



Advisory Council on Reparations

Tuesday, March 18, 2025

4 PM – 5:30 PM

Meeting in person and via Zoom

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Passcode: 710245

MARCH COUNCIL APPROVED MINUTES

1. Call to Order
2. Attendance
3. Approval of the Meeting Minutes
 - a. March 4, 2025
4. Public Participation (up to 3 minutes per speaker)
5. Council Response to Public Participation
6. Continued Council Introductions
 - a. Derrick Jackson, Racial Equity Officer
 - b. Councilor Introductions
7. Strategic Framework Discussion
 - a. ATM: How we came to the charge was through exploring the work of other reparations councils around the country and creating a “non-definition definition” of the work we were doing. We felt as though we were coming to the meetings and not accomplishing much, so we added this charge to give us a focus.
 - b. CS: We wanted to provide context around reparations before discussing the charge. That context is acknowledgement, apology, and redress.
 - i. Reparations is a process intended to hold a person heals by way of acknowledgement, apology, and redress.
 - c. NN: We are singling out black lives?
 - d. ATM: It was in the resolution.

- e. DF: That is why this is not a definition, because it would include other groups like native Americans if it was a definition.
- f. DJ: Washtenaw County has some of the most educated, insulated economically, we have people with big hearts who want to give, we are the most liberal county in Washtenaw County, why are we still having these issues? I think this group can work to understand the realities around how we got here and how we can help.
- g. DJ: It is important that we focus on County government
- h. JH: We can amend the resolution that established the ACR.
- i. CORE VALUES
 - i. MS: Likes it
 - ii. ATM: Believes that it important to hold the Commissioners accountable to the work that the Council works.
 - iii. DF: clarify black community. "Black Monolith"
- j. FOCUS AREAS
 - i. No Comments
- k. STRATEGIC GOALS AND ACTION ITEMS
 - i. MS: We have not invited experts in history or law to speak to the group. I see this action item inextricable intertwined with goal number 3 (research). We need a very solid harms report, discrimination by the county and until we do that we are just spinning our wheels. We can't make any recommendations until we know what harm the county has done specifically. The work that we do has to be very narrowly tailored to address the harm. It is going to take a long time; it will likely take years. Unlike in Detroit where there are lots of people who have written about history, Washtenaw County doesn't have that. We also need money. We are going to be sued- we need a solid harms report and very narrow recommendations.
 - ii. NN: I left the last meeting feeling the exact same way. Knowing this community, I can see us producing multiple sub reports that could then all come together in the end so that we don't get slowed down. It can help us move forward. What does it take to bring a community along? These reports will allow us to help the community wrap their heads around this work. Believes that we can work on the chapters of the work instead of being stalled for four years.
 - iii. CS: Lean into Justin and Derrick as the liaisons for the county board. We have partners who are eager to match the counties contributions, but we need a county contribution before we can get those matching funds.
 - iv. MS: What organizations are willing to match?

- v. CS: Centers at the University of Michigan and AAACF. AAACF is doing contractual work to measure current disparities which is not the same as our work, but parallel to it.
- vi. JH: There have been challenges with OCED/REO management of opportunity index. They are mostly finished, but they are making updates for enhanced user experience.
- vii. CS: We did not get specific about cash or in-kind. There is an enthusiasm to be involved.
- viii. MS: Are they still interested in working on a project like this considering the federal policy environment?
 - 1. Meeting with Kathy White – UM Board of Regents
- ix. NN: WISD is willing to help with data collection, whatever is needed to look at it historically.
- x. DJ: Why is it important to get this on paper?
- xi. NN: I just did a report on career and technical training, having the report done is what caused the uproar in the state when they realized the harm that was being done, multiple reports were done and led to the decision to propose a millage to fund this work.
- xii. Pastor Wimberley: is there an opportunity for us to educate our community on what they don't know. We have to start there and build relationships to get more traction to understand what reparations is. We have to help people get to a point where people believe change is possible.
- xiii. DJ: What is the appetite of the Board to help with this work?
- xiv. JH: We are in a better position to get things moving due to community partners who are interested in doing the work. However, the board is focused on basic services while the federal administration is withdrawing funding from state and local governments.
- xv. ATM: We have to make the ask.
- xvi. JH: Will be a good use of time to put this together.
- xvii. MS: This is essential.
- xviii. ATM: We can have one harms report written, but we are going to keep learning from people, but we should invite the community into truth telling/story sharing sooner rather than later.
- xix. DF: When we spoke about it before there was some sort of appetite of the subsection of the council of going out into the community.
- xx. DJ: We are having a lot of conversations about how to do the work under the current federal climate. For some, the work has been performative. But how do we evolve the work around equity to dive deeper to accomplish real change?
- xxi. JH: The REO office is not federally funded so we don't have to worry about this work continuing at the office.

- xxii. DJ: Should we define reparations for Washtenaw County? What have the conversations in the past been? We can just delete goal two, but it was present in the formula in other places.
- xxiii. MS: I wasn't here when we decided to not create a definition of reparations.
- xxiv. DF: A definition is a statement or a meaning of a word, we are already charged with the limited understanding of the scope of our council. Why come up with a definition that isn't as narrowly tailored to the charge that we have?
- xxv. MS: If I go out in the community and someone says "what is reparations?" what do I say?
- xxvi. DF: That is the first two sentences
 - 1. Reparations is a process intending to promote justice by healing people injured, oppressed, or exploited because of their group identity. A person heals by way of acknowledgment, apology, and redress.
- xxvii. ATM: We were imagining that our listening sessions could be focused on certain areas, like the seats that we are all in.
- xxviii. NN: For example, homeownership. Washtenaw County cut through a neighborhood in Ypsilanti Township. Can we ask our community to respond to questions in this way? Can we create an artifact or story? Can we create pieces of this story together?
- xxix. DF: One suggestion is to reach out to UM again to test the waters after the federal administration change. Another person to reach out to is **Sasha Killewald, director of center for inequality dynamics**. Ready for action, we have partnerships and community engagement, people are involved and committed. It is time for action.
- xxx. NN: Can we make a motion to look into finding consultants that we would consider?
- xxxi. JH: We need money. The next appropriate step would be to work on a financial ask. Put a formal resolution together.
- xxxii. DJ: We do the round robin of reconnection with people to see if they are still on the path and see what it will cost. There are a lot of competing priorities right now, the reality is that there are many pressing needs that we have to compete with right now.
- xxxiii. JH: IF it is a challenge to get funding from the county, it is not the board saying no to reparations, it is priorities.
- xxxiv. MS: I don't know if you can give us a prognosis of what you think the board will do? What percentage change do we have of getting something funded?
- xxxv. JH: It depends on the dollar amount and time limit.

- xxxvi. CS: It could be a good time to leverage the Trump administration's attacks on washtenaw county as a reason to give money to this cause now.
- xxxvii. JH: IF the county loses federal funding, the county will have to figure out a way to cover those losses in critical services.
- xxxviii. DJ: How can we braid this money together? THe goal will be to meet with AAACF and the UM folks between now and the next meeting.
- xxxix. MS: Has someone he wants Derrick to meet with. **Matthew Countryman, former chair of the department of Afro-American studies at University of Michigan.** He is very well connected in Washtenaw County and could do the work.
- xl. DF: It is going to take a couple of researchers, what was the role of Washtenaw County and someone to analyze the current data today. These are different tools and skillsets.

8. Public Participation (up to 3 minutes per speaker)

9. Adjourn