



Greater Tulsa Area African American Affairs Commission

Regular Meeting | September 9, 2025 | 6:00 – 7:00 pm

City Hall at One Technology Center | 10 North Meeting Room

Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present: Patricia Carter-Breeckner, Dewayne Dickens, Brian Humphrey, Margaret Love, Jon Paul Ray, Jameelah Stuckey, Mikeal Vaughn, Maybelle Wallace, Juddie Williams, Tony Williams, Ray'Chel Wilson

Commissioners Absent: Marquess Dennis, David Harris, Tracye Love Chandler, Larissa McNeil, Kristi Williams

I. Call to Order

- a. Chairman Dickens called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm.

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- a. Chairman Dickens entertained a motion to approve the August meeting minutes.
 - i. Commissioner Love made a motion, Commissioner Wallace seconded.
 1. Commissioner Breeckner recommended an edit to Item IV.b: Add her comment suggesting 5:45 as a possible time.
 2. Aye: 10, Nay: 0
 - a. Commissioner Ray was not yet present in the meeting.
 - ii. Motion carried, August meeting minutes approved with one edit.

III. Guest Speaker: Cindy Webster, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Oklahoma

- a. Cindy Webster is a Big Ambassador a Big Brothers Big Sisters of Oklahoma (BBBSOK).
- b. Cindy shared a history of the organization, which started in 1904.
- c. BBBSOK's Mission: Create and support one to one mentoring relationships that ignite the power and promise of youth.
- d. BBBSOK matches adults (18+) with youth (6 – 16) to help grow decision making skills and self-worth.
- e. The most important factor for a child to develop resilience is having a stable relationship with a supportive adult. When we nurture children, we strengthen our community.
- f. Three core programs:
 - i. School-based program at Kendall Whittier Elementary School: One-hour commitment per week directly on-site at school.
 - ii. Community Program: Big couple program, offer community activities a few times per month to introduce new experiences to littles.
 - iii. Big Team Mentoring: Provides extra support to littles, requires at least one hour per week for one year.
- g. Bigs are assigned to a Program Specialist who communicates and guides them through mentorship.
- h. BBBSOK is a proactive solution to supporting youth and Tulsa's future
- i. 431 children served in 2024. So far in 2025 have served 421 children.



- j. Recently concluded 30-year study. BBBSOK improved social competency and identity, learning to practice regulating emotions, avoiding risky behaviors
- k. Currently 125 littles waiting for mentors, 87 of which are boys.

IV. Chair / Vice Chair Report

- a. Chairman Dickens highlighted the upcoming Black Educator Excellence Awards Ceremony and reminded commissioners they typically donate to provide a token of acknowledgement to awardees and to purchase food for the event.
- b. United Nigerian Association of Tulsa wants to contribute to GTAAAC and share Nigerian culture, invited them to join the Culture Committee.
- c. Chairman Dickens gave DJ Mercer the floor.
 - i. DJ is the Community Outreach & Engagement Manager at Justice for Greenwood.
 - ii. Hosting a three-part, monthly genealogy workshop starting on September 25, 6 – 7:30pm. The workshops will be offered in a hybrid format, with the in-person location at Rudisill Library. DJ invited commissioners to attend, share with their networks, and volunteer.
 - iii. Genealogy is important. You can't know where you're going if you don't know where you've been.
 - iv. Other two dates: October 23 and November 20.

V. Discussion and Possible Action: Commission Meeting Time

- a. Chairman Dickens continued the discussion on this item by referring to the August meeting minutes.
- b. Commissioner Wilson reiterated that she's open to a different time in the spring; otherwise, she won't be present for the start of the meeting if the meeting is moved up earlier than that.
- c. Chairman Dickens asked Lexi if moving to 5:45 would be a substantial change, she responded that she is unsure that it would be.
- d. Commissioner Love likes the current time.
- e. Commissioner Breeckner stated her preference to start later than 5:30 to avoid the rush hour traffic.
- f. Commissioner Love noted that when you have children there are more necessary considerations.
- g. The commission came to consensus to keep the meetings at 6pm. As the meeting time will not change, no formal action is necessary.
- h. Commissioner Wallace asked a question about ending at 7 vs 7:30, Chairman Dickens reinforced that meetings will end at 7pm except in rare occasions.

VI. Discussion and Possible Action: Response to Concerns about the Greenwood Legacy CDC Raised by Councilor Hall-Harper

- a. Commissioner Ray passed out copies of the Policy Committee's report (Appendix 1). Chairman Dickens and Commissioner Ray reminded the commission of the context for this discussion, included in August's meeting minutes.
- b. The Policy Committee interviewed individuals who would have knowledge of this issue to inform whether or not GTAAAC would sign onto Councilor's letter. Endeavored to gather as much information as possible in a short amount of time in order to bring back to GTAAAC. Commissioner Ray read the Policy Committee's report of findings to the commission.
- c. Commission Discussion:
 - i. Commissioner Vaughn asked if Chairman Dickens's letter is the same letter Councilor Hall-Harper has requested GTAAAC send to the Mayor. Chairman Dickens clarified that



Councilor Hall-Harper's letter is different than what he has written for the commission's consideration.

- ii. Vice Chair Humphrey talked about the Policy Committee's process. It is important to listen to and advocate for community. Councilor Hall-Harper has done a lot for Tulsa. There is a risk when community doesn't agree, and we have to wager risk of listening to everyone and supporting influential people. Don't want to bully or squash other voices in a process like this. The Policy Committee received pressure not to conduct research. GTAAAC must build bridges within the community; disagreement and difficulties can be worked out. Councilor Hall-Harper wants to protect our community, which is a shared goal. There are people in our community who voted on a process, and Vice Chair Humphrey thinks there has to be respect for the process and the decision of that body.
- d. Chairman Dickens reflected that only four current commissioners are founding members. Posted the question: What is the purpose of GTAAAC?
 - i. Referenced Article II of the bylaws, which states the purpose of the commission.
- e. When Councilor Hall-Harper presented to GTAAAC, Chairman Dickens's response was that GTAAAC needed time to make a decision for themselves.
 - i. Not acting solely based on his personal experience and interpretation, working on behalf of the entire commission.
- f. Chairman Dickens wrote a letter (Appendix 2) reflecting when he thinks the GTAAAC can do. As Chair of GTAAAC, he can't sign off on any individual's plan. Advocating for the CDC to work together with a trust.
 - i. We have an elected official who represents the voices of the community, and we can respect that role.
 - ii. Directed commissioners to look at the last three items in his letter.
 - iii. Elevating concerns to the Mayor is GTAAAC's responsibility, and GTAAAC will fall in line with the Mayor's decision.
 - iv. A trust provides an additional layer of protection; however, Chairman Dickens is not indicating currently anyone involved with the CDC is doing anything untrustworthy.
- g. Chairman Dickens proposed voting to send his letter to Mayor Nichols, TDA, and Councilor Hall-Harper.
- h. Commission Discussion:
 - i. Commissioner Ray asked clarifying question: Will GTAAAC vote tonight on sending Chairman Dickens's letter? Chairman Dickens answered yes.
 - ii. Commissioner Vaughn clarified that the proposed idea is to support a CDC and a trust, Chairman Dickens answered yes.
- i. Chairman Dickens shared the floor with Dr. Lana Turner-Addison. Dr. Turner-Addison shared that the Kirkpatrick Heights/Greenwood Master Plan (KHGMP) had a lot of community engagement, and subsequent decisions flow from that plan. The working group represents community voice. The working group established the selection committee, which selected the advisory board. Legally established the Greenwood Legacy CDC (GLCDC) in October 2024 for the purpose of acquiring and developing the 56 acres of land to benefit of Race Massacre descendants. Dr. Turner-Addison respects Councilor Hall-Harper and has always invited her and others to the table. Will continue work with GLCDC, interviewing for Executive Directors, going to do more direct community outreach and engagement. Dr. Turner-Addison invited GTAAAC to provide input or recommendations on filling the remaining board seats.



- i. Discussion ensued about the proposed relationship between the trust & GLCDC.
- j. Continued Commission Discussion:
 - i. Commissioner Love reflected that this is a long-time situation, she hopes the community can come together instead of being on opposing sides. It's not personal, it's about doing the best thing for the community.
 - ii. Chairman Dickens hopes the tone and messaging that will be heard is for groups to work together, not separately. Not looking to harm or support any particular person, focused on Greenwood's legacy as the ultimate concern. A trust provides an insurance to those who feel the historic hurt that the land is in a more protected position. Not saying a CDC couldn't provide this security, but CDCs do have more flexibility to change the land that wouldn't exist if the land is in a trust.
 - iii. Commissioner Vaughn: Hearing a lot of things, did a bit of research, and he appreciates the idea of both the CDC and trust. Doesn't understand the conflict of interest of an elected official serving on the CDC, see opacity in decision making, and feel that the elected official representing the area where the land exists should be part of the CDC regardless of personality conflicts.
 - 1. Chairman Dickens clarified that he is not addressing that specific point in his letter.
 - 2. Ongoing conversation is needed due to conflicting reports of if a formal discussion or decision took place to exclude elected officials from the GLCDC board.
 - iv. Commissioner Stuckey likes the letter.
 - v. Commissioner Wallace asked if the trust would ensure the land is under the jurisdiction of the City. Vice Chair Humphrey clarified that the trust is not fully set up yet so that's not determined yet.
 - vi. Commissioner Wilson Not comfortable voting yes on the letter yet because there is still room for assumption, but aware of timeliness. Asked what partnership would look like for the CDC.
 - 1. Chairman clarified the letter is not intended to dictate what the partnership will be; rather, supporting the idea of the CDC and trust working together.
 - vii. Commissioner Stuckey asked about a deadline, Chairman Dickens said there is urgency but ultimately not a set deadline.
 - viii. Commissioner Stuckey clarified the GTAAAC is not making final decision, simply sharing a recommendation.
 - ix. Commissioner Stuckey: Is it possible to vote next meeting? Could a group come to speak with us, to clear up conflicting information.
 - 1. Chairman Dickens is fine with tabling the vote if that's what the commission wants. Want commission to be comfortable.
- k. Commissioner Stuckey motioned to approve the letter, Commissioner Vaughn seconded.
 - i. Aye: 7 (Chairman Dickens and Commissioners Love, Ray, Stuckey, Vaughn, Juddie Williams, and Tony Williams)
 - ii. Nay: 4 (Commissioners Carter-Breeckner, Wallace, Wilson, and Vice Chair Humphrey)
 - iii. Abstain: 0
 - iv. Motion carried, letter is approved and will be sent to Mayor Nichols, TDA, and Councilor-Hall Harper.



- I. Chairman Dickens: There is still opportunity to continue discussion and invite folks to speak, community and commissioners should know what is going on.

VII. Committee Reports

- a. Policy Recommendations – no further report
- b. Community Engagement and Culture Promotion
 - i. Commissioner Wallace: GTAAAC will table at the 918 Day Festival, invited commissioners to participate. Shifts are 5 – 7 and 7 – 9. Need someone to set up at 4:30 because Commissioner McNeil is not available. Email Commissioner McNeil if you can volunteer.
 - ii. Working on a shared calendar.
 - iii. Looking to debut the GTAAAC email in the October newsletter to further promote visibility of the commission.
 - iv. Commissioner Wallace passed out flyers for Othello with Theatre North.
- c. Education and Skill Building
 - i. Commissioner Stuckey: Received 10 nominations for the Educator Awards. Committee selected the Elementary & High School awardees. Middle School ELA teacher nominations are still needed, so nominations are reopened for two weeks. Following up with DRE team and other organizations on budget and donations.
 - ii. Op-ed on chronic absenteeism will be done soon.
- d. Human Rights Commission
 - i. Dickens shared emailed report from Commissioner McNeil.
 - ii. HRC is working to understand and/or support various ordinances for the city.
 1. One commissioner brought up the boulders on the sidewalk outside of the bus station downtown, since it seems it will disproportionately affect unhoused populations.
 2. HRC also wrote a letter to City Councilors supporting the expansion of the human right ordinance that would add protections to veterans in housing and public accommodations and members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community in public accommodations. The ordinance was up for discussion at the City Council Urban and Economic Development committee meeting. Unfortunately, the ordinance will not move forward at this time because of the lack of votes to pass the ordinance. The HRC will regroup to determine how to advance these human rights.

VIII. Old Business – no old business

IX. New Business – no new business

X. Announcements / Public Comments

- a. Tulsa Tech Week: Sept 21, Tulsa's first tech week
 - i. Two financial resilience events: Code Switching Your Wallet (9/24) and Financial Wellbeing as Innovation (9/25)
- b. 918 Day Festival at Chapman Green: 5 – 9 pm on 9/18

XI. Adjournment

- a. Chairman Dickens entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting.
 - i. Commissioner Love made a motion to adjourn, Commissioner Wilson seconded.
 1. Aye: 11, Nay: 0
 - ii. Motion carried, meeting adjourned at 7:37 pm.

Policy Committee Report – September 9, 2025

Assignment: Conduct information-gathering research to allow GTAAAC to vote on whether to support Councilor Vanessa Hall-Harper’s letter addressing her concerns regarding PartnerTulsa.

History: On August 12, 2025, City Councilor Vanessa Hall-Harper spoke to GTAAAC to advise of her concerns with Partner Tulsa, TDA/TAE0, and the Kirkpatrick Heights / Greenwood Master Plan. In the August 12th meeting and the letters that she provided, Councilor Vanessa Hall-Harper noted concerning issues relating to the lack of transparency, the exclusion of elected officials to serve on the CDC Board, and conflicting communications on whether advisory committee members could serve on the CDC Board. Accordingly, City Councilor Hall-Harper has sounded the alarm, and she is requesting GTAAAC’s support of her letter to Mayor Nichols requesting that Partner Tulsa and the Greenwood Legacy CDC not be legitimized by the Tulsa Development Authority (TDA) and Tulsa Authority for Economic Opportunity (TAE0).

Methodology: The policy committee called, interviewed, and emailed several individuals with knowledge of the issues presented above. The policy committee also analyzed websites and information available to the public. The findings are presented below.

Findings:

- A Community Governance Working Group (including Councilor Vanessa Hall-Harper) performed 16-18 months of research regarding national governance models and local community input.
- This 35-person Working Group then voted on a CDC vs. a trust.
 - An attorney was consulted to advise on the differences between a CDC and a trust
 - The Working Group voted in favor of the CDC.
 - A few members of the Working Group disagreed with the CDC decision, but the majority voted for the CDC.
- A nine-person Advisory Committee was established to select the founding members of the CDC.
 - *Note* some reports indicate that the Advisory Committee then created a “Selection Committee” to select the founding members of the CDC.
- The application for the Advisory Committee was open to the public and the Working Group was encouraged to apply (41 applications were received).
 - *Note* reports indicate confusion whether the Working Group members could apply for the Advisory Board. Some indicate their belief that the Advisory Board would then provide an opportunity to be selected for the founding board. Other reports indicate that only members of the *Selection Committee* could not serve on the Founding Board of the CDC.
- The “Selection Committee” or Advisory Board selected 5/9 CDC founding members
 - There was a discussion on specifically not selecting elected officials since they could potentially have a conflict of interest. But there are mixed reports on whether an actual vote occurred to specifically exclude elected officials.
 - The CDC’s current five Founding Board members are all from the 9-person Advisory Committee.

From the Chair, Greater Tulsa African American Affairs Commission, Dr. Dewayne Dickens

Date: September 9, 2025

To:

Mayor Monroe Nichols, City of Tulsa
 Councilor Vanessa Hall Harper, District 1
 Chair Ashley Philippsen, Tulsa Development Authority

Subject: Greenwood Land and the Need for Trust and Transparency

Dear Mayor Nichols, Councilor Hall Harper, and Chair Philippsen:

On behalf of the Greater Tulsa African American Affairs Commission (GTAAAC), I write regarding the future of Greenwood land currently held by the Tulsa Development Authority. The future of Greenwood is both personal and historically significant. Decisions about this land deserve a process that is transparent, respectful, and committed to the community's long-term well-being.

Representation and Community Voice

Since we operate under representative democracy, and we believe that every voice deserves to be heard at the table—through town halls, City Hall meetings, and direct communication with elected officials, Councilor Harper's stated request requires thoughtful consideration.

Our bylaws demand that we give special attention to advising and advocating for the use of city resources on behalf of the African American community:

With the goal of creating a strong, prosperous, self-sustaining African American community, the Commission will advise and advocate for the use of city resources for the development of matters of importance to the African-American community.

In line with this charge, we recognize Councilor Hall Harper as a tireless advocate for District 1. While her passion has sometimes drawn more attention to tone than substance, the larger concern—the future of Greenwood—must take precedence, as Councilor Hall Harper has rightly indicated.

Education, Transparency, and Respectful Dialogue

While there have been moments where process and tone created tension, the larger concern—the future of Greenwood—must take precedence. On this, we are aligned. We must foster dialogue that allows for differences without fear of dismissal or ridicule. Respectful engagement is the only path to rebuilding public trust.

Although public meetings have been held, the broader community still lacks a clear understanding of the process and outcomes. Moving forward, we encourage clearer communication that allows all citizens to follow the process and trust the outcomes, ensuring understanding for the members of the public.

Why a Trust Is Necessary

The Greenwood land symbolizes more than property—it represents shattered dreams and stolen wealth. Placing this land in a **trust** is not about who proposed the idea; it is about protecting the community's legacy and preventing the possibility of quick loss, as history painfully taught us in 1921. A trust provides an additional layer of protection that a CDC alone cannot offer.

While CDCs are well-equipped to develop partnerships, finance projects, and build community facilities, the trust ensures that the land itself remains safeguarded for future generations. The two can work hand-in-hand: the trust protecting the land, and the CDC building upon it. Together, they can heal mistrust and foster confidence that Greenwood will not again be stripped away.

This is not about personalities or past disagreements; it is about ensuring Greenwood's future is never again left vulnerable. For a community scarred by the destruction of 1921, a trust is not simply a legal structure; it is a safeguard of dignity and assurance for generations.

Our Request

The GTAAAC respectfully requests:

1. That the City of Tulsa and the Tulsa Development Authority place the Greenwood land currently under TDA control into the Mayor's proposed trust structure, ensuring permanent protection of the land.
2. That the identified CDC serve as the development and financial partner, leveraging its expertise to implement community projects.
3. That all parties—TDA, the City, the CDC, and Councilor Hall Harper—commit to open, respectful dialogue and public transparency in each step of this process.

We believe this approach honors history, acknowledges ongoing pain, and sets a precedent for a legacy of reparation. It places the emphasis not on individuals or tactics, but on outcomes that ensure justice for Greenwood. We believe representative democracy requires that citizens be fully informed, fully engaged, and fully respected—especially when decisions carry the weight of shaping Greenwood's legacy for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Dr. Dewayne Dickens



Chair, Greater Tulsa African American Affairs Commission