughes, Alexander Mitchell, Rev Mark Hughes, Sydney VanTassel, Phet Keomanyvanh

Start: 5:45pm

1. Motion to Approve the Minutes from July 14, 2022 and Aug 23, 2022

Not a Quorum

<https://go.boarddocs.com/vt/burlingtonvt/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=BXEN785D16E1>

2. Public Forum

Mark Hughes – Discusses task force members and how there were 5 members appointed by the REIB, City Council President, and Human Rights Commission. Councilperson Paul discussed the council appointment in the REIB Meeting. What about Rebecca? Would like to ensure we will have 5 folks appointed to task force to support open meeting law rules and decision making.

Phet Keomanyvanh – Describes the rules around open meeting law and shares that without a quorum, the task force can't make decisions without violating open meeting law. It is important that the task force does meet soon, but maybe we can discuss it during REIB City Council or next month.

Mark Hughes – Would like to address scope of Reparations Task Force. Describes Scope: California research discussed 12 different verticals. We need to get the community engaged and this should include different lanes encompassing reparations. As an example, lanes could include housing, education, health services, transportation, justice system, and so forth, and there could be findings and recommendations in each one. California report did include segmentation.

Christine Hughes – There has been a lot of work done, but I don't think there is any state that hasn't been a beneficiary of slavery.

Mark Hughes – I would hope that the task force would look at reparative policies and reparative process. This work should encompass initiatives that are already at play that address some aspects of systemic racism in some systems, whether it's housing or economic. Pull into visibility that is relevant towards reparative process because it ought to inform the work we do. Part of the recommendations could institutionalize reparative processes and policies.

Phet Keomanyvanh– I can talk to Rebecca and Pablo about setting a meeting or a time for us to meet to get a feel about their commitment and their thoughts. In order for us to do anything, we need to get more organized and a plan. Could be a bimonthly meeting.

Christine Hughes - I agree.



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Phet Keomanyvanh – Next time we meet, maybe we come up with a list of names for people to participate the meeting to send an email to.

Christine Hughes – If we come across someone who is interested in chairing or participated in the meeting, what should we do?

Phet Keomanyvanh – Karen Paul told us that if we had someone interested, we could vote on nomination. We can vote in a quorum. We can ask them to write a paragraph or 2 about why they are interested in the Reparation Task Force. It is really important to have a chair and if you don't want the REIB Director to be chair, we would need to have a lead.

Christine Hughes – Phet and Tyeastia leading is not how we are supposed to do it.

Phet Keomanyvanh – We meet at the task force every fourth Tuesday. The REIB Committee meeting on the 21st of November with Reparations in the agenda. We can use that committee meeting as a council and as a support and the task force meeting and internally, discuss things.

Mark Hughes – Discusses timelines, expectations, and deliverables and asks if there has been any collaboration on that level with the REIB Committee.

Christine Hughes - We want to end up with some sort of report and recommendations. We are sort of battling with Vermont exceptionalism and I want to debunk that myth. Even wrapped up the PR.2 work, the Vermont Constitution was used as a model for other states. That goes against what is thought about Vermont and we have a responsibility to share that truth.

Mark Hughes – I think that right now, we need to get out in front of the expectations and pushback.

Phet Keomanyvanh – This task force definitely has a time limit and we will need to make that recommendation.

Christine Hughes – 90 days after the report is submitted, that's the trigger of ending the committee.

Phet Keomanyvanh - With the RFP and analysis, we can use the materials with timeline and milestones to direct the work.

Mark Hughes – Discusses categories of research and determining all of the findings by a certain time, to have a recommendation. We could say one month, we will have a public forum, and another month, we will have two public forums. We don't want to get into analysis paralysis and lose steam/momentum. It's not lost on me at all that there is a loud noise that drowns out any conversation we have about systemic racism and the legacy of slavery. There are very few people that have the courage and will to do the work. In the same way that PR.2, in trying to get this message to reign true. I am not confident that this is the opportunity to stand for that purpose might not be the opportunity.

Christine Hughes – How do you complete any sort of research based on 400 years on ill-gotten gains? At the end of it, we will have a lot more than we have right now.

Mark Hughes – this work is highly controversial. 2 out of 3 of white Americans don't believe that this work should be done. 1 out of 4 folks who are black and brown don't see the point of the work. Don't quote me on these numbers. For context, in 2019, we had a 2-year introduction of H.478 which is a reparations bill, and H.387, which proposed to establish the task force to study and develop reparations proposals, died in 2022. HR40 was introduced in 1989 and we are almost 33 years later and it hasn't passed. This is work that is difficult, and we asked for it, and at the end of the day we were asked to do this work. If we don't complete, we are saying it can't be done. I want to state it infatigably and we need an attitude of understanding that although the obstacles, we will create a product that is respected to further our work and impact their lives.

Christine Hughes – I was really overwhelmed, where do you start with this and when we keep using the word "reparative"



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and reparations? I would encourage us to look at the principles and terms used in restorative justice, like with the CJC.

3. Current Reparations Discussion

Christine Hughes – Would like some discussion about how to engage the community to let them know about the work done so far and input about what direction we should go. Reparation is a very broad topic. She also suggested putting out an RFP for research on how staple industries and economies evolved in Vermont.

Phet Keomanyvanh – Describes the financial technicalities around an RFP. If you are using the city, you would need to research vendors and make it an open process. Also, over a certain amount of money, requires the city's approval.

Christine Hughes – Thinking about an RFP and how do we do move this forward and next steps. I'll send something out to folks.

Phet Keomanyvanh – will look to see if I can find any RFP templates

Phet Keomanyvanh – Raises the topic of Director of REIB as the chair of Reparations. Maybe we should consider rescheduling the meeting or having the chair direct when we schedule these meetings. Do you have any thoughts on that?

Christine Hughes – Pablo was considering being chair and if he is not interested, we would have to bring the new chair up to speed. I would like to check to see where he's at with that and I will talk about.

Phet Keomanyvanh – This task force is a public body and is required to follow open meeting laws, so when we have a quorum, we can make a decision. We can discuss, but we can't vote on it or make choices over email.

Christine – I am not sure who it would be the make the most sense to reach out to the Humans Rights Commission. What's the deal with that? Who will be appointed to this task force?

Phet – We can bring this up to City Council when we meet with them.

Mark – I will reach out to Bor Yang about the Human Rights Commission.

Phet – I will reach out to Pablo and Rebecca. To discuss nominations and we could discuss voting them in. We can also discuss a project timeline and Sydney and I are happy to help with a timeline to help with the project.

Christine – Would you send us the template RFP and timeline? I will try to make the agenda.

Phet – Yes.

5. Adjourn

Not a Quorum