



Beyond Apology Commission

Regular Meeting | May 16, 2025 | 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

City Hall at One Technology Center | 10 North Meeting Room

Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present: TheRese Anderson Aduni, Phil Armstrong, Jacqueline Evans, D'Marria Monday, Krystal Reyes, Greg Taylor, Taylor West, Corinice Wilson

Commissioners Present Virtually: Kristi Williams

Commissioners Absent: Vanessa Hall-Harper, Mattece Mason, Keith Mayes, Damali Wilson

City of Tulsa Staff Present: Lexi Bollis, Kyra Carby, Dion'trae Hayes, Brentom Todd

I. Call to Order

- a. Vice Chair Corinice Wilson called the meeting to order at 1:04 pm.

II. Ancestral Acknowledgement

- a. Commissioner Aduni delivered the Ancestral Acknowledgement.

III. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- a. Vice Chair Wilson entertained a motion to approve the April meeting minutes.
 - i. Commissioner Armstrong made a motion, Commissioner West seconded.
 - 1. Aye: 7, Nay: 0
 - a. Commissioner Monday and Chairwoman Williams were not yet present in the meeting.
 - ii. Motion carried, April meeting minutes approved.

IV. Guest Speaker: Kyra Carby, Community Genealogy Grant Coordinator at City of Tulsa

- a. Kyra introduced herself and shared a handout about the Emmett Till Cold Case Grant and a workbook for the community engaged genealogy workshops.
- b. Greenwood Cultural Center will be the hub of information. Working on an exhibit that will open this summer, which will include a database to search where people lived before the Race Massacre.
- c. Provided training to Tulsa Police Department to help prevent cases from becoming cold.
- d. Goal for genealogy workshops participation is 200. Will have next workshop in June, pre-registration opens next week. The workshops are open to all and pre-registration allows data capture for the workshop.
 - i. Workshop teaches you how to research an individual person in your family tree.
 - ii. People have the option to donate DNA to do a DNA comparison.
 - iii. Gives you roots to the land you are connected to, discovering family and neighbors lost during the Race Massacre.
- e. Commission Discussion:

- i. Vice Chair Wilson: When does the grant end, and how will the work continue? Kyra answered that the grant ends September 30, 2025. Greenwood Cultural Center will own the work moving forward, with City of Tulsa collaboration.
- ii. Commissioner Armstrong asked what the amount of the grant is, Kyra answered that the grant is \$1 million, 75 thousand.
 - 1. Commissioner Armstrong: Will there still be funds at the conclusion of the grant on Sept. 30?
 - 2. Kyra: Yes, the City is filing for a no cause extension. If granted, we can get a six month to one year extension.
- iii. Commissioner Armstrong asked for more information about the exhibit at Greenwood Cultural Center.
 - 1. Kyra: Partly paid for by the grant, some amount will be up to Greenwood Cultural Center to identify additional funding needed.
- iv. Commissioner Monday asked what is considered sufficient information about family history to do genealogy work. Kyra provided examples of places some people start, sometimes with very little information.
- v. Vice Chair Wilson asked about community outreach and ensuring folks' information is safe and secure.
 - 1. Kyra: City of Tuls and Tulsa Police Department do not access people's DNA. Use Ancestry.com and 1921dna.org for the work. Important for people to know what their rights are. DNA donation is optional.

V. Chair / Vice Chair Report

- a. Vice Chair Wilson welcomed Chairwoman Williams into the meeting. Chairwoman Williams and Councilor Hall-Harper are at a conference in Omaha, representing Tulsa. Omaha just elected their first Black mayor yesterday.
- b. Recap of *Cost of Inheritance* Screening and Panel
 - i. Vice Chair Wilson shared that it was insightful and appreciated giving the welcome. Commissioner Evans spoke on the panel and several commissioners were at the event.
 - ii. Commissioner Evans enjoyed the panel because they discussed the panel and City of Tulsa's work, and she was proud to share the story of her ancestors. Appreciated working with everyone on the panel and planning team.
 - iii. The event highlighted the collective work we are doing. Continuation of us working together in collaboration.
- c. Chairwoman Williams will send an invite to the commission for a community listening session at Vernon AME Church on June 1 at 6 pm.

VI. Old Business

- a. Commission's Role in June 1 Tulsa Race Massacre Observance Day
 - i. Brentom Todd, Mayor Nichols's Deputy Chief of Staff, introduced himself.
 - ii. The Road to Repair announcement will be June 1st at 2:30 pm. Brentom passed out invitations to commissioners from Mayor Nichols.
 - iii. The mayor's team is finalizing details of programming. Initial invitation has gone out and event is shared on the Mayor's Facebook page. Please rsvp to help the Mayor's Office prepare for attendance.

- iv. Spread the word, if you know someone who should be invited, please share with them. Public event, want to honor survivors and descendants.

VII. Guest Speaker: Genealogy and Database Creation with Dr. Angela Raji

- a. Chairwoman Williams introduced Dr. Angela Raji.
- b. Dr. Raji shared that she is working on a project with Justice for Greenwood to document descendants of Tulsa Race Massacre survivors.
 - i. Utilize 1920 Census as well as city directories from around that time (within 3 years before and after the Race Massacre).
 - ii. Talked about process to trace family lineage. Genealogy can take many twists and turns, helpful for the individual to do some homework prior to tracing their family history.
- c. Tulsa County doesn't have digitized school records, which is not the norm for most cities. Dr. Raji wondered if there are other sources of identification that are local to Tulsa.
 - i. Chairwoman Williams noted she would like to start a database that is separate from the City. Verifying descendants is key in the reparations movement.
 - ii. Commissioner Armstrong noted that Kyra's work is incredibly well done through the community engaged genealogy project.
 - iii. Vice Chair Wilson noted that Deep Greenwood Foundation is also doing this.
- d. Dr. Raji suggested developing an intake form for folks who reach out after the Mayor's June 1 announcement.
- e. Dr. Raji talked about different forms of corroborating data, such as birth or death certificates or military enrollment, that can be used to prove lineal descent.
- f. The search of 104 years is not that deep or difficult of a search.
- g. Commission Discussion:
 - i. Vice Chair Wilson asked how to reach Dr. Raji for further questions. Lexi will share her email with the commission.
 - ii. Commissioner Taylor asked for Dr. Raji's thoughts about DNA vs lineage.
 - 1. Dr. Raji: Use DNA all the time in my work, DNA test gives information on both maternal and paternal. Connecting an individual today to an individual who was a victim of the race massacre, need both sets of DNA samples.

VIII. New Business

- a. Update on Mass Graves Investigation at Oaklawn Cemetery
 - i. Brentom Todd provided an update. Concluded all exhuming from 2024 season, planning to release a report of findings in early June.
 - ii. There is enough in the proposed 2025 – 2026 budget for the City to continue efforts next year. The budget is currently in the City Council's hands.
 - 1. Vice Chair Wilson noted commissioners can advocate with their City Councilor.
 - iii. Several teams working on this every single day.
 - iv. Commissioner Armstrong paused to acknowledge the work that was done to honor C.L. Daniels. The City flew out his family to be at the memorial ceremony.

1. Brentom added that he is working to standardize a process as more remains are identified to ensure respectful and meaningful recognition of individuals in a sustainable way.
- v. Chairwoman Williams noted she served on the investigation oversight committee. Witnessed a fading away of that committee. Asked how those meetings can be brought back. Suggested ensuring that the community continues to be connected to and involved in the work. Brentom thanked her for her input

IX. Announcements / Public Comments

- a. No announcements.
- b. Public Comments
 - i. Janetta with Deep Greenwood Foundation shared about the upcoming Greenwood Descendant Family Reunion on June 1. Shared posters.
 - ii. Jazzy shared an event she is hosting on June 1 at Greenwood Gallery during Legacy Fest focused on community healing so people can be partners in all the work taking place.

X. Adjournment

- a. Vice Chair Wilson entertained a motion to adjourn.
 - i. Commissioner Armstrong made a motion, Commissioner Evans seconded.
 1. Aye: 9
 - ii. Motion carried, meeting adjourned at 2:11 pm.