



**Reparations Task Force Meeting
Thursday, July 11, 2024, at 6 p.m.**

Location: Fulton County Government Center Assembly Hall, 141 Pryor St SW, Atlanta, GA
30303

Zoom: <https://zoom.us/rec/share/s4DikHnRBeZBAq7FuJyEiOEno5G6ywoYvIO3h6K9nH7fY0CjxaPVXseiFgAlwHI9.WfxmH4h4bWbayj6e>

POST AGENDA MINUTES – RATIFIED

This document has been ratified or approved by the Fulton County Reparations Task Force and is not binding on the County or any officer.

****A QUORUM WAS PRESENT****

Roll Call: Karcheik, Marcus, Ann Hill Bond, Elon Butty Osby, Mike Russle, Carole Sykes (online), Michael Simanga (online), Greg Fann (online), Mr. Rodney Littles (excused)

Staff Present: Jordana Arias, Fran Calhoun, Denval Stewart (virtual)

Adoption of July 11, 2024, Meeting Agenda

Motion to adopt by Mr. Mike Russel. Motion seconded by Bishop Greg Fann seconds. Motion passes.

Approval of June 6, 2024, Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve by Vice Chair Marcus Coleman. Motion seconded by Mr. Mike Russel. Motion passes.

Old Business

- Research updates
 - Slavery Research
 - Chair Karcheik Sims-Alvarado: As you may recall, our researchers have gathered the names of all the slaveholders, the number of individuals in

Slave and Folsom County, the value of these individuals from 1853 to 1864, we have calculated the percentage of these individuals to the value of whole property of slaveholders, and we won't reveal the percentage just yet, but it's large. Also, the researchers have begun creating visualization charts. We are moving into the phase now of discussing, identifying writers to contextualize that information, information regarding those who were enslaved, convict labor, voting, help me, Madam Secretary, I'm going down the list in my head, and we have begun drafting an outline for the study at Table of Contents. The research committee members we met this past Friday, we met previously before, and we think that we've narrowed down a working outline, Table of Contents. A few things may change based on our timeline to be able to pen to paper and produce the report. We believe that we were our report, I'm describing as being small but mighty. It doesn't need to be 1,100 pages like the California report. It needs to have the skeleton, it must have the evidence, and we must be able to make the argument, and Dr. Meng, you wanna share how we're shaping it?

- Dr. Meng provides an update on final report by reading through the proposed outline (find attached to bottom of minutes)
- Chair Sims-Alvarado: As Dr. Meng has explained, as we are looking at those areas that fall under the purview of the county, in the summary and the conclusion, we are looking at the benefit to the county and the harm at the expense of Fulton County residents. A lot of this is groundbreaking research, just challenging a lot of what even myself as a historian has learned. So we're excited about it. This work is not an academic piece. This is for the Fulton County residents. And more importantly, it's a report for the commissioners to support the recommendations that we as a task force would actually make. We are looking at organizing ourselves in the next few weeks in order to gain support from community. Community have been waiting for this moment. So we're excited about that. So a lot is gonna happen in the next four weeks. We were actually asking for some of our task force members if you're interested and even contributing to the report. If you're interested in writing, I know that Ms. Anne Hill Bond has volunteered, hopefully Dr. Michael Simanga, hint, hint. I'm going to write, Dr. Meng has volunteered to write. And we're looking at about 10 pages of text supported by visual, how do you say it? Data visualization charts. So we're excited about this. We're looking at what we actually want to have this report printed. And so that is shaping our timeline. We were looking at a number of publishers. I think we may have narrowed down to one particular publishing company that can print in 10 days, whereas others may be looking at four to six weeks. So I'm going to share with you a copy of a printing company that we're actually looking at all glossy pages. You can start with Anne, all in color, hardback. We're looking at printing about 1,000 pages to distribute to the community, 1,000

books, thank you. 1,000 books, this book can be used, this harm report can be used to engage community, to have conversations, to compare with each other, to have conversations, to compare it to other works that have been published already. It's a great way to have conversations and more importantly, to see the faces of those who experience harm. It's so important for us to humanize the experience of those that we include in the data, they're not just numbers. So that's going to be important for us. And then we're going to start mobilizing. And we promised the community to town hall meetings and I'm going to let Dr. Meng talk about that when we get to new business.

- Chair Karcheik Sims-Alvarado: So newspapers.com, partner with ancestry.com, I had to sign a nondisclosure, I couldn't share this with anyone, but there are a number, over 422 references in newspapers.com that actually provide the names of individuals who were auctioned off, those who ran away, slave holders, slave brokers, names of sheriffs, individuals who continued to be involved in the selling of human beings, even after Abraham Lincoln gave the executive order to abolish slavery and the Confederate South. The county, the state, the entire South ignored that order. And so what we see in these newspapers is how Black people took, they sought self-immolation by taking flight, and they ran away. So those names are there. So that information is actually gonna help with our study. And I'll turn it over to Dr. Meng to talk about convict labor research.
- Convict Labor Research
 - Dr. Meng: Thank you. So last time we were here, I spoke a little bit about the convict, the Georgia Registry of Convicts and how that data has been digitized, and we're already starting to see the trends of Black Fulton County residents being convicted of crimes disproportionately in relation to White Fulton County residents. And you can see their sentence links are longer. You can see that Black women are twice as likely to appear in the convict registry than White women. So all of that is definitely showing that Fulton County was disproportionately convicting Black residents. And to build on that, we have been looking also at the Fulton County chain gang because we need to draw all of this directly to the county, right? So with the Fulton County chain gang, we've been able to see reports in the papers based on county superintendents, county meetings, talking about how many roads and actually the value of the convicts that did the work leveling and grading the roads. They actually quantify that. They never paid them, of course. They paid contractors to put some rock and pavement on top, but the work of the convicts, of course, was never paid for. There's also articles talking about the increase of the value of property when roads were laid towards specific properties. So we're starting to build that evidence of just how much value in terms of the

infrastructure, in terms of property, the county benefited from, which was completely through convict labor.

- Dr. Michael Simanga: Two things that we might want to consider. One is the percentage, the population percentage of Black Fulton County residents who are incarcerated. And that's number one. So if it's 5%, 10%. The second is how does this affect their families financially? Because two people working in the household is very different than one person working in the household. I mean, it's the same kind of scenario of today, but if there's data on that, I think we should try to include it, that the incarceration is not just the loss of their freedom and the exploitation of their labor, but it also has a financial and social impact on their families and communities. And if we can quantify that, that would be a good thing.
- Bishop Greg Fann: Mike already asked part of the question in terms of the dollar amount, in terms of how do we quantify that dollar amount, in terms of for the totality of that family that may be affected, well-affected by the loss of a loved one that was in prison that didn't get compensated for being in prison, building those roads. I do have a question, in terms of the roads, in terms of the inmates paved the roads and then they paid a contractor to pave over the road, you saying that they did the deep basing and then they brought in a contracting company to actually put in the asphalt, but it would be some kind of topping. Is that what you were saying?
 - Dr. Meng: The way it's described in the reports I'm reading is that the chain gangs did the grading and the leveling, so kind of like maybe cutting the road, and then they paid contractors to lay, I guess, the material on top.
- Bishop Greg Fann: And it shows how much they paid the contractors. Obviously, they didn't pay the convicts. So when we talk about labor and labor in terms of people who actually did the contractors during the work, are we looking at in terms of what they paid the contractors, in terms of the inmates that were used to actually do the deep basing, that's what it's called, the deep basing, to put the, so they can put the asphalt on it. Are we looking at that in terms of how much it would have been per person for doing the actual work?
 - Dr. Meng: Yeah, they actually calculated in dollar amount in 1885 dollars, we'll say, so they did that. They value the work at say \$200,000 that the convicts did. So we don't have to come up with that because they already put it in the report for us.
- Chair Sims-Alvarado: And convict leasing is quite interesting to say the least. It becomes a new, it creates a new class of wealthy people in Fulton County, I mean, throughout the United States because you're talking about

creating roads in order to make way, I mean, for the automobile that's coming, right? And then, but also for the road roads. And just looking at geography with Fulton County, we don't even think about this when we start thinking about slavery. Everyone needs to race out of their minds, this whole idea that Fulton County was terror from going with the wind. We're in plantations here, large plantations, as we would like to imagine, as we have romanticized. If you look at the geography of Fulton County, it comprised of mainly gravel. And some other things which I won't talk about, okay? But the gravel is where you're gonna have a large number of convict laborers. And for those who are part of the metropole living in the city of Atlanta, these individuals who are incarcerated are on the outskirts of the county, kind of like out of sight, out of mind. And, but the conditions of these individuals who are beating rocks, I mean, they are creating the gravel for the roads and for the, I mean, for the roads that we drive on every day, but also the railroad tracks. The railroad tracks have to be supported by gravel. And we don't think about these things. We don't think about the passageways for the trains, the passageways for the roads and how those things came to be. But the same individuals who come into this new industry of creating roads, being involved in public works, they also double dip, right? So they have the contract, not only for the chain gain, but also the contracts in some cases to lay the tar on top of the roads or and some of these individuals who we will soon name. They are elected officials. Their names are on streets. Their names are on, on school buildings. And we celebrate them, they're allotted. And, but just as we have the names of slaveholders, we have this new class of individuals who become the profiteers of individuals, oppression and exploitation. And we have their names too.

- Bishop Fann: You brought up a very interesting point when you talk about public works. You also had infrastructure work in terms of the water lines because you had to get water to different places and businesses and those kinds of things. So there's a lot of infrastructure work that went on. Have you looked into that? I've worked in public work 20-something years. Is there any other information in terms of convicts doing anything other than just doing roads and bridges?
- Dr. Meng: I've been looking mostly at the keyword chain gang and a lot of it is discussion of roads, but I'm definitely also seeing some work in parks. Even the story I read today about a man who died in Piedmont Park who was working on a chain gang. So there's definitely more work that they were doing. The roads at the timeframe that I'm at right now were very important. So it's just been kind of the bigger story.

- Chair Sims-Alvarado: So for what we can see and I'm explaining John Wright's research and I'm not sure if all of you all are familiar with John Wright who started off with us in the beginning special collections librarian with Central Atlanta Library. He's been working on this research on chain gangs and slavery. He has over 15,000 documents just on convict labor alone. And so he has the names of those individuals who had the contracts, but he also shed light on the various types of goods and services provided or offered by those who were, well, at least they weren't offered by those who were incarcerated, but there were actually convict made goods such as the bricks. And I'm sure many of you all have heard about the Chattahoochee Brick Company, but there's also timber, turpentine, definitely quarry yards. So it's a number, then what was the number? Brooms for women. Oh yeah, okay. So brooms made by women. So there's goods and services provided by those who are incarcerated, I mean, still less today. And around the 1910s it became a huge debate, a huge issue during the gubernatorial debate when both Black and White residents, I mean, throughout the state, not just in Fulton County began to advocate on behalf of incarcerated individuals and said that they wanted to have goods labeled because they did not want convict made slash slave made products. And so it actually caused the governor to do away with the chain gang, but then it became county farms. And if you talk to individuals who were arrested, who were, you know, some of the individuals who were part of the Atlanta student movement, some of these young folks talked about how they were placed on county farms. You said, say that again. It was common for adolescents to go to the farms.
- Dr. Meng: And I do want to add for, especially for the Vice Chair that there's a lot of articles about the condition of the county jail and how even at that time, even in the late 1890s, the county jail was not in good condition. It was not hospitable to life. And then today I was reading about one of the county commissioners, Mr. Collier and this is the last story I'll tell today, where he was talking about how he didn't want to see White people in the chain gangs because they were too dignified. And they were bringing in White people even from other counties. The Whitecappers was the actual term in the paper. And also that their work was not as good. They were too dignified, yet their work was also not as good.
- Chair Sims-Alvarado: And some of them protested. Like the Italians, they took the dynamite and just blew up the joint. So, but yeah, so this is going to be a wonderful research. Our issue is how do we put all this information within a harm report? And so our challenge is not that we are short of information. So how do, where do we place it? And how do we make it

accessible to the public? And how do we use this as a way to show that full-to-counter justice is a way to make it accessible to the public? How do we use this as a way to show that full-to-counter residents were indeed harm?

- Lynchnig Research Update from Ms. Hill Bond: So the work around lynching is, is Fulton County. So Fulton County, as we know it today. So Fulton County does have the largest amount of lynchings in the state, which are doc, which is documented at 36. And with that being said, that's documented. So it's coming from two different, more than two places, but right now I'm working with two different document or two different data sets because lynching in itself is classified in two different ways. So it just depends on how we want to classify lynching as just the act of what we know as lynching or mob violence as lynching. I lean into mob violence as well as the acts, so both and. So with that being said, the number from 36 will go up. If you're looking at mob, mob, terror and lynching as the act, you're going to be more upwards in the 50s, 60s for documenting. We do know that there is the undocumented part. With that being said, looking at it as like wrongful lawlessness, a lot of the lynchings were done into prominent African-American families that were paying property taxes were upward mobility in social economic spaces. So that was taken out of their lineage, as well as counting generations to come, right? Like what could they have added to the generational wealth of that family if they continue to reproduce? There is a case where there was a lynching and it took out that particular son from that family, but also the brothers did not have children. So looking at that and that they did not have children and it's documented based on that scare tactic of lynching. And so when you take all of that into consideration, you're looking at lynching still today as a public health crisis. So how could we have prevented that on the space of health? And then on the law and justice side, there is a lot of wrongful deaths, right? So you're looking at 36 wrongful death suits that should have been filed or should have been paid out that wasn't paid out, as well as land loss from families, especially from the 25 lynchings that took place, documented lynchings that took place during the 1906 Atlanta race massacre or riot, however you want to split it today. And the 25, so for that alone, there was a lot of land loss in the African-American community as well as business loss. So just compiling all of that to show just how Fulton County benefited from basically allowing citizens to self-deputize themselves and kill Black people. And I think there's the report.
- Dr. Simanga: Yes, thank you for that report. As concise as it was, it's always terribly terrifying that people live that way. Two things. One, documenting the loss of generational wealth is I think only one component of it because there's also a loss of community wealth because Black people, particularly in segregated situations, those who had more wealth were also influential in the community's

well being. So just give that some consideration. How do we say that and how do we quantify it? How do we say that this is the impact on the Black community? The second thing is the documented lynchings. If there's some way that we can also document the complicity, the active complicity of Fulton County officials and law enforcement, because even if they didn't participate, but they stood back and watched their complicity. And I think part of this project that we're doing is to see how Fulton County government violated the citizenship rights of Black people. As we're talking about particularly after the 1865. So if we can just think about it as we're going, it doesn't have to have as much data, but we do have to have it in the narrative that including how the commissioners voted on different things. If we can have somebody do that research, just need to find a good political scientist who can look at the record of voting on particular issues like the ones we're talking about, who gets the contract? What was the consequence of not sending the police in? Because we have to tie it back to what was the behavior and the philosophy and the outlook of those who voted to create this horrible harm against Black people.

- Ms. Hill Bond: That makes sense. It does, and thank you. The community wealth part is yes, but also I did, I guess I failed to say this. Each lynching is documented in a way that shows who was responsible for the lynching and who was complacent for the lynching. So you will see like a judge's name or the officer that got off or if they got, whatever the outcome was of the lynching, it is noted in there.
- Chair Sims-Alvarado: There are other areas that we are looking at, including the report that is not on the agenda. Some of these things overlap, but we are definitely looking at voting that falls under the purview of the county and every county across the United States is where African-Americans are actually disenfranchised. And one way that people are disenfranchised, not only through racial terror and intimidation, but also through property taxes, through the poll tax. Ms. Anne Hillbun, you mentioned the 1906 race riot slash massacre. I always say. I know, we differ on the idea, yeah, exactly. So we always pause and look at each other like when we say, you're right, exactly. You have, however you want to claim it, right, exactly. But historians have shaped the narratives. Historians have the power in order to make people to be the Great Emancipator, such as Abraham Lincoln. They also have a way of shaping the public's opinion about a narrative until another historian comes along to actually challenge that research, the primary research to see what is actually true. So for years as we have come to learn and read from works on the 1906 race riot, the story has been that it was the newspapers that incited that riot. And that part is true. And the narrative has been that the Black business community was under attack because they were being extremely successful. We look at what happened in Tulsa and blah, blah, blah,

blah. But if you were to go back one year during the gubernatorial campaign, which is more like a two year campaign, you will see at the heart of their debate, each candidate is trying to prove that one is more racist than the other. So it's kind of like when Stephen Douglas and Abraham Lincoln, when they were both trying to win the public support about running for president of the United States, they were both pointing the finger, you an abolitionist, no, you an abolitionist, as if it was a dirty thing. So with both candidates, both Clark Howell and Hoke Smith, they were trying to prove that one was more conservative than the other. And the target of their campaign were actually Black men. And there was a campaign to disenfranchise Black men. And then the hopes of disenfranchising Black men, the question became, will poor White men be disenfranchised too? And the promise was made to poor and uneducated and landless White men that they would not lose their right to vote. When Hoke Smith won, it was the first thing on his agenda. And he disenfranchised Black male voters and they did it through the property taxes, which comes back to the county. And so you will see that probably more Black men had the right to vote or probably exercised their right to vote in 1868 compared to 1944 with the Smith versus Alt-Right case. So we were going to document this, not to the degree that we would want to. So we're going to look at voting. We're going to look at healthcare. Healthcare is where caste is assigned from birth. There were laws that was stated that if you were, if you intentionally identify yourself at a certain race that you were not, then you could be incarcerated. If you married outside of your race, you could be incarcerated. Miscegenation was banned, but it's from the Board of Health who's actually assigning caste. And the goal was to ensure that Black people do not move outside of their station and race was used as a way to keep people to ensure that they remain a servile class. As I said, property taxes, we're going to look at the courts, parks, which actually fell down the purview of the county, which goes back to Bagley Park. Ms. Osby, when you look at the maps for Bagley Park, when you hear, when you learn about the story, what was the thing that caused them, this community to be moved out? It was what?

- Ms Osby-Butts: Sorry about that. It was the park that was being built, planned and built for the White subdivisions that were also planned that were being built at the time.
- Chair Sims-Alvarado: And what was said about sanitation in that community? The residents of Bagley Park and probably the other settlements, the other Black, some of the other communities the other Black settlements in Buckhead, they were refused sanitation sewer lines, water lines. But immediately when the White subdivisions were built, they were built with these, what do I want to call them? They were, yeah, but I want to say that they were something really special, but they were built with these utilities. But residents of these Black communities had

been refused for years whenever they asked. Right, right. So I just want to let you know we're not skipping over all those things. Yes, I just want to bring up something that it slipped my mind because sometimes talking is like, what are we doing? That we talk about the Atlanta Massacre, but there's another massacre in Palmetto that is often never talked about, right, in 1899. And it was the killing of four Black men completely. But what was for that particular one, the person that apprehended them received \$300 from the county for apprehending the wrong people, right? So also looking at what the county paid out to people that self-deputized themselves to do these lynchings. That's all I wanted to say. And my list keeps growing. I forgot all about this. Let me see your pen because I keep forgetting this. So the courts are also responsible for giving out charters, articles of incorporation. Yes, and the list just keeps growing. I mean, it's just as wild. But a lot of times when we think about when you establish like a nonprofit organization or any business, you have to be registered through the Secretary of State's office, right? Well, years ago, before you could actually take your certificate or be registered with the state, you had to receive approval from the county. So one of the things that we must look at is the county's role in actually issuing the charters for the KKK and other hate groups. And even when their charters were taken away, there was a very famous court case with the assistant attorney, district attorney, David Duke, no relation to the plan. But he actually pushed and was successful in having the charter for the KKK, for the state of Georgia taken away. Well, what happened was that Fulton County actually allowed them to have another charter and they just received another name. So just want to add that to our list.

- Financial Report
 - Ms. Calhoun: good evening, Madam Chair. The extent of what I can share is that we did receive the third invoice request from the AUCC and it has been sent to accounts payables for processing. And so it will follow through the normal processing pattern. And I believe that it's a 30 day net. I always forget if it's 21 or 30, but it is in process.

New Business

- Invited Guest Speakers: Mr. Kirk Sarkisian and Mr Kirk Canaday on the Macedonia Cemetery Preservation Link to presentation: <https://fultoncountyga.gov/-/media/Departments/Clerk-to-the-Commission/Clerk-to-the-Commission/Macedonia-Cemetery-Presentationrv1-Jul2024.pptx>
- Mr. Russell: I was just writing things down, but thank you so much. And we've had long conversations and I do have some documents from the other Kirk that I'll share with the committee. And, um, we've enlisted the help of, uh, commissioner

throne as well. I spoke to her on Wednesday about this, so I really thank both Kirk's for all the work that you've done over the last 30 years. And hopefully we can move this to the next level on preserving the entire graveyard. And the second Kirk will talk a little bit about the current state of the cemetery.

- Chair Sims-Alvarado: Members of the task force do you have any questions?
- Dr. Meng: Well, um, I don't mean to put you on the spot, but when we have speakers, they'll often speak to their support of reparations. So I'm just curious, your group, your organization, um, are you personally, and there's, you know, there's more than one way to answer that question.
 - Mr. Kirk Sarkisian: I'd be happy to answer it. Um, um, and our group is not together. We, you know, we, this is all a long time ago, people have moved on in a way. Um, uh, as far as reparations my, my idea about reparations, see, I, I'm Armenian. Do you, does anyone here know the history of the Armenians? Okay. So, um, I know what, what the history of my grandparents who survived that and came to the States. In fact, my son is named James because my grandfather, his name is Khatchadour, was in line at Ellis Island. And there was an Irish fellow in front of him. And he was just telling, he was talking. My grandfather memorized his name over and over and over. And when he introduced himself in this country, he became James Simonian. And the stories of their being chased and killed. And I mean, they're horrific, right? But it's not just the Armenians and it's not just the, the Jews during World War II, people have been put up on since, you know, Adam took a bite of the apple, things started changing. Right? And so it's, it's not something that, I don't think a right thinking person would ever think that the, the circumstances to any, um, ethnic group is right. Any oppression is right in that regard. Um, I don't know. In my heart, I don't understand reparations because I don't know where it ends because what about the Irish who've come over? Irish were indentured slaves in New York for quite some time. And then they, you know, they came, they didn't come on their own. They were kind of clubbed on the head, putting a, a ship and brought over as well. Um, so my, you know, my, my opinion is I just don't understand at this point in time, when we try to bring, uh, ethnic groups together, how we now are doing things that might divide us. And that division is the thing that scares me most about it.
- Chair Sims-Alvarado: Just so you know, this is my area.
 - Mr. Kirk Sarkisian: Yeah, which one?

- Chair Sims-Alvarado: Preservation. I work with the dead. I tell people my living is the dead.
- Mr. Kirk Sarkisian: Oh my gosh.
- Chair Sims-Alvarado: I can say it in this tone and try to wear black. I can say it in this tone to scare everybody. But um, the preservation of cemeteries are important for me. Because for me, I want to ensure that for many individuals, many African Americans, they were not buried with dignity.
- Mr. Kirk Sarkisian: Yeah, I know. I've read a lot about it.
- Chair Sims-Alvarado: But for me, how do I humanize the dead? There's a slave cemetery that I'm working to preserve about 45 miles outside of Atlanta. These individuals are buried in the woods. I'm looking at April's headstone. This person was living in high cotton.
- Mr. Kirk Sarkisian: Yeah, that would have been a very expensive headstone.
- Chair Sims-Alvarado: I don't know if African Americans or enslaved Africans in the United States, what they had to mark their graves with were rocks..
- Mr. Kirk Sarkisian: Rocks. Yes, that's right. There are a few stones up on this, uh, some of the cemetery.
- Chair Sims-Alvarado: And I think about how these individuals, who never experienced, never lived to see freedom. They had little to no resources, and with just the shirts on their backs, how did their family members bury them with dignity? How did they prepare the body? How did they wash the body? How did, how was their religious belief, uh, respected. Did the owner even give family members time to grieve. Time off to bury them. So many of the people that I, I mean, I get calls about looking at slave cemeteries and these folks are buried off the side of the roads. If you believe in the resurrection, oh, they gonna come out the woods. But I think about these individuals and how they have not been buried with dignity. And we had about a hundred and fifty acre site. And I think about all those people who till the soil and created wealth for those individuals and I ask the question all the time - how can the descendants of these individuals be made whole for their loved ones who never lived to see freedom? Some people they don't want to go back to this place where they lived in. These were horrific conditions in which people lived in. And so people don't want to return to that past and Ms. Ann Hill Bond can probably speak about how sometimes the history of lynching gets lost because family

members have to deal with the shame of individuals who were lynched even when they were free. I mean, even when they were innocent, and the same thing is true for the enslaved and so my question to you for your group is, how can your group assist in making the descendants of April and others whole. And what is the ultimate goal for this property, the descendants of April is there any way that that land could be considered returning back to those descendants, has that conversation come up or is it mainly about the preservation of the site?

- Mr. Kirk Sarkisian: Well, we did, we looked extensively for descendants. It was, well let me just let me back up because I you know with all due respect, that's a great story. Okay, and you can take that story and you could peel it back and you can put it in any spot around the world. So, you know, in relationship to reparations, it's, it's the same issue everywhere where people have been either enslaved, or they've been mass graves or mass graves all over Armenia which if you know your ancient history was the first Christian nation. And, you know, it's getting today, today, with the Turks and Azerbaijan, they're trying they're taking more and more land away. So, these type of things are horrific wherever they are. How do I see, you know, repairing that? I don't know whether you can really repair it, even. And so if we kind of nut this down to maybe basics of monetary payment for that. Honestly, nothing could bring them back and money couldn't make me feel better for it. That's me. I know there are people out there who say yeah I'd like to be paid. It's just, I, my biggest fear of this whole thing is the division it's going to cause, and it is causing now. So, you know, it's, that to me it is more damaging to the future of this country in a future of race relationships, then, then name it, you know, that's just an opinion. You know, it's just my opinion. I've thought about, I've thought about it extensively. Honestly, I mean, you know, Evanston, Illinois, you guys are using their, their outline for your task force, right?
- Chair Sims-Alvarado: No, not at all.
- Mr. Kirk Sarkisian: Oh, see, I was told that my mistake, my mistake. So a mostly Jewish community in the middle of northern Illinois is a blueprint for other areas who are using that I know to do reparations. I just, again, I just don't see where the end game with this thing, you know, where it leads us. I think there's going to be some relief. I think eventually, ultimately, it's going to be a divisive, a divisive issue in this country. And that that's the thing that scares me most. And by the way, we have our share of divisive issues.
- Chair Sims Alvarado: All right, thank you. I'm going to go to Ms. Anne Hillbun and Dr. Samonga, we see that your hand is up so you'll be up next to present your question.

- Ms. Ann Hill Bond: I'm here. I have a question about the site like Dr. Karchik, I share love for cemeteries. I often think about one of our, one of the best cemeteries in the county is Southview, are you familiar with Southview Cemetery?
 - Mr. Kirk Sarkisian: No.
 - Ms. Ann Hill Bond: Okay, so.
 - Mr. Kirk Sarkisian: And by the way, I say that because I probably have read about it, but it's 30 years ago now. I've got, I've got reams of documentation on slave cemeteries in Georgia. So, but I don't know that much about...
 - Ms. Ann Hill Bond: Okay, no problem. But I just wanted to ask questions about the site. How many, because I see the request. One, I don't know if Mr. Kirk number two is going to talk about the request about what the, what exactly was the request of the group for that with the request of the task force. And then the other question is how many, how many graves sites do you know that's currently on this property?
 - Mr. Kirk Sarkisian: I believe my memory might be failing me. I think that we've located 40 or 60. I think it was 60.
 - Ms. Ann Hill Bond: 60 across how many acres?
 - Mr. Kirk Sarkisian: There's two acres there. We believe there's more there that, you know, with all the destruction that happened with the, with the headstones up there. We, we don't know. I mean, we came, we went up there really quick and did an inventory cause we saw that happening. And I have that and I will provide it to you.
 - Ms. Ann Hill Bond: And my last question is outside of Ms. April, is there, is there other stories that you have been able to find that are connected with descendants? Or is it just Ms. April's story that this particular cemetery is standing on?
 - Mr. Kirk Sarkisian: We had a hard time finding relatives, other people that would be related to the people there who, who stones were there. I would, I would say to you that April was such a, a large story because it transcends the cemetery and went back to the civil war, to the George Morgan waters and his work. And then his father in a revolutionary war that became part of the reason why the National Preservation Trust was really, truly interested in it, that it was, it had a large, a long history attached to it.

- Ms. Ann Hill Bond: Thank you.
- Mr. Kirk Sarkisian: You're welcome.
- Dr. Simanga: First, because I can't see you that just want to commend the speaker for speaking your own honest truth. Oftentimes in conversations like this, we don't hear what White people are actually thinking we usually wind up seeing what they're thinking by what they do. But I think that this problem of communication and this question of reparations. It's not a question of us making people uncomfortable. That's, that's something they have to wrestle with.
 - Mr. Kirk Sarkisian: True.
 - Dr. Simanga: Because what we're talking about is 400 years of Black people being uncomfortable, physically, spiritually, economically, politically and on and on and on and on. So how do we as a country repair the damage done to a massive group of people who have a unique history in this country, it's not comparable to the Irish coming. The Irish is not comparable to millions of people kidnapped and brought in the slavery and bred like animals. So, I think it's unfortunate when we make comparisons like that. But I do admire the fact that you had the courage to say it. And just so you know, many of us will be willing to talk to you and anybody else about this, because I think that there's some similarities to all struggle for freedom in this world. But there's also some uniqueness to them and this one here is what allowed America to become the great economic and political power that it is globally. So, just keep that in mind and you know, if you want to talk, I'd be more than happy to.
 - Mr. Kirk Sarkisian: I appreciate your perspective.
- Vice Chair Coleman: It's a good thing that Dr. Simanga went before I did because he was a lot nicer than I had planned to be respectfully speaking. But you brought up George Morgan Waters, right. Yes, please correct me if I'm wrong. It's my understanding that he was paid reparations.
 - Mr. Kirk Sarkisian: I don't know.
 - Vice Chair Coleman: Given land back that was lost.
 - Mr. Kirk Sarkisian: It was a different time it wasn't it wasn't George Morgan Waters, it was his father, his father during the Revolutionary War when they banished the loyalists who were British, British soldiers, or people who were sent here to be, to act on their behalf. So his argument was, I'm, you know, I was only doing what I was here to do for the people who were in charge. In essence, what he was saying was that the Revolutionary or the Patriots were the aggressors. They were not. And he,

he petitioned the Georgia government, the Georgia government gave me his land back. It wasn't a it wasn't reparations to every British. [coughs] Excuse me. Yeah, resident, [coughs] excuse me. Excuse me.

- Vice Chair Coleman: Well, just to put it in, in context if you are familiar with reparations for slavery actually has been paid out in this country but it's been paid to the former slave owners, right. I just wanted to make sure you were aware of that. And that's documented.
- Mr. Kirk Sarkisian: Listen, I'm not, I'm not telling you or I'm not here to tell you that I know all the details of this.
- Vice Chair Coleman: No, sir, I got you. We're together. I'm just, I'm just informing you that reparations for slavery actually has been paid out by this government.
- Mr. Kirk Sarkisian: That was a different [inaudible].
- Vice Chair Coleman: And it was specifically paid to former slave owners who had lost wages because of their slaves.
- Mr. Kirk Sarkisian: Mhm.
- Vice Chair Coleman: Now, ending this right here, I'm glad I spoke about Dr. Simanga and he, he graciously and very wisely formed it, I would simply say to you, sir, and understanding we are a reparations task force, people have the right to be pro or against. So I get that you are the first one that's against, for the speaker. But in closing, I would encourage you, sir, because you seem to be very passionate. I'm familiar with your wife's work. I believe that's off of Fulton Industrial and other areas if I'm not mistaken, iff that's, if you're the council that was referenced, but I would caution you in comparing Irish indentured servants to enslaved Africans who were the victims of the greatest atrocity that this globe has ever experienced, which is the transatlantic slave trade. That's like night and day. I mean, it's so I do agree with Dr. Simanga, it is great to be engaged and have conversations with folks that have opposing views or even different kind of ideologies. But we can't have all kinds of different facts.
- Mr. Kirk Sarkisian: I'm not trying to have different facts. And this and the Irish were just mentioned because they're one of many, and it happened to be at the tip of my tongue. And if I, if I plan to be in a debate with you, I would go ahead and put together my points. I'm not here to debate you. I'm here to tell a story. I don't, and I believe, I believe in your, in your passion about this. There's nothing, I'm not here to say anything disparaging that at all. And so, but it still does... It still to me is a dividing issue in this country. It's a dividing issue everywhere. And by the way, the

transatlantic slave trade was, was King George in England. That's where you should go and get your reparations. If that's the, if that's where you were.

- Vice Chair Coleman: We're actually headed there next.
- Mr. Kirk Sarkisian: Because you need to drive back, dig back. If you're, if you're going to claw this back.
- Vice Chair Coleman: There's several nations that had a hand in the enslavement of our ancestors. Absolutely.
- Mr. Kirk Sarkisian: That's right. And then from what I know, and what I've read that, that the Blacks that were sold into, sold in the slavery, were sold by Blacks in the slavery. Is that true?
- Vice Chair Coleman: Well, not at all, sir.
- Mr. Kirk Sarkisian: Then I must be reading the wrong stuff.
- Vice Chair Coleman: Well, it depends on where our sources are. But I thought, you know, you weren't here to teach. We were just here to...
- Mr. Kirk Sarkisian: Exactly. Exactly. So understand by the stuff I'm saying, by the things I'm saying to you now, this is where I formulate my opinion on the things that I may be wrong about. As you pointed out, and the Doctor is pointing out, I, I, you know, I will look into that on my own because I do that kind of stuff
- Vice Chair Coleman: Let's make sure for the record. Okay. No, make sure for the record for something I just said. I want to make sure for the record. Have there been Africans that have had a hand in, in, in the fueling of the transatlantic slave trade? Absolutely. But when we're talking about the actual owners of that mechanism, you pointed out a country that is, that that is the actual target after we deal with this country here in America, but specifically speaking, we're dealing with Fulton County, right?
- Mr. Kirk Sarkisian: Right. I get that.
- Vice Chair Coleman: And this is a Fulton County reparations task force meeting. I just want again to note for the record, it's interesting that our first opposing guest to reparations happens to come by way of Mr. Russell, but I appreciate your passion and your work is, is, is more than noted. We're talking about the preservation of grave sites. And I guess how that can fall low on the, under the totem pole, but for me, sir, you lost me at Irish indentured slaves.

- Mr. Kirk Sarkisian: And so, and so here, here's the truth. I would not be here today. If I walked away from that site, I would be here today. We would not be here today if I, if I didn't protect, if I didn't protect that headstone.
- Vice Chair Coleman: Yes, sir.
- Mr. Kirk Sarkisian: So, so, yeah, you know, at this, it would have been...
- Vice Chair Coleman: Passion for preservation of graves and reparations for slavery or apple seeds and watermelon seeds.
- Wife of Mr. Kirk Sarkisian [comes down from audience]: I want to say something, because I'll tell you something, I have spent the last 30 years working on modern day slavery, and many of these victims are Black. And, and it's something we can all agree on. I wish we put as much energy toward modern day slavery as we're putting into the 1860s. I commend you for what you're trying to do here. I have nothing against what you're trying to do here. But there was a group of people, a dozen people or so, all White, who looked at that cemetery and said there's a hell of a story here and the community came together around that. And to sit here and point fingers that that this is not worthy work is really disgusting.
- Vice Chair Coleman: First of all, I never said that. Second of all, you're the one pointing fingers. I never said this wasn't worthy work.
- Wife of Mr. Kirk Sarkisian: I feel it. I feel it.
- Ms. Fran Calhoun: Point of order.
- Vice Chair Coleman: Point of order? We've got a different speaker come up here.
- Wife of Mr. Kirk Sarkisian: We came down here to help tell the story
- Vice Chair Coleman: And it's an awesome story, ma'am, and I commend you guys for your work.
- Mr. Mike Russel: Madame Chair.
- Wife of Mr. Kirk Sarkisian: The city council that sat here and heard it unanimously. I mean, they said, go to Oprah. This is a story. And that's why Mike asked him down here. And it's, and I don't think he should be disparaged for doing that.

- Vice Chair Coleman: He wasn't, ma'am. I'm not going to let you change the narrative. I'm not going to let you come up here. So just one second, Mike, one, one second, Mike, because she addressed me as if I was being negative with him and I was not sir, me and you were having a disagreement. I'm sorry that it ticks somebody off to make them want to come to the mic. But again, preservations of graves have nothing to do with the reparations of enslaved Africans. And, and, and I appreciate your, your, your work in preserving the site.
 - Chair Sims-Alvarado: And I appreciate your work in preserving the site. But before you ask your question, Mr. Russell. If you can, just to bring it back, can you share with us what, what is your, what is the goal of this project and presenting it to us this evening. What do you, what do you want to see?
 - Mr. Kirk Sarkisian: So, I think this man who has taken the mantle and moving forward would be better to give you that information. I, what I did was, is what it wasn't just me again, it was a number of very, very dedicated people. What we did was we fulfilled our obligation that we felt by getting those two acres, you know, protected, and then we fought to try and get it protected even in a larger way. And it wasn't very successful. I came down here to tell you the story about the story. You know, the reason why that this Kirk can stand here and tell you about it is because of the past and the things that these people did. And the, and the depth of the story is not just April Waters. It's back to Major Tom Waters. It's, I'm going to send Mike, these documents, you're welcome to read them if you, if you care. Don Shadburn was a Georgia author who wrote the definitive books in North about North Fulton County. He's passed away. And his books are hard to find, but I have the chapters on Major Waters and George Morgan Waters, and that will shed more light on this way.
 - Chair Sims-Alvarado: Okay. And so will we learn what is your, your, your goal for presenting this project to us this evening.
 - Mr. Kirk Sarkisian: Again, that would be Kirk.
 - Chair Sims-Alvarado: Okay.
 - Mr. Mike Russell: I'm just going to let that pass. It seems like some people can't help themselves, but thank you, Kirk. Thank you both for...
 - Mr. Kirk Sarkisian: I take no offense. Honestly, sir, I take no offense.
 - Mr. Mike Russell: If we can get, if we can get Kirk Canaday.

- Mr. Kirk Canaday: I've got some comments about reparation, but I'll, I'll leave that till later. That's a fiery subject here in this, in this house. [gives presentation linked above]
- Mr. Mike Russell: So I want to thank Kirk as well. And I will say this that Stephanie Andres, who put the bill forward, who's now the Chair of the Fulton County GOP. I called her after I talked to Kirk about it. It was just her husband that built the sign. That she's going to revisit the \$100,000 because I, I'm, I'm a novice at this, but when he walked me through that. I got emotional that day. And it bothers me now. We're not going to let this fall. We're not going to let this go away. We're going to keep pushing for this because there is a fence right through the middle of a grave that's got a concrete cap on it. Ray Charles could see that that's a grave in the house that's adjacent to it with the swimming pool. Again, there's no doubt that in that man's backyard there are graves. This could be a good thing for the City of Johns Creek, or it could be a bad thing. It's their choice on which way they want to go, but we're not going to let this, we're not going to let this die. We're not let this drop. So I thank both Kirk's and I also want to thank Madam Chair because when I called you, and I mentioned this to you, you responded immediately, and I really sincerely appreciate this. This is something I've taken to heart and we owe it to our combined history and we owe it to the families who this Kirk has located who's descendants in that grave that we do the right thing by this because this is one way to bring closure is to... I just find it inhuman that you could go up there and destroy two churches burn one to the ground the work that this man's done and the other Kirk is amazing I mean the fact that he did stuff like find the telephone pole and the survey marker and locate the corner stone of the church and the steps are there you can see where they took the roof down and threw it across the street. There's a there's a shopping center right up next to one side of the grave the cemetery and houses to the next their intent was to cover this up. The other thing that he helped me understand was Georgia State law everything they've done is in direct violation of Georgia State law about preserving graveyards. It's in black and white that they were supposed to maintain this graveyard and keep it up to snuff and they don't do any of that and so we're not going to, we're not going to let this go and I've already started making phone calls in my own name not in the name of the the Task Force to the people who live in that area to make sure that things are done the right way to include and I think she was going to send you an email Commissioner Thorne uh to send you an email because she's going to help back us on this to get this done the right way so again thank you to you Kirk and the other Kirk and to you
- Mr. Kirk Canaday: I got one comment and that's on reparations. I grew up in Denver Colorado. My first job was working at a pharmacy owned by a Japanese guy and I was aware that his family were in prison camps in Colorado in the second world war. Reparations? Yeah. Not money. Scholarships, education is all I'm thinking about as far as reparations.

- Community Engagement

- Chair Sims-Alvarado: I think it's a nice segue um to move into our final item on our agenda but we do hope that you will attend our future town hall meetings, but thank you for it for your time and sharing that with us I'm going to move us on to community engagement and to our one attendee here I'm not sure if you have signed up for public comments if you have please if you haven't please do so now. Okay, okay you did but um we have one final item um community engagement.
- Dr. Meng: I'll start it. I mean it feels like we've been doing community engagement tonight. So one event that we're going to do which is a certain kind of mode or style of community engagement is a datathon. This will be July 21st. Not this Sunday but next Sunday, and we're inviting the community to come down to Georgia Tech and help us record location data of where convicts were sent to. So this is handwritten. It's tedious, and that's why we want some support with it. Um, I we will send information to anyone who has ever signed in and we have their email and I will also drop it uh some information in the chat here it will be accessible we're we're going to go through tutorials so please come and then I'm going to pass it off to Ann to speak a little bit about some other community engagement plans.
- Ms. Ann Hill Bond: Sure so we are looking at doing um two town halls as well as many gatherings around the county uh to be able because what we know is that some people can't come to the Thursday meetings, so we will be organizing um specifically by district to host some engagement opportunities for community before the report is officially not the report the recommendation the report report the report is out in October and then in October we will do a larger um community engagement um gathering around the report so look forward to seeing when in your district we will be there to do some listening sessions and sorry and then um after that we will go into a major um community town hall and then the final town hall in October

Public Comments (end of document)

Final Comments

Ms. Elon Butts-Osby: Let me turn this mic because I want to make sure this is heard. I'm really upset right now and um that doesn't happen often outside of my home or work. Number one, when we have speakers to come I think the subject matter should be related to reparations. Doesn't have to be directly but it should be at least indirectly related to reparations in some way. And number two, and I had to write this down because when I get upset I have to speak. I can't get things out the way uh that I mean them. People are watching us. People are watching us. We should not be attacking speakers. They are our guest. We should not be attacking them. I don't care what their views are, their personal feelings. We should not be attacking them because we want more speakers to come, we want our audience to grow, we want people to feel that they can get up and speak whatever it is that they have to say and not be challenged and not be attacked. They are our guests. They are our guests. We cannot do that. More importantly and again I say, people are watching us, if we are not united up here how we... [inaudible] important what we're

trying to do. Madam Chair, I think it's your place and your responsibility not to let this happen, and I've heard it, seen it four or five times now. That's not what we're here for. We're not here to attack each other if there's somebody on this panel that you don't care for you, don't like. That's your problem take it up with that person somewhere else other than here or take it up with the person that appointed them. Not here in the public, on tv. We cannot do this. We cannot do this and and I'm sorry I keep repeating myself but I want you all to hear me. We can't keep doing this while we are in this meeting everyone should be respected. They must be respected whether it's our guest or whether it's each other, and Madam Chair I'm asking you not to let this happen again please.

Chair Sims-Alvarado: Thank you and I hear you, and I also ask for members of our of our task force that when the point of order is called that we respect it. I don't have a way of cutting off mics I hope that we can be mature, and when the point of order is called that we respect that but I hear you loud and clear and I thank you.

Ms. Elon Osby: Thank you for stating that.

Vice Chair Coleman: Madame, Chair? Well I mean let's not talk around folks. I mean we're talking about what I just did, and so let me let me please respond to that. I appreciate your thing about point of order Madam Chair because technically one has to state what that point of order is about. So if we're going to really get on the same page then let's do so. I have spent almost two decades in public service work, and what I have noticed because of the type of man that I am. It is beyond frustrating to watch my words get twisted. My position to be twisted. No one attacked our speaker. Matter of fact, I would have liked for this group to have had the respect for me for speaking to our speaker and then his spouse come up and attack me let's not use attack because it's not never never an attack but the point was me and this gentleman we're having a discussion. Ms. Osby, I respect you, got a lot of love for you, but to think that we're all going to be unified up here, that is, that's not factual, ma'am. We're already not unified nor would I expect the number of adults to be unified around such a controversial issue but again it's important because I was engaging this gentleman. I think those of you who've been knowing me for this amount of time know when I'm in attack mode and when I'm not. I am not going to be reduced to as if I'm the problem because that is a stereotype that they love to throw on strong Black men. That speaker's wife came up here to get me straight. It sure resembled a lot of privilege that I fight on a daily basis, so to hear my colleagues have some type of issue. And especially before he walked off, I don't know if you guys noticed when the gentleman walked off, he said, sir, we have no problem. I'm sure you know he was just saying that to be respectful because technically I was being nothing but respectful. In closing, Madam Chair, there's something that's funny that this happened because there's something that's been bothering me. I have some sleepless nights on top of some other issues, but we're nearing the end of this research. I can't remember if it was you Ann, Miss Hill Bond. What we speak about all the time come like October we're going to be completed with this research we talked about the reports that are going to be done I agreed to table this issue over a year ago we have not dealt with who will be eligible the research that we're doing in Madam Chair you know I feel like it's I mean it will be trend-setting but ladies and gentlemen the biggest question are two the two biggest questions are how's it going to be funded and let's make sure we're clear because we're not just talking about funds we're talking about programs we're talking about free the land brother yes but the biggest two questions are going to

be how is it paid, which we have been discussing as far as the feasibility study and who is going to benefit. Ms Osby, I think that's what you got to understand how divided we really are on this thing. So I would like in closing for our next meeting because we only meet once a month our next meeting is August we have to put the discussion of eligibility on this agenda. And we've got to see where everybody's hearts and minds lie as we are nearing four years for the Fulton County reparations task force stop labeling strong opinionated Black men as if they are part of the problem. I'm not going to be subjected to how you may perceive me to be. I was nothing but professional and I will always be that. And Mike, for the record if I had a speaker a husband and wife and the husband was speaking and then the wife came and jumped on you, you might not believe it or not, but I would have said ma'am, ma'am allow your husband to speak. I'm not going to be painted like the boogie man here and this on this task force. You best believe that and in closing again please I hope we can put eligibility as a discussion because we got to iron out who all this great research is going to benefit and with that I close.

Chair Sims-Alvarado: Right and you think that we're going to be disagreeing? As you know I can respect disagreement. I mean, we're not a monolith. And I don't expect for us to be of one mind and one consciousness. I do hope that we are one body but I can respect people's differences, their opinions which is why I as you, as you saw that I do not want to cut off the second Mr. Kirk's time um because we extended um the time so that way we can make sure that our presenters have a chance to present. But things are going to get rocky. We're not going to agree and so what we probably need to establish are some additional rules so we can ensure that everyone is heard and everyone feels respected and they feel that they have a voice but I never want to silence anyone even when we don't agree with them. Ms. Sykes, you wanted to speak?

Ms. Carole Sykes: Everything that I had [inaudible interruption]. I don't have anything else to add.

Ms Ann Hill Bond: In terms of um uh Vice Chair Coleman saying about eligibility I would hope that because you placed it out there that you would also be sending around some information about how that can be obtained how that how we can think about the process, look at the process, and have a full understanding of about eligibility processes that has been done so that way we're coming to the conversation with you know a lot of thought placed into it.

Vice Chair Coleman: Yes, ma'am. And for clarity we had before we started meeting in these chambers. See a number, a few of us, have been on here for quite some time and so we actually tabled the discussion, and it was a major split between I believe uh lineage and race, so I would suggest for newer members please review some of the the notes. We have to know exactly where that was but I think that would be important because it would be a continuation of that conversation with the newer members so I don't want to recreate the wheel of something that we put a pin in so again I think maybe I don't know I guess we can go and find that.

Chair Sims-Alvarado: Ms. Calhoun, before we close out, I'm hoping that um you can answer this question for us - In the process of us uh being involved in in the research committee we really were so productive because of the way in which we were able to engage with one another within such a small group and so the question came up what is the policy in regards to going into executive session because the Robert Rules of law actually unfortunately you know interrupts

some of the flow of of the conversation, and I think that we can probably get a lot more done in some of these sessions before we come forth to the community. I mean before we come before the public. In order to be able to have discussions so it's not presented as if we are not a cohesive body and that we are in disagreement with one another, so what are the rules in regards to executive session?

Ms. Calhoun: Madame Chair, we'll consult with the county attorney's office on that typically when there is an executive session those are for the elected boards and those have the legal counsel with them but we'll certainly share that inquiry with the county attorney's office and unfortunately Mr. Stewart could not be with us. I don't know that he is joined he said he might try to join if he got out of an appointment.

Attorney Stewart: I am here but I'm not going to comment on that in this forum, Fran. I will take it up to you offline.

Ms. Calhoun: So what we're hearing from our county attorney's office is that we will respond and provide that in writing to you okay thank you

Chair Sims-Alvarado: Thank you and I have nothing more anyone else any final comments?

Dr. Meng: I just want to say since one of the Kirk's is still here, I don't think any one of us was trying to devalue or dismiss the work done by the former presenter and his wife and we appreciate it thank you for being here. We expect anyone to be willing to have a conversation about reparations because that's what we're here to do. And you know this idea of shying away from something that's divisive. I think there's a lot of policies that we wouldn't have in place now, would we have a civil rights act if we said oh that's too divisive let's not touch it? So and I listened to Ms. Osby on "40 acres and a Mule" and she said that she at [Chair Sims-Alvarado and Ms. Hill Bond correct the name of the podcast saying, 40 acres and Lie] Thank you. And she said at first she wasn't in favor of reparations and I at first thought reparations is is divisive that was really my main thought when I first thought about reparations and as she said the more time she spent with it the more time I have spent with it your your opinion changes your thoughts change and so I that's the main goal is that people keep being a part of this conversation listening to the research, all of the updates, the points of view, and um and the final report. So I just wanted to make that final comment.

Adjourn

Public Comments:

Justin Nicholson:

Thank you all so much for sharing space. [Chair: and please state your name] All right my name is Justin Nicholson. I'm here representing my maternal grandfather Jesse Junius Oates who was a sharecropper in Samson County North Carolina uh through his uh sacrifice uh we still possess our land in North Carolina. I'm also here representing Habesha Inc, which

is an organization here and internationally teaching agricultural education um environmental sustainability to Black communities um and I wrote some notes because I knew I had three minutes and I want to make sure I get everything uh so I wanted to just inform you all that Habesha Inc is creating a curriculum and vernacular to support reparative agriculture and um that's creating a shift in the historical narrative of exploitation and dehumanization of people of African descent to shift to more um uh restoration healing uh through agriculture and the land we know the land is our healing um Habesha is using or leveraging platforms internationally to present this curriculum uh the first the next uh platforms will be the Black Urban Growers Conference in Houston Texas in November as well as the South Regional Agricultural Conference that'll be here in Atlanta in February 2025 um here inviting you all to participate and learn more about uh reparations as it relates to our people in the land and agriculture specifically I believe Mr. Coleman you may be in communication with our Executive Director Cashawn Myers uh so definitely wanted to extend that invitation and additionally appreciate all the research that you all have done I'm curious if any of the research is focused around agricultural lands that have been stripped from our people in reconstruction or post-reconstruction as we know that was detrimental to our well-being as well as the mindset of how we can uh support uh ourselves and our nation um so I'll let that rest and wanted to again invite you all to continue to dialogue I'm here I'll stay after a little bit as well if I can uh get any specific contacts uh and uh Ms. Bond uh you you asked uh you you spoke about lynching and I had a question uh the number that you the documented number 36 lynchings um what was the time frame for that number? [Ms. Ann Hill Bond: yes thank you it was 1880 1890 all the way to 1936]. 1936 okay um is was there a reason why it stopped there? [Ms. Ann Hill Bond: that just the period of, the period that we were looking at] Okay, got you. So when you when you said that, I couldn't help but think about all the undocumented lynchings and the ones that were ruled as suicide to as cover-ups uh including the 2020 uh lynching of uh Mr. Michael George Smith Jr who was found in Piedmont Park uh so you know just continuing to uh lift you all up for the valuable research y'all are doing and um thank you again.

Mike Strike (online comment): Hello, I would like to ask this gentleman a question. I would like to ask if he believes that

descendants of Black Americans have EVER been truly included and given the same opportunities as other groups of people in this country? And if so, when?

Waters: April Waters was a male my gggrandfather

Khalifa Lee How can we suggest speakers to come and speak to the board?