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REPARATIONS
COMMISSION**

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National African American Reparations Commission
Initial Assessment of the Evanston, Illinois' Reparations Initiative
And Recommendations

At the invitation of Alderman Robin Rue Simmons and the Reparations Sub-Committee of the Evanston, Illinois City Council, December 10-11, 2019 a Team from the National African American Reparations Commission (NAARC) conducted a consultation to provide advice on ways to implement the Reparations Resolution recently adopted by City Council consistent with the criteria for reparatory justice initiatives and international guidelines for reparations. NAARC was also interested in evaluating whether the Evanston Reparations Initiative could be embraced as a model that could be replicated in municipalities across the nation.

The NAARC Team was comprised of Kamm Howard, National Co-Chairperson, National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (NCOBRA); Dr. Iva Carruthers, General Secretary, Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference; Nkechi Taifa, Esq., The Taif Group; Lionel Jean-Baptiste, Cook County Circuit Court Judge; and, Dr. Ron Daniels, President, Institute of the Black World 21st Century, Convener of NAARC. The Itinerary/Agenda for the consultation included:

- Meeting with Alderman Robin Rue Simmons, Alderman Ann Rainey, Alderman Peter Braithwaite and staff of the Reparations Sub-Committee.
- A tour of Evanston Black Neighborhoods to illustrate the historical impact of redlining and racially exclusionary policies, facilitated by Morris "Dino" Robinson, Founder/CEO, Shorefront Legacy Center.
- Luncheon Meeting with Members of Equity Commission, Reparations Sub-Committee and African American Stakeholders.
- Meeting with African American Stakeholders.
- An informational/educational Town Hall Meeting which featured a Keynote Address by Danny Glover, U.N. Ambassador for the Decade of People of African Descent.

During the consultation, NAARC presented criteria for reparations/reparatory justice initiatives/proposals based on definitions which have evolved within the reparations movement and longstanding standards grounded in international law as follows:

1. Consistent with the principles of restorative justice, the government, institution, agency or individual that is responsible for inflicting injury or harm cannot define the remedy. The remedy must be defined or agreed to by those who suffered the injury or harm. Remedies may include Direct Benefits to people of

African descent/Black individuals or families having suffered/harm injury and/or Collective Benefits for the overall damages suffered by institutions or communities as a whole. It is important to emphasize, that as a matter of principle, all persons of African descent are eligible for reparations.

2. In accordance with international norms for reparations, it is also imperative that the party inflicting the harm or injury issue a public apology to initiate the process of repair.

3. The creation of an independent structure to receive resources for restitution is a distinctive qualification for a reparatory justice initiative. Those who suffered the injury or harm must have the power to make decisions on the allocation of resources for restitution and repair. This should include the creation of an independent Black controlled structure to receive and allocate collective or direct benefits for restitution as identified by the affected community, institutions or individuals, e.g., a Reparations Finance Authority as referenced in the NAARC 10 Point Reparations Program, Community Economic Development Corporation, Community Land Trust, Cooperative or similar structure.

4. Regular, standard or ordinary public policy is not reparations. The allocation of resources to meet current needs in the Black community and the community at-large which are not exclusively for the Black community and controlled by Black families, communities and institutions is regular/standard/ordinary public policy.

The NAARC Team also suggested Guidelines which should be applicable to any city or state reparatory Initiative like Evanston's:

1. No amount of money can ever repair the intergenerational or contemporary damages inflicted on Black communities as a result of enslavement or racially exclusionary policies. Therefore, the \$10 million over 10 years allocated by City Council is insufficient to address the longstanding, racially exclusionary policies which harmed Black families, neighborhoods and institutions in Evanston. However, the Initiative represents a meaningful beginning of the process of restitution and repair.

2. The \$10 million in public funds should be viewed as leverage for private institutions to contribute to independent structures established by the community to devise and administer reparatory justice projects, programs, initiatives.

3. A percentage of \$10 million should be set-aside to engage the services of reparations resources persons/consultants and community economic development experts to assist the community with the creation or implementation of reparatory justice projects.

General Observations

The NAARC Team was/is very impressed with the vision, commitment and investment of work on the Reparations Initiative by Alderman Simmons, Alderman Ann Rainey, Peter Braithwaite, the Reparations Sub-Committee Staff and the support of the Equity Commission, Chaired by Pastor Monte Dillard.

The decision to use city tax revenue from the sale of recreational marijuana is innovative and consistent with the principles of reparatory justice. Data across the country and in Evanston clearly documents that

Black communities bore the brunt of the War on Drugs through the deliberate targeting, arrest and incarceration of Black people by policing and criminal justice authorities. The debilitating impact of racially-biased policies on Black families and communities warrants repair. The use of tax revenues from the sale of recreational marijuana as adopted in Evanston is a model that cities and states may choose to replicate.

The series of preparatory town hall meeting which Alderman Simmons convened to received input from affected communities not only engaged the residents, they provided specific ideas on what forms reparations should take in addressing the harm/injury. These proposals should be among the first to be implemented through the Reparations Initiative.

Alderman Simmons has assembled a very diverse and impressive group of African American Stakeholders to play a leading role in unifying the community to implement the Reparations Initiative. Many of those on her list participated in the November 11th Stakeholders meeting with NAARC and expressed their willingness to support a community-based process to move the Reparations Initiative forward.

Recommendations

While the NAARC Team feels that important information was shared and receive in all of the individual and group meetings, the session with African American Stakeholders was particularly vital to developing recommendations for implementing the Reparations Initiative. This is consistent with the principle that there should be independent structures within the affected community which play the leading role in decisions about the development and implementation of reparatory justice projects and programs. The following recommendations are offered from that perspective:

The creation of an African American Reparations and Racial Justice Collaborative; a body comprised of the Stakeholders attended and those who were invited to attend the November 11th meeting. Since Stakeholder invitation list was compiled to include all sectors of the African American community, care should be taken to share information on the November 11th meeting to the entire list, with an invitation to those who did not attend to join the process.

This recommendation emerged from the conversation at the Stakeholders meeting where the question was posed as to whether such an influential group of leaders had ever been convened before. The answer was no. Dr. Ron Daniels suggested that the model of Justice Collaboratives established by the Institute of the Black World 21st Century in Washington, D.C., Philadelphia and Pittsburgh to advance criminal justice reforms might be adapted in Evanston to play a leading role in the implementation of the Reparations Initiative as well as other racial and social justice work (the Mission Statement for the IBW Justice Collaboratives is attached). It is suggested that the Collaborative have three Co-Conveners, one male, one female and one which must be a younger person as defined.

The creation of an Evanston Reparations Task Force within the Collaborative with the specific mandate to:

- Convene community meetings and forums to receive input on reparations proposals.
- Review and make recommendations regarding reparations proposals adopted by City Council and to submit proposals for adoption based on input from the community.

- Establish a Reparations Finance Authority modeled after the proposal contained in the NAARC 10 Point Reparations Program which would be empowered to receive private funds to implement reparatory justice proposals.
- Develop strategies to educate and enlist support from allies within other people of color communities and the white community.
- Establish a legal team to ensure compliance of reparatory justice proposals with local, state and federal laws.

The Reparations Task Force is envisioned as a major component of the Collaborative and as such would report to and be accountable to the Collaborative.

The African American Stakeholders should be reconvened at the earliest feasible date to consider these and other recommendations about how to play a central role in advancing the Reparations Initiative.

Follow-up by NAARC

Within the limits of its capacity, the NAARC Team stands ready to assist Alderman Simmons, the Reparations Sub-Committee, African American Stakeholders, City Officials and private sector institutions in the implementation of the Reparations Initiative to ensure its success within the framework of the Criteria for reparatory justice initiatives and international guidelines for reparations. To that end, the NAARC Team is prepared to do the following:

- Attend a future meeting of Stakeholders to discuss its findings and recommendations if invited to do so. The Team is also willing to facilitate discussions of how best to implement all or some of the recommendations.
- Assist the Reparations Sub-Committee to identify consultants to provide expertise on crafting and implementing community-based, housing and economic development reparatory justice projects.
- Continue to act as an advisory and facilitative resource to Alderman Simmons, the Reparations Sub-Committee and whatever structures that may be established by the African American Stakeholders.