



North Carolina Martin Luther King Jr. Commission

Tuesday, September 8 2020

10:00am – 12:30pm

Virtual Microsoft Teams Meeting with a Call in Option

(This meeting was recorded and said recording is available upon request.)

Meeting Minutes

Members Present: James Williams, Edwin Booth, Nervahna Crew, Kiana Rivers, Jamilla Hawkins, Rev. James White, Rabbi Lucy Dinner, Jacqueline Jeffers

Members Not Present: Philip Smith, Larry Jones, Immanuel Jarvis, Walter Rogers, Carolyn Stroud

Government Staff Present: Betty Marrow-Taylor, Shanon Gerger, Bob Coats

Welcome/Call to Order

Chairman White welcomed the MLK Jr. Commission to the meeting. He mentioned a quote from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. from 1965, ending the quote by reminding everyone that we are all connected. He mentioned that we are all going through tough times. He then introduced Deputy Secretary Betty Marrow-Taylor to give the opening remarks.

Opening Remarks

Deputy Secretary Marrow-Taylor greeted the Commission, sharing that she is honored and privileged to be a part of the MLK Jr. Commission. She wished that everyone had a wonderful Labor Day weekend and reiterated Chairman White's words on the impact of COVID-19 on our lives, emphasizing the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on communities of color. Deputy Secretary Marrow-Taylor stated that she is honored to carry on the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Deputy Secretary Marrow-Taylor spent a moment reminding the Commission of their functions and duties. These functions and duties are:

- To encourage appropriate ceremonies and activities throughout the State relating to the observance of the legal holiday honoring Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday;
- To provide advice and assistance to local governments and private organizations across the State with respect to the observance of such holiday; and
- To promote among the people of North Carolina an awareness and appreciation of the life and work of Martin Luther King Jr.

She ended her remarks by sharing a quote by Martin Luther King Jr., "If you can't fly then run, if you can't run then walk, if you can't walk then crawl, but whatever you do you have to keep moving forward."

Deputy Secretary Marrow-Taylor passed it back to Chairman White. Chairman White gave an invocation for the Commission.

Ethics Statement

Chairman White read the Ethics Statement to the Commission. No conflicts were identified.

Virtual Public Meeting Norms

Catherine Rivera was unable to attend due to unforeseen circumstances, so Deputy Secretary Marrow-Taylor shared some of the public meeting norms and rules.

Roll Call

Deputy Secretary Betty Marrow-Taylor conducted a roll call of the members, reflected in the attendance list above.

2020 Census – Last Push

Chairman White introduced Bob Coats, Governor's Census Liaison, Office of State Budget Management. Coats greeted the Commission and shared that COVID-19 has had a big impact on the 2020 Census. He shared why we do the Census and what is at State for North Carolina, including representation, funding, and planning. Deadlines have changed but importance has not.

He shared the different ways to participate in Census self-response. The easiest way to participate and be safe is to respond at home by phone, paper form, or online. This is the first census to allow internet responses. You can also respond by phone or using the paper mailers. A quick response is the best way to keep social distance and safety.

He shared the link <https://2020census.gov/response-rates/self-response.html> for people to track Census self-response rates.

As of the 3rd, the response rate is 61.1% percent for North Carolina. This lags a bit behind the national average, but it is showing improvement. Rural counties need more response rates, most likely due to internet issues. There is more work to be done to ensure that we get a complete and accurate count.

Coats shared info on the Census non-response follow up. Door-to-door visits by Census workers began on August 11th and will run until September 30th. He shared the link <https://2020census.gov/en/response-rates/nrfu.html> to view the daily 2020 Census Response Non-Response Rate Tracker. Based on September 3rd, the 2020 response rates are:

- Nearly 40% of NC Households have not self-responded to the 2020 Census
- 1.5 million nonresponse households
- 3.8 million uncounted NC residents
- \$7 billion in annual funding at risk

He shared the adjusted Census Timeline. Self-response ran from March 12th until September 30th. Non-Response Follow Up is running from August 11th – September 30th. Service Based Enumeration is running from September 22nd – September 24th. Enumeration of Transitory Locations is running from September 3rd until September 28th.

Mr. Coats shared with the Commission how to recognize a Census worker and what questions they will ask. There have already been attempts to scam people in North Carolina. He shared some of the challenges of the Census this year as well.

He encouraged all leaders to complete their Census and challenge friends, family, neighbors, and complete strangers to do the same. He shared that you do not need the Census code that was sent to you in order to do the Census. He also encouraged the Commission to “join the social media party” with #MakeNCCount and @NCCensus.

The floor was opened for the Commission to ask questions.

Grants Discussion

Chairman White reminded everyone that one of the Commission’s major initiatives is their grants. The Commission needs to be intentional about their grants. Everyone should think in terms of what is the best use of any grant dollars to support our communities. Chairman White asked the Commission what do they feel is an appropriate theme for this year’s grants.

James Williams: In terms of the time we are in and Dr. King’s perspective on certain aspects that are relevant to today, we should think back to one of his last speeches that was titled “All Labor Has Dignity.”

Kiana Rivers: The wealth gap in rural areas are much more prominent as well. We should look at certain areas that needs resources the most and focus on those areas.

Nervahna Crew: We should focus our intentions and efforts in underserved communities and populations. Rural communities are living in desperate and trying times. Focus on organizations that are trying to do good in these communities. We should also find a way that we should support several.

Shanon Gerger: Last year’s grantees ranged from mentoring and outreach to educational opportunities and youth councils. One of the grantees from last year finished overhauling the Hoke County soup kitchen.

Betty Marrow-Taylor: During the pandemic a lot of attention is being given to the first responders but not for those working in cafeterias or housekeeping. They are putting their lives on the line as well. We sometimes do forget about those who have jobs that aren’t as elaborate but they are definitely risking their lives too.

James White: In light of the visible disruption from many of the younger generation, how do we make sure that we don’t miss some of the disruption that is taking place, especially with the upcoming election regardless of who wins? How do we make sure we don’t miss a younger generation.

Lucy Dinner: The leadership is so diversified that it is hard to get in and offer help to the leadership on where they want to go in effecting change. Our grants could reach out to some of the young college leaders/leaders in general and help them move from the protest on the street to the actions needed for change. How do we connect the momentum that is forming from protests to action and make it an intergenerational, multinational creation?

Kiana Rivers: What if we say we want to see an intergenerational board as a qualification for leadership? We should also have an introduction series to show the organizations how to meet those qualifications in order to get the grants before we roll out the grants.

Shannon Gerger: The organization only needs to have a federal tax ID number or some sort of federal identification to qualify.

Betty Marrow-Taylor: Do we want to have five grants? Narrow it down to three?

James White: General themes we discussed today: We do not want to miss rural counties this time around. This idea of labor and that all labor has dignity. We do not want to miss those people as well. We want to make sure we connect with the younger generation and we lifted up the idea of “what do we do next?” and moving “from protests to politics.”

Goals and Subcommittees Establishment

Chairman White said that in order for this to get done in a short timeline, they need to establish subcommittees. He asked the Commission what are some subcommittees they should form.

Subcommittees that were determined: Communication Subcommittee, Theme Subcommittee, and Grant Review Subcommittee.

Members of the Theme Subcommittee: James Williams and James White

Members of Communication Subcommittee: Kiana Rivers, Jamila Hawkins, and Betty Marrow-Taylor

Members of Grant Review Subcommittee: Jamila Hawkins, Kiana Rivers, Rabbi Dinner, Shanon Gerger, Jacqueline Jeffers, James White

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Lucy Dinner made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the previous meeting, Commissioner Jamila Hawkins seconded the motion. The vote to approve the meeting minutes was made via roll call and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Announcements/Updates

Deputy Secretary Betty Marrow-Taylor reminded the Commission to vote and finish their Census. Chairman White said the Commission needs to make sure their Facebook page stresses voting and encouraged the commissioners to make sure that their Facebook pages reflect the same.

Next Meeting Date

Chairman White asked the subcommittees to get back with him when they are planning to meet.

Meeting Adjourned