BUDGET WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL
Held Wednesday, April 9, 2025

Meeting: **To receive an update from the Reparations Commission and a Presentation from Tribesy.**

Mayor Jordan began meeting at 7:30 p.m., held in Council Chambers and virtually via Zoom.

In attendance:	Councilmembers Amy E. Knesel, Danielle P. McKinney (virtual), Jenni A. Pompi, Silke I. Pope, Rodney M. Roberts, Kristen L.K. Weaver and Mayor Emmett V. Jordan.
City Staff:	Josué Salmerón, City Manager; Tyra Smith, D.E.I. and Shaniya Lashley-Mullen, Deputy City Clerk.
Others present:	Dr. Lois Rosado, Denise Nadasen, Reparations Commission members; Reena Doyle, Gail Watts, Maya Tietz and Jumoke Warritay, Tribesy Consulting and others.

Greenbelt Reparations Commission Progress

Mayor Jordan provided background on Reparations Commission established after a 2021 municipal election which aims to review, discuss and recommend reparations for African Americans and Native American residents of Greenbelt.
Dr. Rosado shared that the Commission has been working with Tribesy group to compile information and has conducted various activities including seminars, webinars, and town halls to gather public feedback and understand the harms of Indigenous people. The Commission has also raised awareness by distributing flyers, brochures and postcards. Dr. Rosado discussed the Commission's plans to continue engaging the community with the African American Redress Network to research harms and offer recommendations. The Commission also plans to employ an indigenous person to participate in their project.

Reparations Commission Work Summary Presentation

Dr. Rosado noted that the Commission had requested and received funding from the city. The work with Tribesy was initiated last summer and continued over the fall. Reena Doyle presented a summary of their work, acknowledging challenges and emotional aspects of the task. The City Manager and the Reparations Committee vetted the final report. The presentation summarized a more extensive report that was also shared with the city.

Reparations: Holistic, Continuous and Multifaceted Process

Ms. Doyle and Ms. Warritay discussed the concept of reparations emphasizing its multifaceted nature beyond socio-economic aspects. They highlighted the importance of understanding reparations as a holistic, continuous process rather than a one-time action. The presentation was designed to reflect African American and indigenous cultures and wisdom, aiming to provide a different perspective from traditional academic or scientific reports. They clarified that the document was not intended as a checklist or

list of to-do items but rather to outline the complexity and root causes of harm the city wishes to address.

Reparations for Wholeness and Healing

Tribesy discussed the concept of reparations as a path to wholeness for African American and indigenous communities affected by colonization and systemic racism. They emphasize that reparations should go beyond financial compensation addressing spiritual, cultural, health and social costs. Ms. Doyle highlighted the importance of community healing by drawing on indigenous wisdom and practices like the seven generations principle. She specified that repair must be defined by and for impacted groups, focusing on long-term healing and investment in these communities.

Reparations Commission Faces Challenges

Ms. Tietz stated that the Reparations Commission faced challenges due to an overrepresentation of white commissioners, leading to a focus on process and structure rather than the content of the reparations work. The Commission underwent training sessions on various concepts related to reparations including community healing approaches and understanding white supremacy characteristics. Despite enthusiasm for the job, some commissioners showed resistance to engaging with trauma-based stories and struggled with culturally attuned processes. The training has reportedly improved the Commission's approach to community conversations, but black commissioners are experiencing significant exhaustion.

Community Healing and Reparations Discussion

Ms. Warritay discussed the importance of slowing down the process and not creating urgency and the need for more understanding and flexibility within the Commission. She emphasized the importance of intentional trust-building with diverse communities and the need for the community to be the force of change for liberation.
Ms. Doyle discussed the role of the city in creating spaces for community healing and the need for more African Americans and Indigenous people on the Commission. She suggested the use of African and indigenous approaches and the importance of collecting stories for future generations.

Addressing Reparations in Greenbelt Community

Dr. Rosado explained the need for more inclusive and representative participation, particularly from indigenous communities. She discussed the importance of understanding the concept of reparations and the need for further dialogue and education. Dr. Rosado also highlighted the value of community engagement and the need for more effective outreach methods to reach all community members. She emphasized the importance of taking the time to ensure proper representation and compensation for all involved.

Engaging Disenfranchised Communities: Building Trust and Respect

Ms. Knesel and Ms. Watts explained the challenges of engaging disenfranchised communities, emphasizing the importance of building relationships and trust. Ms. Doyle highlighted the need for fair compensation and respect for indigenous communities' expertise. Ms. Pope acknowledged the rushed proof and lack of guidance suggesting a

more thoughtful approach in the future. The term "Generational African American" was clarified by Ms. Doyle remarking its complexity and importance of understanding inter-generational trauma.

Commission Training and Community Collaboration

Ms. Doyle highlighted the importance of having more affected people on the Commission and the need for collaboration between the Commissioners and City staff. Ms. Nadesan emphasized the value of the training provided and suggested that professionals should be identified to connect with the community and share their stories. The discussion also touched on issue of naming a highway after a community with Mr. Roberts expressing his concerns about the practice.

Reparations Commission's Organizational Concerns

Ms. McKinney expressed concerns about the lack of guidance and organizational structure for the Reparations Commission, suggesting that more immediate action is needed to establish the necessary infrastructure. Ms. Doyle agreed and emphasized the need for more affected individuals, particularly African Americans and Indigenous people, to be represented on the Commission to address the impact of whiteness. The Commission's report outlines recommendations for its organization and subcommittees, including a proposed timeline for immediate steps toward healing.

Engaging Generational African Americans in Community

Mayor Jordan discussed the need for cultural, ethnic and gender diversity in the community and acknowledged the importance of reaching out to all parts of the City. He also discussed the challenges of engaging with diverse populations and the need for better outreach efforts.

Reparations Commission Discusses Recruitment Challenges

Dr. Rosado discusses challenges in recruitment and representation with suggestions to broaden eligibility beyond Greenbelt residents and reframe the approach to engage people. She emphasizes the need for community healing, building trust and having inclusive dialogues. Council members express gratitude for the progress made and the expertise provided by Tribesy. The importance of staff support without overly driving the process and the need for a healing process rather than just producing a report are discussed.

Informational Items

Mayor Jordan stated that the city received a $200,000 Bond Bill from State Senator Alonzo Washington for replacing elevators. Mr. Salmerón shared that one of the Community Centers elevators would be replaced. The meeting ended at 9:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Shaniya Lashley-Mullen

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Deputy City Clerk