

NRSC Meeting Minutes: Tuesday, January 6, 2026 5:00 – 7:00 P.M.

Call to Order & Declaration of a Quorum

The meeting was called to order. There was a quorum; Felicia, Garrick, Renika, Jasmine, Bill present.

Ancestral Acknowledgement

Approval of Minutes

Tabled to Feb. Meeting; Approval of minutes will be moved to the next meeting

Public Comment

Jo-Ella Tarbuton in public comment: Went to a Nov. 18 meeting. Noted a public comment that was very harmful. "Lets not inflame division" the work asks us to expand our voice and provide space without hierarchies.

Reminders and announcements

Solicitor Alan Seewald will be in the next meeting (FEB) to discuss city meeting laws.

NRSC Chairs were asked to check in about the administrative assistant position. Encourage Commissioners to send out job postings for the admin assistant position when it's posted.

Discussion

Joint Bill: The joint bill (H. 1753) - enduring effects of racial injustice, most notably the black-white racial wealth gap. Which is the cumulative result of centuries of enslavement, economic exclusion and discriminatory policy. While the work begins at the local level, we recognize that achieving justice on the scale required will demand bold action at the state and federal levels.

Bill led this portion of discussion —This is quite straightforward, in the Dec. 2024 report there was a rec that city council should endorse support for the pending bill of commonwealth engaging in the study of reparations. This was upheld in the June report. Bill reads a section from that report. This bill is now pending regarding the study of reparations with many complexities.

The question was raised if we want to adopt a recommendation this evening urging the City Council and Mayor to formally support efforts towards statewide and national reparations initiatives. Affirming Northampton's commitment to advancing equity. Not only within our city limits, but as part of the broader movement for justice. It is now pending in the Massachusetts legislature, the bill that is generally identified as. Short for House Bill H17. 53. The bill is in fact quite detailed. Legislative proposal with regard to the study of reparations. It's a quite detailed document and is very much the bill that it was envisioned when this Commission said that Northampton should support statewide efforts for reparations.

Continued Discussion:

Renika is not ready— “members shall be drawn from diverse backgrounds” has real concerns about a state body that doesn’t actually support the people that it is trying to support.

We may need some language to put forward to the city council. Could state concerns we have.

Bill suggests that we call on the city council to bring back the addition to its recommendation to change that piece.

“We support this along with the strong recommendation that the statewide commission should be a majority Black commission.”

<https://malegislature.gov/Bills/194/H1753>

Renika thinks this should be a caveat, but this should be carefully crafted.

Garrick recommends that there are other orgs that support this legislation:

-interfaith

-Historic Northampton?

Bill: Who wants to be the sponsor counselor?

Garrick: Could schedule a meeting to discuss language and then move it forward.

Jasmine: Thinks Native people should be involved.

Next Steps To Do:

Read this bill, and come back with language for February.

Someone in touch with rep dawn??? About how much time we can take with this.

Tabled and return it to the top of the agenda for next meeting.

Renika: to draft

Bill: to reach out about the timeline.

TABLED

Renika led discussion on continued study —

Additional community engagement, interviews, admin assistant.

Suggestion: wait for the admin assistant and then start interviews after that. Where is the information for the admin position?

Renika agreed to reach out to Marsha and Emikan about the interviews for updates. [What has been done, who has been interviewed and how many more interviews are left?]

The question was raised about what do people actually want to do in terms of continued study and how do we want to move forward?

Subcommittee and public hearings:

Discuss with tabled to the meeting with Solicitor Seewald .

Outreach: We need a process that includes a formal opt-in/out for this and other resources obtained through NRSC. i.e. sign up for a NRSC mailing list, a link on the website to inquire about NRSC updates and events etc.

Garrick suggests more conversation on a public record document of where we have done this work. We are out here excavating.

Jasmine: Is this a spreadsheet?

Garrick: Maybe! A document noting the outreach efforts.

Felicia: The process and practices of the list will be tabled for meeting w/ conversation with Solicitor —on agenda for Feb.

Jasmine to make a spreadsheet for this.

Monetary Recommendations:

Bill: There has been an unexpected advantage of this commission's work going on as long as it has. We said we would address this in our reports.

There have been more studies on this since our June report which we could reference. The way to make this manageable could be to look at what the other municipalities have done, and what their conclusions have been. Boston, Amherst, and others across the country that can be referenced.

Suggestion: Collect those reports and check on the conclusions on what others are able to do, and what they said they will do. We can make decisions based on that underlying body of work.

Discussion:

In earlier days of the commission, we have looked at the various municipalities. Could help new commissioners dive into this.

Chairs to come up with a list of places, and then pick newer folk to research.

We all received an inquiry from an academic group that said they were putting together a study. Which group was this?

We already have a list. Felicia will add it to that to-do list and bring it forward to the next meeting and reach out to Ousman.

Garrick led discussion on — Recommendations, implementation, pace, priorities, partnerships & next steps for Juneteenth, city-sponsored events, proclamations & City Council endorsements Juneteenth and city sponsored events: Garrick will have more information in February. The energy is there, but the meeting of the youths has not happened yet.

City council endorsements: recommend our body commerce forward and try to discuss the work with the new city council. Give a refresher. Discuss our needs.

Garrick: Some of the things we have are going to take money, and we should take the time to do present things in small portions that the city council can help with.

Kendall may show up at the next meeting.

Renika: A question to Garrick— can we help the youth commission with funding?

Garrick: A great use of our funds! The youth are eager. We can help fund them with the website and paying for printing posters.

Can we add a link to our website on the city page to the youth commission. Let's have the city's support in this.

Northampton Interfaith Roundtable made recommendations for funds. We could reach back out to them.

Endorsements from the city in terms of Juneteenth have been made.

There have been many resolutions passed by NH city council and we can always take from that language!

To do:

Ask Alan Seewald about revenue and solicitation, among the other questions highlighted earlier.

Quorum Size, Composition+

Garrick: looked at the house bill and how it breaks down. It looks similar to ours. The thing that stood out is that they establish exactly what a quorum is. Suggests that we add something like that.

Seewald to help establish what we could do in regards to that.

How do you leave a commission?

Suggestion to add a clause about vacancies.

Garrick suggested at the last city council meeting to have a schedule for the year and contact chairs to check in and say the work that they're doing.

Suggested Agenda Items For Next Meeting were made and noted
Motion to Adjourn 2nd, Adjournment