



Agenda
Athens Justice and Memory Project
Team Meeting #18
Wednesday, June 15, 2022
5:00- 6:00pm
City Hall, Room 301

- A. Hattie Thomas Whitehead called this meeting to order by stating this team was assembled in September 2020 to work on avenues of atonement outlined in the Linnentown Project resolution.
- B. Moment of silence for Linnentown descendants
 - a. The justice and memory team took a moment of silence to acknowledge and show respect to those who were no longer with us.
- C. Ms. Thomas Whitehead stated that the minutes of the last meeting were distributed to members in advance of the meeting and asked if there are any amendments to the minutes.
 - a. Ms. Thomas Whitehead made a motion to accept the minutes and it was seconded by Charlene Marsh; the minutes were approved with no opposition or abstinent.
- D. Ms. Thomas Whitehead opened the floor for Mayor Kelly Girtz to speak about the charge and why this team was created.
 - a. Mayor Girtz said that the creation of this team was pursuant to two pieces: the first was a resolution approved by the entire commission to pursue avenues of justice and atonement around the urban renewal work in Athens and the second was the charge from the Mayor to gather specifically around the Cloverhurst and Baxter areas, which are the Linnentown neighborhood. Mayor Girtz thanked Ms. Thomas Whitehead, Inclusion Officer Gardiner, and Assistant Manager Jones for working on this throughout the pandemic.
- E. Ms. Thomas Whitehead stated she appreciates the tough discussions they have had as a team in order to move forward. She stated that one of the first big accomplishments they had was to get an apology for what had happened that led to the erasure of their community. To get that from Mayor Girtz in the form of a proclamation read on the steps was a historic moment for the city of Athens. This team has also made recommendations that all the Athens-Clarke County employees receive at least \$15 per hour; that was approved last year.

- a. Ms. Thomas Whitehead opened the floor for questions, hearing none, she continued.
 - b. Ms. Thomas Whitehead stated that the Athens Justice and Memory team are currently working on the Walk of Recognition and acknowledged Dr. Jennifer Rice to give an update on that piece.
- F. Dr. Rice stated that the original Wall of Recognition was changed to a Walk of Recognition because they needed more space for what they are trying to accomplish with this project. As a refresher, the Walk of Recognition is four points along South Finley Street. On the corner of Baxter Street and Finley Street, there will be an art installation called the Linnentown Mosaic. As you proceed south down Finley, there will be three historical signs that could be interactive for the public; there will be a partnership with an interpretive design firm. These documents exist online with points and maps. The mosaic piece has been conceived as a participatory art installation. This has been a collaboration between this team, the community, UGA classes, and the descendants. Last semester, UGA students did several community workshops where they got input on design ideas. This semester, another UGA class, under the direction of Dr. Bustle, were making pieces for the art installation. In every community workshop, people learn about the history of Linnentown.
- a. Ms. Thomas Whitehead asked Dr. Rice to talk about the social media.
 - b. Dr. Rice explained that there is a social media page about the mosaic on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter and those pages probably have not been as active as they could be; Dr. Rice said they can begin posting updates when they have events. The handle is @linnentownmosaic.
 - c. Ms. Thomas Whitehead asked if there were any questions.
 - d. Ms. Thomas Whitehead personally thanked Dr. Rice and Dr. Bustle for working on this project.
- G. Ms. Thomas Whitehead gave an update on the Athens-Clarke County Center for Racial Justice and Black Futures, which is referred to as The History Center. Ms. Thomas Whitehead has been organizing people around the work that needs to be done in the form of putting a public historian, a community outreach person, a strategist, a financial leader, and a grant writing team in place - all of those people said yes and they are ready to go to work. Ms. Thomas Whitehead stated The History Center has applied for a 501(c)(3). In time, they hope to do an RFP for a floor in the building.
- a. Someone was concerned about wheelchair accessibility and Ms. Thomas Whitehead stated all that is being worked on.
 - b. Someone else asked about the reason for the RFP; Assistant Manager Jones stated that there is a SPLOST project for the renovation of the Costa Building and there is more demand than there is space. The RFP process is being utilized to ensure everyone has a fair chance to get a space in the building.

Inclusion Office

- c. Inclusion Officer Gardiner clarified what an RFP is and why it is necessary for this project.
- H. Ms. Thomas Whitehead opened the floor to Charlene Marsh to discuss the subgroup she is leading.
 - a. Ms. Marsh explained that her subgroup is focused on developing recommendations for how this local government can address past wrongs when it comes to urban renewal, specifically through funds for affordable housing development and funds for the Black History Center. There has been no official meeting for this group yet. There has been a discussion with county staff from the Manager's Office, Attorney's Office, and the Inclusion Office to get guidance about the scope of work for this group. Ms. Marsh wanted clarity on the status of that group.
 - b. Inclusion Officer Gardiner explained that subcommittees of the Athens Justice and Memory Project are Economic Losses, Walk of Recognition, and Center for Racial Justice and Black Futures with leads that are members of the Athens Justice and Memory Project. Those leads can consult out and get input from experts in the community, but the majority of the work and the recommendations must come from those members on the Athens Justice and Memory Project.
 - c. Assistant Manager Jones stated that having a quorum is a key in public meetings. If you have a quorum, it has to be a public meeting.
- I. Ms. Thomas Whitehead asked if there were any other questions. Hearing none, she asked for a motion to adjourn. Motion to adjourn was made and seconded.
- J. Meeting adjourned at 5:32pm.