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# HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

City and County of San Francisco

## ***SAN FRANCISCO HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION***

### ***Draft Meeting Minutes***

**September 14, 2023 5:00 PM**

#### **ROSTER OF COMMISSIONERS**

Karen Clopton, Chairperson  
Ann Champion Shaw, Vice-Chairperson  
Rodrigo Duran, Commissioner  
Hasib Emran, Commissioner  
Jayson Johnson, Commissioner  
Mark Kelleher, Commissioner  
Jason Pellegrini, Commissioner  
Leah Pimentel, Commissioner  
Irene Yee Riley, Commissioner  
Michael Sweet, Commissioner

Sheryl Evans Davis, EdD  
Executive Director

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For more information, contact the Commission Secretary at 415-252-2500  
Agenda and other information are available on the HRC website: [www.sfgov.org/sfhumanrights](http://www.sfgov.org/sfhumanrights)

**The meeting was called to order at 5:01 pm.**

Ramaytush Ohlone Land Acknowledgement – **Vice Chair Shaw.**

**1. 2:33 CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL OF COMMISSIONERS**

**Present:** Karen Clopton, Ann Champion Shaw, Jason Pellegrini, Rodrigo Duran, Hasib Emran, Jayson Johnson, Michael Sweet

**Absent:** Irene Yee-Riley, Mark Kelleher, Leah Pimentel

The meeting was called to order with 6 Commissioners present; Commissioner Johnson arrived shortly after roll call.

**2. 3:16 GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT** *(Discussion Item)*

Members of the public may address the Commission on matters that are within the Commission's jurisdiction and are not on today's agenda.

There was no comment on this item

**3. 4:32 ADOPTION OF THE August 10, 2023 MEETING MINUTES** *(Discussion and Possible Action Item)*

Review and anticipated adoption of minutes from the Commission's August 10, 2023 meeting.

**Public Comment**

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment on this item.

**COMMISSIONER COMMENT/ACTION**

Motion to adopt August 10, 2023 Meeting minutes as submitted: 1st Vice Chair Shaw, 2nd Commissioner Emran. Motion carried by unanimous consent

**4. 14:06 SAN FRANCISCO REPARATIONS PLAN 2023** *(Discussion Item)*

Executive Summary of recommendations from the African American Reparations Advisory Committee (AARAC) leadership, awareness of Community Engagement Sessions, HRC review of recommendations including timelines for advancing recommendations, and next steps including Board of Supervisors Hearing and formation of the Office of Reparations.

**Presentation: Sheryl Davis, Director, San Francisco Human Rights Commission**

**Eric McDonnell, Chair, African American Reparations Advisory Committee**

**Tinisch Hollins, Vice Chair, African American Reparations Advisory Committee**  
**Public Comment**

The full Reparations Report is available on the City's website ([African American Reparations Advisory Committee Final Report | San Francisco \(sf.gov\)](#)), and the slides presented here this eve are on the HRC website for this meeting ([September 14, 2023 Human Rights Commission Meeting | San Francisco \(sf.gov\)](#)).

Chair McDonnell opened with gratitude to the Committee members. He delivered a slide presentation outlining responses from community surveys showing driving forces for outmigration and displacement of the Black community, and these noted institutional issues became the focus of the 153 recommendations of the Reparations Report, outlined in four categories: Education, Economic empowerment, Health, and Public Policy.

Vice Chair Hollins addressed the priority recommendations. She noted that financial reparations, under the heading of Financial Empowerment, was a clear need, however it is up to the City to decide how that need will be met. The need to close the wealth gap is a priority. Spatial Justice is a clear Financial goal, seeing ways to expand Black business, creating opportunities for Black businesses to start and thrive and the creation of Black business districts.

Vice Chair Hollins added the need for educational institutions including the addition of an HBU (Historically Black College) to the City and supporting Black pre-K and K-12 schools/classes, and recruitment and support of Black Teachers. She added increases in Black focused health care with support of Black doctors and nurses , all designed to address health disparities.

She called for the formation of a nonpartisan advisory committee that works arm in arm with the city to implement the recommendations that we have in this report, and this to be put in place while the Office of Reparations is being "built" and staffed.

Chair McDonnell brought up three overarching recommendations the AARAC has put forth for the City to act on. They are:

1. The City and County of San Francisco and its agencies should issue a formal apology for past harms, and commit to making substantial ongoing, systemic, and programmatic investments in Black communities to address historical harms.
2. The City and County of San Francisco should establish an independent Office of Reparations within the City to execute this plan. This Office must track

implementation of the recommendations of the Reparations Plan and ensure the continued success of programs.

3. The City and County of San Francisco must create and fund a committee of community stakeholders—such as a Reparations Stakeholder Authority or similar—to ensure equity and continuity in the implementation of relevant policy initiatives, independent of the City and County of San Francisco.

The Chair and Vice Chair invited all present to attend and support the rally and Board of Supervisor's hearing on Tuesday September 19, when the presentation on the Final Reparations Report and vote by the BOS on the report will take place.

Director Davis closed out the report by addressing next steps. The HRC has been actively involved administering the stipends to Committee members and providing administrative support through the process. She gave thanks to the staff engaged in the work.

**Chair Clopton** thanked all the presenters and the members of the AARAC for their work in the creation of this report and the recommendations.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Daniel Landry (AARAC Member):** Thanked the other members of the Committee for their work. He noted Reparations is nothing new and many people have not lived to see this work come to fruition. He asked all to think of those who have passed without reparations when considering their next actions. He thanked the Commission.

**Gwendolyn Brown (AARAC Member):** Asked on behalf of San Francisco and the Community that HRC endorse the recommendations by the AARAC. She stated this all boils down to repairing and addressing harm.

**Malik Senaferu:** Thanked all who made this moment possible. He stated this work is about repairing harm, most importantly in children. He cited past works in reparations to other communities and asked that this now happen for the Black community.

**Niqua Jones:** Thanked everyone present and to all for allowing people who do not necessarily have a voice to be heard. She stated the work is monumental to the growth of San Francisco and hoped for the support the recommendations for the next 100 years.

**Elliot Hellman:** Stated he grew up in San Francisco and though he does not identify as an African American person, he stated most white people, at this point, are aware of the

stumbling blocks that have been put in front of African American friends and neighbors. He added reparations will repair the harm that has been done to our community and to the City.

### **COMMISSIONER COMMENT**

**Chair Clopton** noted all Commissioners had a copy of the AARAC Final Report and the Executive Summary. She urged the Commission to give the report their unanimous endorsement.

**Commissioner Shaw:** Stated she was emotional to see all the work come to fruition. She noted this (report) was an incredible piece of work, and it will have an impact on Black San Franciscans and throughout the country. She asked if the Committee received any encouragement or support from other minority groups. Secondly, she asked if there was a timeline for the actual formation of the Office of Reparations in 2024.

Chair McDonnell stated yes though it has been intermittent. He cited strongest response is in the Black and Jewish Coalition. He hoped that the open Endorsement Process will elicit more declared support.

Director Davis addressed the second question noting it is up to the Mayor's Budget Office to release the funds to form the Office of Reparations. The soonest the HRC could hire a person for the new office would be November or December. There are actions the HRC can take in the interim to aid the Reparations recommendations moving forward and she can come back with a timeline. She was joined by Vice Chair Hollins in noting that the formation of an agency outside the City that could move and operate outside the City's restrictions is still being discussed. This group could act on issues of public education on Reparations.

**Commissioner Duran** stated that the Report, though appearing to people outside our "circle" as being comprehensive, is just beginning to address the issues and harm that the Black community has experienced. Additionally, he applauded the work of Mega Black, HRC staff, and others are doing on the social media platforms to get the word out regarding Reparations. He asked if there were any outstanding areas of focus brought up by community, during the outreach sessions, that were not already addressed in the report.

Director Davis replied by noting the issues around honoring Certificates of Preference and housing in general are a significant topic and issue. The Department (HRC) connected people who spoke about this with groups offering help in these matters (New Community Leadership Foundation). These issues are in the report and still it was noted that more needs to be done and with immediacy. She added there are over 100 recommendations in this report that address many needs, and they include measures to ensure that harms do not continue; she noted that financial reparations cannot overcome institutional racism and if people are not

permitted to make a foundation here in the City, money will not change the ongoing harm and displacement that is affecting the Black community.

Vice Chair Hollins reverberated what the Director said, and she offered that the guarantee of non-repetition is essential for this to repair harms for the past and set up the Black community for success in the future. She added that it would be necessary that financial reparations be made while not impacting the subsidies people are receiving as those subsidies ensure people's housing in San Francisco.

Chair McDonnell added that themes that arose during the sessions were economic empowerment, access to entrepreneurship, access to capital, and access to opportunities on the public sector side and RFP's. Lastly, he pointed out that the harms being addressed here are generational and part of the process needs to include elements of "truth and reconciliation" like what has been done in South Africa, to bring in social and emotional healing efforts.

**Commissioner Johnson:** Offered his thanks to the leadership for the report. He stated this Committee and the report speak for so many people outside the City and across the country who have been impacted by this harm. The work addressed generational harms and he thanked the Committee for looking at the issues in these ways.

**Commissioner Emran:** Applauded the work of the Commission and noted this historic work and that the work of the Committee would be remembered positively for the work, courage, dedication, and strength to make it happen. He called slavery this country's original sin and the efforts here are working towards restorative justice. He asked Chair McDonnell, for those critics who say that this country has already paid for reparations to African Americans through affirmative action, how would you respond to that? And to those who say, "why should I apologize for something that happened before I was born", what would you respond with. Chair McDonnell stated there has not been any demonstrative, demonstrable, systemic approach to repairing the harms of African Americans in this country. There have been episodic movements, however what is lacking is a collective systemic repair that begins with acknowledgment, and then addresses commitments of non-repeat and all the ways in which repair can manifest itself. And to the second question he noted that people living today benefit from the effects of racism and racist policies; people may have not been complicit with the acts that we are trying to address today, however they have benefited from these historic wrong doings.

**Chair Clopton** Asked what we can be doing now. How do we make amends and ensure we do not continue harm into the future. She brought up the three overarching asks and noted these can be done now. She cited the work done to make reparations to the Japanese community

following their internments during WW2, and how this serves as a historical basis for addressing harms.

Vice Chair Shaw: Made a motion for the Commission to endorse the report and add “our” names in support of the report. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Johnson.

Commissioner Sweet noted this agenda item was not listed as an action item, and asked if a vote is “appropriate” given the published agenda.

Director Davis stated she believed a vote could happen, though it would not be a formal, legitimate, vote. A formal vote would need to be agenda item for the next meeting to make the vote official.

Chair Clopton asked the vote to proceed to ensure the choice and support of the Commission be heard in advance of the September 19 BOS hearing.

Commissioner Sweet asked for clarification of the motion and Vice Chair Shaw stated the motion was to endorse the entire report (not just the three overarching recommendations) and to add our (the names of the Commissioners) in support of the report.

Secretary McKnight called the roll: 5 Commissioners voted aye, 2 Commissioners passed, and 3 were not present. By quorum, the vote and motion passes; the Secretary notes this is an informal vote demonstrative of Commission support, and a formal vote will be called for the September 28 meeting.

**5. 1:34:36 COMMISSIONER ACTIVITIES IN THE COMMUNITY** *(Discussion Item)*

Commissioners update the public on activities they have participated in and any upcoming events.

**Public Comment**

**Commissioner Duran** Joined Commissioner Riley at San Francisco King of the Streets Event and Asian Latino Cookout; Asians are Strong Joined with Carnival to put on the cooking event. Tomorrow (September 15) is Mexican Independence Day with a celebration at City Hall with the Mayor.

**Commissioner Emran** Will be attending the Black Firefighters Ball this coming Saturday (September 17), benefiting the San Francisco Fire Youth Academy.

**Vice Chair Shaw** Plan to attend the September 19 Rally and Board of Supervisors meeting on Reparations. The Rally is at noon and the meeting, though it begins at 2:00pm, the hearing on Reparations starts at 3:00pm.

**Commissioner Riley** Enjoyed the Asian Latino Cookout with Asians are Strong Joined and Carnival. Thanks to Commissioner Duran for organizing this event. Also attended a Woman's Equity Roundtable discussion with speaker Nancy Pelosi; it was well attended. Additionally attended the Stand Together SF meeting at the Booker T Washington Community Service Center.

Chair Clopton Joining Tuesday, September 19, as well for the Reparations Rally and hearing.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Malik Senaferu:** Event at South East Community Center, 1550 Evans, Resilience, Art, and Trauma. He extended an invitation for "Board" (Commission) members to attend. Additionally, he will be leading a Black Reparations Mural touch up project at Alice Griffiths Double Rock.

6. **1:42:25 ADJOURNMENT** Meeting adjourned at 6:44 pm.  
Motion to Adjourn: 1st Commissioner Sweet, 2nd Commissioner Riley  
Transcription of the meeting minutes are available upon request to the Commission Secretary, [john.mcknight@sfgov.org](mailto:john.mcknight@sfgov.org).