

Meeting Date: 11/18/2025**Attendance:**

☐ Akiba, Sukia
☒ Bastola, Kashish
☒ Brown, Thabiti
☒ Collins, Melissa *
☒ Dance, Kwame
☒ Davis, Jeff
☒ Greenidge, George
☒ Johnson, Xenia

☒ Lubintus,
Gassendina
☒ Mason, Natassa
☒ Paris, Paula
☐ Wyzard Jones,
Chyenne

City AFC Staff

☒ Belt, William
☒ Brown, Deidre

** Arrived after the meeting
was called to order*

Call to Order Time:

1. Call to Order - 6:40 pm, Deidre Travis Brown, American Freedmen Commission, Acting Executive Director
 - 9 Members present, quorum established
2. Public Comment: 30-minute public comment period
 - 9 participants
 - 2 speakers from the public registered for public comment
 - Lawrence Adkins
 - Doreen Wade
3. Election of the Commission Chairperson and Co-Chairperson
 - Open the floor to receive nominations for Chairperson & Co-Chairperson
 - Motion by Kwame Dance to amend the Co-Chairperson position title to Vice Chairperson. seconded by Paula Paris
 - Vote passes 9-0
 - Chairperson Description/Responsibilities
 - Lead meeting by confirming quorum, calling to order, and guiding discussion aligned with the agenda
 - Establishing meeting agendas in collaboration with the Executive Director and city staff
 - Organize related events in collaboration with the Executive Director and city staff

- Floor opened for Chairperson nominations
 - Nominees:
 - Commissioner Jeff Davis - nominated by Commissioner Paula Paris
 - Commissioner Paula Paris - nominated by Commissioner Jeff Davis
 - Commissioner George Greendige - self-nominated
 - Commissioner Xenia Johnson moved to close nominations. Motion properly seconded
 - Declinations
 - Commissioner Paula Paris declined the Chairperson nomination
 - Commissioner Jeff Davis declined the Chairperson nomination
 - Acceptance
 - Commissioner George Greenidge accepted nomination for Chairperson
 - Vote passed 9-0 for Commissioner George as Chairperson.
 - Floor opened for Chairperson nominations for Vice Chairperson received
 - Motion to postpone Vice Chairperson election to next meeting, Dec.16th
 - Properly seconded
 - Passes 10 – 0
- 4. Discussion about Commission deliberations and meeting protocols
 - The idea to elect a committee to explore alternatives to Robert’s Rules and identify a more aligned meeting management process for the American Freedmen Commission was proposed. An additional idea was proposed to facilitate a discussion on meeting norms. Commissioners could share examples of different meeting-management methods.
 - Idea introduced around framing the mission of the Commission: “What do we want to accomplish in year one? What are the short-term vs long-term goals?”

- Question posed to the Commission by the Commissioner Melissa Collins:
How do we address the historic systemic harms that have occurred, and
audit current policies and oppressive systems active today?
 - How does the American Freedmen Commission leverage the
surrounding University's research and work done on the current
harms to American Freedmen
 - It's important to look at the current oppressive structures
affecting the American Freedmen community presently
- Question posed to the Commission by the Commissioner Kashish Bastola:
How can members of the commission identify their skills and join
subcommittees that make sense based on their skill set?
 - Ideas around identifying varying responsibilities and identifying
who from the commission or city staff would be responsible
- Commissioners shared thoughts around amending the mission of the
commission to be more specific when referring to American Freedmen
 - 7/10 Commissioners present identify as American Freedmen
 - Discussion about ways to inform the public of Commission
members who identify descendants of Chattel Slavery.
 - Template for Bios to have a structure and how discussion around
how folks are identified on the website
 - Possible structure (Info, asterisk *to include Descendant of
Chattel slavery, Quote.)
 - Possible community-building activity introduced
 - Mapping out the legacy of slavery within Cambridge
 - Utilizing national definitions previously established from the
Ordinance when referring to American Freedmen
- Commissioner Paris introduced [Embrace Boston – Harm Report](#)
 - Stressed the importance of hearing statements from the
community about ongoing harm to American Freedmen
Cantabrigians.
 - Prison Industrial Complex
 - Housing discrimination
 - 7 Harms identified by Boston Harm Report -

- Culture & Symbols
 - Housing
 - Transportation
 - Education
 - Criminal Legal Systems
 - Health
 - Income & Wealth
 - The American Freedmen Commission should aim to identify the problems currently facing the community and provide immediate solutions.
 - Commissioner Greenidge introduced Alvin Tillery and the connection to Evanston's reparations program.
 - Tillery is responsible for evaluating Evanston's program and has resources that could be useful for the commission's work
 - Focus groups template
 - Feedback/listening session templates
 - Commissioner Greenidge emphasized the need for a meeting where the commission dreams big about the work, then a more reality-based discussion, and finally bridging the two.
 - November 25th State's Bill on reparations
 - Possible subcommittee around current events and efforts
 - Possibly bring in Saskia to talk about the Ordinance
 - Agenda Item – Who is under the umbrella of American Freedmen?
 - Motion to add to next agenda – passes 10 –0
 - Possible kickoff event for the Commission and its work
 - How can we be strategic partners with organizations and businesses doing the work already
 - How do we include young people?
5. Review of American Freedmen Commission and Core Objectives – This item will be carried over to the next agenda.

6. Discussion regarding the formation of subcommittees - item carried over to the next agenda.

7. Meeting Adjourned (Time): 8:10 pm