

Reparations Task Force Public Meeting

Location: Zoom (remote)

Date: 9/20/2023

- Agenda:
 - Call to order & roll call
 - Those present:
 - Na'tisha Mills
 - Carrie Mays
 - Damani Williams
 - Dorothea Jones
 - L'Merchie Frazier
 - Denilson Fanfan
 - Chairman Feaster
 - Presentation on Request for Proposals for historical research partners to support the Task Force
 - General public comment
 - Adjournment
- **RFP Presentation**
 - Per ordinance, the Task Force's work comprises 3 phases:
 - Where are we now? RTF has completed conversations and revision of the RFP seeking academic research partners
 - A total of \$600,000 has been allocated as funding for the work ahead
 - RFP will release on **Monday Sept 25 2023**
 - **Deadline for submissions: Nov. 6 2023**
 - **Research partners will be chosen by December 2023**
 - Contracts for research services will run for **6 months, and each contract has an option for extension for an additional 6 months**
 - **Scope of Work**
 - Detail the history of the ties between the trans-Atlantic slave trade, racial slavery from the Global South and its intimate connections to Boston's specific histories of slavery, the history of Boston and its African descended peoples and communities, and the legacy of these historical ties within Boston's economic, political, and social history
 - The report will center the City of Boston and its history¹⁶² and its relationship with other institutions
 - The report will be divided into 6 sections across **6 units of study**

- 1) 1620-1690 -> Boston and Bostonian's economic growth and involvement in the trans-Atlantic slave trade and trans-Atlantic slave economies
- 2) 1690-1750 → Boston and Bostonian's economic growth and involvement in the trans-Atlantic slave trade and trans-Atlantic slave economies
- 3) 1750-1790 → Boston and Bostonian's economic growth and involvement in the trans-Atlantic slave trade and trans-Atlantic slave economies
- 4) 1790-1860 → Boston and Bostonian's economic growth and involvement in the trans-Atlantic slave trade and trans-Atlantic slave economies and their legacies
- 5) 1860-1940 → the economic, social, and political legacies of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and trans-Atlantic slave economies
- 6) 1940-Present → the economic, social, and political legacies of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and trans-Atlantic slave economies
- Structure of report
 - Research partners will be expected to accomplish the following:
 - 1. Produce an original work of historical research for each of the units of study to which they have applied
 - 2. Produce a comprehensive literature review and historical narrative of the City of Boston's historical ties to the transAtlantic slave trade and the institution and legacies of slavery from 1620-present
- What will candidates submit?
 - Potential research partners must submit an application with:
 - 1. A proposal for an original work of historical research based in 1 of 6 units of study
 - A proposal for a comprehensive review of secondary literature in the same 1 of 6 units
 - A work of previously written peer reviewed research by the respondent
 - **One contract will be awarded for each unit of study;** if an applicant wishes to do research for more than one unit of study, they must submit a separate application for each unit of study they are applying to cover
- **Criteria for evaluation**

- Proposal quality
 - Response to the scope of work
 - Organizational background
 - Thematic expertise
 - General expertise
 - Cross-historical expertise
 - Community engagement and equitable practices
 - Interview and demonstration
- **Outcome:** this report will provide shared understanding of the City's role in the history and legacy of slavery.
- **RTF Deliberations**
 - **Carrie Mays:** what will the community engagement outreach be and who will be implementing that?
 - Bitters Conference for the public to learn and ask questions
 - Thorough Q&A will be released
 - Researchers as points of contact
 - Online website and social media
 - Boston Public Library locations to have information
 - **L'Merchie Frazier:** Is there a residency requirement for research partners?
 - Answer: no, there is no residency requirement – research partners can apply from anywhere
 - **Carrie Mays:** when will outreach and dissemination begin?
 - As soon as the RFP is released on Monday (9/25)
 - **Chairman Feaster:** emphasizing the importance of being grounded in the history as well as the task force's ability to discern the best candidates for research partners
 - **Chairman Feaster asks for a motion with regards to the RFP**
 - L'Merchie Frazier: I move that the current RFP be accepted for the approval to be dispersed
 - Seconded by Dorothea Jones
 - Votes of the Task Force members:
 - Denilson Fanfan: yes
 - L'Merchie Frazier yes
 - Dorothea Jones; yes
 - Carrie Mays: yes
 - Na'tisha Mills: yes
 - Damania Williams: yes
 - Chairman Feaster: yes
 - The current RFP has officially been approved and accepted by the Reparations Task Force

- **Dorothea Jones:** request for task force members to receive a hard copy of the RFP prior to the official release on Monday
- **Carrie Mays:** are task force members allowed to be a part of the outreach and distribution process?
 - Answer: Yes, TF members should be participating in outreach, but should direct specific questions about proposals and applications to Ajay Singh
- **Open for public comment/questions:**
 - **Antonia Edwards:** what prompted the change from the original RFP which qualified American freedmen and women descendants to the Black American freedpeople, which puts the proposal under threat of being struck down due to it being a “race-based” qualifier
 - The decision was made because the Task Force chose to interpret the SCOTUS opinion as only relating to schools as well as to increase the specificity so only those Black Boston residents could be eligible and to prevent non-Black residents from attempting to qualify
 - **Cheryce Cryer:** former Boston resident and current reparations advocate; helped to form LA reparations commissions; encourages Task Force to remember that reparations is based on legal precedent, and to include the Commissioner of the Reparations Task Force in California. Also stated that policy change is not effective reparations, only direct cash payments to descendants of chattel slavery is.
 - **Reggie Stewart:** Is the Task Force responsible for selecting the researchers?
 - Answer: the selection committee will be composed of the four RFP subgroup members, and approximately five City representatives.
 - Followup question: what will happen if the Task Force and City of Boston are in opposition to this decision?
 - Answer: that is unlikely, but the team would work through a process to come to a consensus.
 - **Nyhiem Way:** president and co-founder of the United Sons and Daughters of Freedmen, work with several reparations organizations throughout the country as well as Kamilah Moore with the California Reparations Task Force; concerned about the language in the RFP conflicting with the SCOTUS ruling against affirmative action
 - Chairman Feaster: the City staff will investigate this topic and the Chairman notes the concern, it remains to be seen if researchers come to the same conclusion on the legality of the utilization of “Black” in the RFP

- **Edward Shaw III:** concerned if the Task Force will ensure that descendants of chattel slavery (Black historians, HBCUs, etc) will be able to be awarded the contracts if they choose to apply
 - Answer: the incorporation of persons that have been affected by slavery and discrimination has been included in the RFP
- **Carrie Mays:** motion to change the language in the RFP back to “American freedwomen and freedmen” from “Black freedpeople”
 - The legal counsel will review it, but the RFP has already been voted on and there was no second to the motion
- Chairman Feaster thanked the Task Force, City of Boston representatives, and the public for their work and participation. The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 PM.