

Borough of Carlisle
Truth & Reconciliation Commission
April 23, 2022
Retreat Minutes

Members present: Emily Kelahan (co-chair), TaWanda Hunter-Stallworth (co-chair), Raff Donelson, Andrew Razanauskas, and Dorene Wilbur.

Members absent: Lou Werdebach

Also in attendance: Sean Shultz (mayor and liaison)

Co-chair Kelahan called the meeting to order at 2:15 P.M.

Co-chair Kelahan posed that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission may be more of a task force than a commission and whether the TRC could complete its work by the deadline under its authorizing resolution. Commissioner Donelson analogized the TRC to the Warren Commission. Co-chair Stallworth noted that the Commission could request more time.

Co-chair Kelahan stated the political importance of moving the recommendations forward by the end of the year. Commissioner Wilbur asked which seats were next up for election in Carlisle to which Mayor Shultz responded that the seats of Councilors Crampsie, Stuby, Hicks and Mellen would be up for election in 2023.

Co-chair Kelahan asked if there was a consensus that the Commission should continue to plan to meet the December 2022 deadline and all commissioners indicated approval.

Commissioner Wilbur noted that the planned speaker could impact the Commission's work. Commissioner Donelson responded that the speaker would be presenting in October 2022, and he suggested greater focus on consistently adding to the report over the coming months and focusing less on event planning. Commissioner Razanauskas agreed on focusing on the report and to ask for my time if needed in November.

Co-chair Kelahan recommended keeping story gathering limited because it would not get the Commission to the goal but to leave that as a potential pilot program. She noted there were only about seven months left to pull together the report.

Co-chair Stallworth suggested a report to Council in June or early summer. Commissioner Razanauskas suggested it should be a simple oral report to Council. Co-chair Kelahan asked who the ultimate audience of the report would be, council or the public, concluding it would not be Council because Council is already apprised of the ongoing work, but that they may not be prepared to engage with the public. Commissioners Wilbur and Razanauskas both agreed that public feedback could be valuable. Co-chair Stallworth stated that the update report to Council should be simple and could be made at the June meeting. Commissioner Donelson thought it might be premature to make such a report, and Commissioner Wilbur agreed, but thought an orally stated, bullet-pointed report could be made. Co-chair Kelahan asked where the Commission stood on this question. Co-chair Stallworth and

Commissioner Donelson stated that more work would need to be done before making a report. There was a consensus to wait until another time to consider such an update report.

Commissioner Donelson asked whether the Community Engagement Committee has gathered public feedback that would have provided the Commission information that can help identify goals and recommendations. Co-chair Kelahan questioned whether there is a need to close the gap between public feedback due to a lack of productive feedback because the feedback reaffirms the need for the work but does not create an actionable direction.

Co-chairs Kelahan and Stallworth discussed a recommendation for law enforcement having a residency requirement having come from research rather than public feedback.

Co-chair Kelahan noted that public feedback is affirming in the direction the Commission is going and that the path from public feedback to action is less clear. Co-chair Stallworth disagreed. Commissioners Razanauskas and Wilbur thought there has not been sufficient feedback thus far upon which to take action. Commissioner Donelson stated that feedback could inform goals and outcomes if it is provided. Commissioner Razanauskas stated that there is not much the Community Engagement Committee has to offer to date, but that the data and research could aid in developing public feedback. Commissioners Wilbur and Donelson reminded the Commission of the work done getting information and feedback with Carlisle Police Chief Landis and also with high school students. Commissioner Donelson mentioned police academy tuition assistance and

Co-chair Kelahan suggested the challenge of gaining rapport and positionality may be impeding broader public feedback. Commissioner Razanauskas stated there is a continued need for the Commission to continue outreach and be more deliberate about how to enter public conversations. Commissioner Wilbur suggested starting with the people you know in Carlisle. Co-chair Kelahan suggested this could all distill into a recommendation to hire a chief diversity officer or similar position. Commissioner Donelson stated two potential recommendations for the May meeting: (1) Having someone who could build rapport do story collection beyond December like an ombuds or diversity person; and (2) collecting data about policing and improving police-citizen interactions like residency requirements or other ways, including ways to improve recruitment.

Co-chair Stallworth asked what other recommendations there might be. Co-chair Kelahan suggested there should be a look at the Borough budget and determine what hiring could fit within the budget and meet the need for community engagement. Commissioner Razanauskas asked whether there is a real demand. Co-chair Kelahan stated that trauma can make it difficult for people to see what the need is for themselves.

Co-chair Kelahan raised the need to decide division of labor. Co-chair Stallworth asked what other potential recommendations might be out there so far. Co-chair Kelahan mentioned an arts and education committee to examine monuments and other similar items along with education at the street level. She also reminded the Commission of her basket concept of areas of focus for recommendations, and she stated a possible recommendation that the Commission or similar body could continue to exist in some form.

Mayor Shultz mentioned the police department's change in data management systems that might be an opportunity to better collect data.

Co-chair Kelahan returned to the question of potential recommendations noting the future of the Commission as one of the last projects. Commissioner Razanauskas agreed and thought they might think about what something like Thinking About Race could look like being continued by the Commission. Co-chair Stallworth stated there is a lack of coordination in Carlisle among organizations combatting racism, and that coordination could be the ongoing work of the committee and that the Commission could become a committee of those organizations. Co-chair Kelahan suggested the community engagement person could help coordinate those organizations.

Co-chair Stallworth said that Council probably should not have moved so quickly to form the Commission and should have continued with the plan to have a series of town hall meetings. Co-chair Kelahan stated that perhaps the final report should note the handling of the town hall meetings and rush to form the Commission. Co-chair Stallworth stated that she and the town hall planning committee had planned a series of meetings focused on several categories, but that during the first town hall a suggestion of a truth and reconciliation commission. She suggested that the town halls stopped and the Commission was formed to avoid Council being put on the spot to take responsibility, and that there should be a reckoning in the report of this. Co-chair Kelahan offered that the recommendations could return to that needed reckoning. Mayor Shultz agreed and noted there was a sense of urgency to take action, but there could be a return to that town hall type of engagement. Co-chair Kelahan suggested that the report could be the best way to get back to the issues that need to be resolved and that there would be a need to have an ongoing venue for the type of catharsis needed.

Co-chair Stallworth asked for a refresher on the baskets, which Co-chair Kelahan then listed. Co-chair Kelahan reminded the Commission that education was not included as a basket because there is no through-line from the Commission to the school district. Co-chair Stallworth argued that there could be influence. Commissioner Wilbur asked whether there are formal meetings between the Borough and the Carlisle Area School District to which Mayor Shultz answered that there are not any such meetings. Commissioner Donelson stated that the diversity officer could coordinate that relationship.

Co-chair Kelahan returned to discussing the timeline for finalizing recommendations per category, listing Arts and Public Education, Law Enforcement, Housing and Neighborhoods, and Commerce. She also stated the Commission would need to make a recommendation on the future of the Commission and possibly the hiring of a staff person, a chief diversity officer, for community engagement.

Co-chair Kelahan reminded the Commission that education was not included as a basket because there is no through-line from the Commission to the school district. Co-chair Stallworth argued that there could be influence. Commissioner Wilbur asked whether there are formal meetings between the Borough and the Carlisle Area School District to which Mayor Shultz answered that there are not any such meetings. Commissioner Donelson stated that the diversity officer could coordinate that relationship.

Co-chair Kelahan asked whether addressing of baskets throughout the meetings should be front-loaded and refined in later months. After discussion, the Commission agreed to this plan.

Commissioner Donelson suggested October to be used as flex time instead of fine tuning.

Co-chair Kelahan stated the plan to have Commissioner Donelson report out in May on Law Enforcement recommendation before his departure from the Commission and to outline the results of

today's retreat at the May meeting. She also raised whether the two subcommittees were still needed, particularly Community Engagement at this stage.

The Commission then diverged into a discussion on members and public attending the Thinking About Race. The Commission was informed by Co-Chair Stallworth that the only planned events are in May and October. Co-chair Stallworth mentioned the Community Engagement Committee's responsibility for the final Thinking About Race sessions and the May session on intergenerational trauma.

Commissioner Wilbur mentioned a July Hope Station/YWCA event on race that she could attend and suggested that the Commission, or only her, could create a space to learn and share about intergenerational trauma that could be used for the Commission's work. Commissioner Razanauskas agreed. Co-chair Stallworth raised a concern whether this was adding too much work for the Commission at a time when they need to work on details of the recommendations, and that it might only be a passive listening role. Commissioner Wilbur summarized prior sessions and stated she would be there anyway to be a passive listener, with which Commissioner Razanauskas agreed. Commissioner Wilbur, based on issues at the intersection of health and race, recommended the category of health to be added to the baskets, which Co-chair Kelahan added to the list.

Commissioner Donelson stated it may be best to understand the role of events that might continue on beyond the Commission's report versus "one-off" events. Commissioner Razanauskas and Co-chair Kelahan agreed with that suggestion. Co-chair Kelahan went further and stated that the ombuds or diversity chair could continue that work.

Co-chair Kelahan returned to outlining the division of labor month-by-month going forward. After discussion, Co-chair Kelahan summarized the agenda plan going forward as follows:

May—The agenda will include the approval of minutes, a summary of the revised workplan, and a report by Commissioner Donelson on the Law Enforcement recommendations. The Thinking About Race event would also take place in May and the Commission would work to develop question prompts for the event.

June—A report on Arts and Public Education recommendations, a review of committee assignments, old business, and experts to be invited in the future.

July—A report on Housing and Neighborhoods recommendations and old business.

August—A report on Commerce recommendations guided by Commissioner Werdebach, and old business.

September—A report on Health and Wellness recommendations, and old business.

October—Thinking About Race questions for that month's event, Indigenous Peoples' Day, flex time to fine tune any lingering issues, and old business.

November—a report on the future of the Commission and a possible recommendation for the hiring of a chief diversity officer, and any old business.

Commissioner Donelson suggested subcommittees for each basket. Incoming Commissioner Jerry Stirkey's absence was noted by Commissioner Stallworth and she suggested that some space should be

left on subcommittees for him to have some choice. Co-chair Kelahan, while asking for volunteers for each category summarized the following assignments:

Law Enforcement—Donelson/Stallworth

Art and Public Education—Razanauskas

Housing and Neighborhoods—Wilbur/Razanauskas

Commerce—Werdebach/Stirkey

Health and Wellness—Wilbur

Future of the Commission and chief diversity officer—Stallworth/Kelahan

Co-chair Kelahan called for any additional issues.

Commissioner Donelson raised the issue that the Commission may want to consider use of its budget, including for speakers. Co-chair Stallworth asked whether budgeting should be discussed at the time the chief diversity officer is discussed. Co-chair Kelahan stated it would be too late in the calendar.

Commissioner Donelson stated that use of outside experts could aid the work of the Commission and feels there is great value in it although getting experts takes time. Co-chair Kelahan suggested in June, the Commission should discuss identifying an expert to meet with the Commission. Co-chair Stallworth said she wanted to avoid the problem that occurred scheduling Colleen Murphy by having experts approved by the Commission before committing to them. Co-chair Kelahan stated that bringing it back to the Commission is too burdensome. Commissioner Razanauskas suggested keying the experts to the baskets. Co-chair Stallworth agreed with the suggestion.

Commissioner Donelson suggested experts should be brought in on a basket category before the category report is due.

Co-chair Kelahan suggested that planned experts would be discussed per basket category. Co-chair Stallworth noted the need for budgeted money to show commitment by the Borough, noted the previously prepared budget by her and Commissioner Donelson, and asked about setting a cap per subcommittee. Co-chair Kelahan said the current budget that was outlined previously would take care of the Commission's needs. Commissioner Donelson stated there was at least money for three experts, and that he would not need one for law enforcement. Co-chair Stallworth suggested no more than \$4,000 per basket, and a consensus was apparent.

Commissioner Wilbur brought up details of an email from Stephanie Taylor about a needed press release for Thinking About Race and said she would take care of it.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:07 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

Sean M. Shultz