



Public Meeting 4/26/21

NYC Racial Justice Commission

APPEARANCES:

- Jennifer Jones Austin, Chair
- Henry Garrido, Vice Chair
- K. Bain
- Ana Bermudez, Esq
- Rev. Fred Davie
- Lurie Daniel Favors, Esq.
- Darrick Hamilton
- Christopher Kui
- Yesenia Mata
- J. Philip Thompson
- Jo-Ann Yoo
- Anusha Venkataraman
- Eden Mulate
- Melanie Ash

Jennifer Jones Austin (JJA) 00:00

I guess the best way to say this is how I guess blessed, I feel in this moment. To be able to pour my energies into this commission and perhaps you all feel the same as me. The last week's verdict in the case of Derek Chauvin, the killing of George Floyd. As I thought about it and I shared some of this, I posted about it. You know, it felt to me like a battle -- you know a long and hard-fought battle -- that was one, but the war is you know, is still underway and honestly, the Ma'Khia Bryant, just you know in that Moment actually brought it home all the more that we for a moment, you know, saw justice in the force served for, for George Floyd but justice still has yet to be achieved for everyone, and it's just for me. I feel blessed to be able to pour my energies, my pain, and my hope into this commission, and I hope that you all will, will feel and find the same, that this is a place where you can bring the concerns that are ever present on your mind, as it concerns racial injustice in America to the table, and together we can do some good. So again, this is the second meeting – Good to see you Commissioner Favors, Favors Daniel, good to see you Favors Daniel. And what we're gonna unpack the charter, some of the charter in this meeting. We're gonna talk about the Framing for our work but first I just want to remind everybody of what we did last week, last last week, week and a half ago and for those in the public who are joining us, the first meeting, during that meeting we introduced the mission and the mandate of the charter commission, the scope of our work. We talked about, like put out some initial ideas around framing, which has since been enhanced in conversations with several of you. We're going to expand upon that today. We also introduced and appointed our Executive Director Anusha Venkataraman, and the Commissioners had an opportunity to introduce themselves and share some of their backgrounds and the perspectives, the varied

perspectives, that, that you all bring to the commission. I implore, persons who are joining us for the first time, to access the last meeting on Youtube and you can possibly also get it by going to the, the website for the Racial Justice Commission. It's just a good thing to hear from some of the Commissioners and hear about their experiences, and their walks, and that help inform this moment and what they bring to these conversations, and ultimately to what will be the product, the work product of the Commission. We have minutes from the meeting it was, let's see the meeting the minutes, it was April 19th I guess that was, and all of the Commissioners should have gotten the minutes. They are posted online, and this is for the public who's joining us -- they're posted online at www.one.nyc.gov/asset/charter/download/pdf/meetings-hearing/4-15-21-publicmeeting-minutes.pdf I don't know if there's a chat, maybe we should put that in the chat for people who are joining us because there's no way in the world anybody caught that, right? The minutes, we need to review the minutes. I'm trusting that all the Commissioners have seen the minutes and I will ask for a motion to approve the minutes. A motion to approve. Thank you. A second? Second. All right, are there any questions or comments, changes? Alright. Hearing none, by a voice vote, all in favor of the approval of the minutes, please say aye. Any nays? Alright, the minutes are approved. Alright, so what we're going to do during this, this public meeting is have a conversation about -- The first, we're going to meet some of the people who joined us. There are several people who were not on the call in the public meeting when we first met but they've now joined us as a staff for the Commission and so I'm going to turn the meeting over to our Executive Director to introduce them and then to walk us through the agenda.

JJA 05:09

And what I do want to say before I hand things over is you'll be presented with a lot of information today. As Commissioners and what I want you to feel very comfortable and feel invited at every turn to do is to jump in and share your thoughts and your perspectives. The first part of the meeting is, Anusha will speak to in a minute, is going to be looking at the framework again for our work. As we go through that, jp right in, when we get to the second part of the meeting where we're going to be looking at the charter and again, Anusha is going to go into that in more detail. I would ask that you allow for the Presentation to be given in full before providing feedback. Good deal? Yup, okay. Anusha, please.

Anusha Venkataraman (AV) 06:00

Thank you so much Chair. It's so wonderful to see your faces back here today after our first meeting, a successful one I think where we got to know you and talk about the mission and vision as the Commission has been formed. We'll really get deeper into that today, so I'm very excited to share that updated framework with, with all of you. But first, I wanted to introduce you to some of the staff that we now have on board since we last had our meeting on the 15th. We have had four staff members join the Commission so I'm going to introduce each of you. And you know you can give a little wave, say Hi. First off, our General Counsel, Melanie Ash. Welcome Melanie! We have our Deputy Chief of Staff, Tashawn Morgan, who was on the last meeting but he hadn't formally started yet. He has now formally started supporting the work of the Commission. We have Eden Mulate, who is our Policy Advisor. You'll be hearing from her a little bit later in the meeting. And lastly we have our Communications Director, Steph Halpin. You can't see on screen because she is managing the streaming of this meeting over to Youtube. You'll get a chance to meet them in the coming weeks as well as additional staff that will be joining us, hopefully by the next meeting as we grow and expand upon the skillset and perspectives that we bring to the support the Commission's work with the staff. I'm so excited to be here today to sort of deepen this work and, and move to the next phase of our work from the sort of introductory setting up to okay how are we actually going to do this work. We'll move

from this meeting today where we'll introduce this framework and give you an overview of the city's Charter too. In subsequent weeks, talking about how Reconciliation can be a part of this process before moving towards public engagement. We'll dip into that a little bit later at the end of the meeting, when I'll give you some, an update and a preview of what to expect with community engagement as well as some guidance for you all as Commissioners since you are probably getting folks who are interested in following the Commission's work. Interested in engaging at some point and we want to make sure you have the information that you need to have those conversations effectively, and make sure they are tracked. Eden will be screensharing during today's meeting so at this point Eden, I think you can bring up the agenda slide.

AV 09:04

Wonderful, so I'm doing the report and introduction to staff right now, then we'll go into the Commission Framework Presentation. That will be from myself and from Eden, then we will have Counsel to the Mayor Kapil Longani on to present an overview of the charter. Very excited to share that with you today, that will really help us to concretize some of the work of the Commission. Then we'll have a presentation for you and a brief overview of Chapter 68 or Conflicts of Interest from General Counsel Melanie Ash. And lastly, we will touch on Community Engagement. Any questions or comments on this agenda before we dive into our first presentation?

AV 10:04

No? Alright, so we'll go right into it. I think we'll keep the slides up to share but we'll also pause between presentations and take the slides down so that we can see everyone's faces for the discussion. So given that our, our commission has a broad mandate -- we are tackling racial justice and racial equity in the city, we're also mandated as a Charter Revision Commission to look at the entirety of the Commission. That is a broad mandate, there are many places that we can start with that work. So we work through a way to propose, to structure and focus our work in such a way that we can arrive at proposals and arrive at recommendations that ultimately go to the voters, that are sufficiently broad to have a structural impact and that are both specific and concrete in terms of what the actual change to the charter is. So we've developed this framework as a way to work through this question and a way to sort of test specific issues that may come up as they do. Jennifer, I don't know if at any point you want to share any background as to why we developed this framework. You're, you're welcome to or to chime in during the presentation as well. We go to the next slide. So we have shared a version of our mission but we wanted to come back to it here today and share an update to it as well. So the Racial Justice Commission, empowered with the legal authority of a Charter Revision Commission, will seize the transformative potential of this moment to, in history to identify and propose structural changes and significant policy reforms that will advance racial justice and equity, and begin to dismantle structural racism for all New Yorkers. This is something that I think you've heard in in the previous meeting and we developed in the formation of the Commission itself. But we have made a small but significant change. Previously it said "history to identify structural changes," but we added "and proposed" because we want to make sure we're not just figuring out what might those changes be but actually putting them forward to voters in New York City and can have plans in place for them to be acted upon. What are, our vision is as a Commission, what are we driving towards -- We're driving towards racial equity, and what that means is that whiteness is not a privilege and race is not a determinant of outcomes. And that government moreover takes responsibility for what is within its power and is held accountable for equitable outcomes. This is not by any means a comprehensive vision of

what racial equity could be, but this is what is important to keep in mind in the context of our Commission's work. You can move on to the next slide. We thought it important to define some key terms at the outset of our presentation and you know I think we're all, everyone is coming into this with a lot of work in identifying the ways that we can dismantle systemic and structural racism but we wanted to make sure that we are naming the problems we are trying to solve for, and that we're coming up with and sharing definitions both with Commissioners and with the General Public that we can use as a starting place. So the working definition of systemic racism that we're using, is that "systemic racism is embedded in structural institutional and cultural norms and conditions designed to -- design and upheld to deny power and access and opportunity to black brown immigrant and other marginalized communities in order to maintain an inequitable society that advantages white people."

AV 14:28

So that, I hope is a direct enough definition and I'm noticing a typo that we need to fix, but we will go in and do it I think "upheld to deny power access and opportunity" there's an extra "and" in there. I don't know if there's any comments or questions on this before we move on. I know we've had some good conversations with Jennifer about this definition and how we're talking about what systemic racism is so I wanted to open it out here.

Rev. Fred Davie (Rev FD) 15:07

Is it possible to comment on the previous one?

AV 15:07

Sure. Yup, go for it.

Rev FD 15:15

So, I just, I am going to, I guess raise whether or not we can start a definition of racial equity without initially referencing whiteness. And I don't quite know how to do that except to sort of I was just to offer maybe perhaps racial equity as being a recognition of the talents and, the talents and potential contributions of all people in a given society, and the barriers that have been I don't know structured that, that deny the full engagement of those talents and contributions by the, by the reality of you know, white supremacy or privileged whiteness, however you want to talk about it. But I'll leave the word smithing to you all, but just the notion, there's just starting a definition of racial equity that focuses in on the talents of those who've been structurally marginalized as opposed to starting with whiteness.

Lurie Daniel Favors, Esq. (LDF) 16:40

Would it be possible to say to take out the whiteness is not a privilege and begin with "Race is not a determinant of outcomes. It neither confers privilege nor blocks from opportunity" -- something that speaks more to a broader definition of what a racially equitable space would be, and that would include not receiving additional benefits and privileges due to one's whiteness or being blocked from opportunities due to one's melanin content.

AV 17:12

Right, that makes sense. Yeah, yeah I think

17:15

Christopher Kui (CK): that's a good point you know. Yeah so it's coming off from a very positive angle.

JJA 17:20
Very good.

AV 17:21
Exactly.

LDF 17:22
That said, is there some way of at least recognizing that there's a need for this vision? Because historically we have not operated in that frame. I know it's, it's perfectly obvious to all of us but for generations to come who will be looking back at these notes and watching this Youtube video on whatever device then exists, it would be perhaps important to include a recognition that we have to declare this vision because we have seen -- this has not been what the reality has produced on its own.

JJA 17:53
Does that -- all good points, appreciable points -- does that, is some of that caught in the systemic racism slide or you think we need to embed it in the vision as well?

LDF 18:17
Perhaps if we were to say "define our vision for racial equity" and state that it is because of the history of systemic racism that this vision is necessary, and can further reference the systemic racism as defined on this slide -- Would that be agreeable?

JJA 18:34
That works.

AV 18:35
Mm-hmm.

Henry Garrido (HG) 18:37
Sorry, I would suggest also on the last sentence instead of making it about advantaging, "advantages for white people," I said "disadvantages." In other words, turned it negative into a positive.

JJA 18:52
The main equitable society say, say that
18:55
again so –

HG 18:57
Instead of the society that advantages white people that it would be to maintain an equitable society that disadvantages or

JJA 19:06
Just be clear Henry, this is the slide that's saying what systemic racism is, not the vision.

HG 19:14
No no I got it, no no I got it, I got it—I just along the lines of the first, it leaves a little bit of war smithing but on the bottom, you, it's almost like it's a double negative here

Ana Bermudez, Esq (AB) 19:27

Right? So right, here's what you want to say -- like to maintain an equitable society that does not advantage it or that does not advantage white people.

JJA 19:37

Right but what I guess, I just want to be clear, I think we all need to be clear. This slide here is the definition of racism, is that right? So that's why, that's why it's written that way. It's not the "what we shall do," it's the "what is the reality."

HG 20:00

I'm sorry. I missed that step.

JJA 20:02

So this step, this slide that we're looking at is different from the vision and the mission slide, in that this slide systemic racism is defining what is the problem that we have. And we have a system that essentially, you know the, there's a system that is propped up and maintained to ensure inequity. That in orders to the benefit of white persons.

HG 20:32

No, I I get that. But, but let me just say this. There are white immigrants, so if you use the word "immigrant," "black, brown, immigrants" and you use the word "disenfranchised as white people" it appears that immigrants of you know white descent if you will, are less disenfranchised. So that, I was just thinking about in a way that, when you say "black, brown, immigrant and other marginalized communities in order to maintain an inequitable society that advantages" I also say that "disadvantages" so I get I, I guess I'm, I'm just saying -- I think the point is that if we can accentuate some of the positive as with the previous comment, I would be in favor.

JJA 21:24

I got you, I got you, and I'll just quickly just share with you all my thoughts on this. I spent, this is probably the one slide that I spent the most time with, the staff with earlier. And I come from the school and it's different -- different schools I come from the school where let's name what our problem is, and systemic racism in America was set up, the structure the system, as I talked with them earlier about racism, capitalism, and militarism, was set up to benefit and advantage the white race over persons of color. And so in fact you know and I'll just jump in and say that there was this back and Forth about whether or not we should so boldly state it. I come from the school, let's call "a spade, a spade." And racism is about power differential, beginning with white people. Now, not everybody can take advantage of it but that's, that's the, you know, the historical structure that's been, that's been set up. Yes, in our society we did decide -- they did decide at a certain point that certain white persons were more privileged than other white persons. Are there, we can continue playing with this -- are there any other thoughts on this?

Rev FD 22:41

Yes Madam Chair, just one maybe. Could we talk about that advantages of white power structure? Because I, and I say that because, it might recognize what the Vice Chair was getting at about immigrants who were white, but it also may help to address how poor white people are disadvantaged by the, by white power structure as well.

JJA 23:17

I hear, I hear you. I appreciate that and you know, I am, I'm open. I think that the, I guess the way that I look at it is that the -- as I've come to learn and understand racism which may be

different from others, the, the system is what it is, and there are white persons who have not been able to share in the fruits the way that other white persons have. But that, that as I understand it doesn't take away from what racism at its core is, and so I'm, I'm a little hes-- I'm a little hesitant to, how do I say it, give it a, give systemic racism a definition that is different than what racism is. There's a difference between how it actually then plays out and who's impacted. Emotionally, you know what it is. But I hear what you all are saying.

LDF 24:10

Can we resolve this by adding "of color" after the word "immigrant" and make "immigrants" plural, so "immigrants" and "opportunity to black, brown, immigrants of color and other marginalized communities," that way we maintain a specificity about which subset of the immigrant population we're talking about, which I think might address the Vice Chair's concern that there are white immigrants who will never worry about ICE showing up at their door the way an immigrant of color would.

AB 24:46

Noted. One, one thing I will –

JJA 24:50

Before you go for the new, I just, is that, I just, I hear what Lurie's saying and I, I appreciate that. I like that. Just want to make sure that that's what Henry's saying.

HG 25:05

Okay that is not gonna make a difference about immigrants as a somehow, there's a subclass separate from race -- the white, brown, black -- that there is, there is an inequitable system in the way the system also treats immigrants in this country.

JJA 25:26

Right, and what I want to understand from you is, are you saying regardless of the, are you saying that white immigrants are subject to the same marginally, marginalization oppression as are black and brown persons? That's what I want to make sure that I'm clear.

HG 25:43

No No.

JJA 25:44

Okay, good deal. Okay.

HG 25:45

I was thinking [Right.] the equity that exists within that system as well.

AV 25:50

Right, yeah. What I was going to add is that there are better, many systems of oppression, oppression and you know sexism taking an another one. We are defining here Systemic racism in particular, so I think we don't have to feel like it fits every form of oppression. But rather is clear about the ways that systemic racism shows up.

CK 26:14

I have a question about where does the, the Asian you know fit into this. Because you know , because I would with, a lot of the, you know, anti-Asian violence and people getting picked on

because being Asian right? So what is, I did in different class or whatever economic status, is because of Asian, right? So, so then Asian could be immigrant or recently implemented or could be here for a long time ago, so I, I'm just trying to figure out whether that, what it's actually you know, and then also –

JJA 26:48

Absolutely fair and, and I want that, I think I was, I was looking at immigrant, but I think that we need to label that. We need to.

CK 26:55

Yeah, and then, and then I don't know how to label that exactly but you know we'll figure that out because I, is it yellow? It's not really the benefit I think, in the Asian community that there's a thing about you know, the yellow thing. I, I, that's something I would need to figure it out. But I thought that that should be at least mentioned you know.

AV 27:11

It could be other people of color or just people of color. I think depending on, on where you sit brown and includes Asian or, or maybe it doesn't, but people of color might be a little more inclusive.

K. Bain (KB) 27:31

I think that these people of color, when we're talking about racism directly specifically, I think that is the who. Black indigenous people who call it black people.

LDF 27:50

And since we're putting it out on the table and I love this approach. At the very beginning, you know, just coming off of my extreme frustration over the census apportionment numbers that were just released we had actually begun heavily using the phrase people of African descent because black tends to be considered a term that is more specific to the black American experience. But my mother for example, who's a Jamaican immigrant, might identify racially as a black person but culturally, ethnically, nationally, as a Jamaican. And while I know what our intent is here to be inclusive if I am a part of the black immigrant or the diasporian immigrant population, I might not necessarily know that this is also including me. So at the risk of turning this into an overly lawyerly, very wordy statement -- I do think there is a beauty in being precise and perhaps an opportunity to communities of African descent, Latin American descent, Asian-American descent, immigrant, immigrants of color and other marginalized communities. Again, I know that this is getting much longer but if we're concerned about specificity, I think that it would be important to just be aware of that as well.

CK 29:06

Yeah.

JJA 29:07

All very helpful. This is why these are first being presented at this point, because right. So let's, let you all weigh in and help us to make it what it should be.

AV 29:21

Exactly.

Darrick Hamilton (DH) 29:22

I guess I have a few comments also and, and I wonder if we should maybe even think about like this is right now we're real civil and everything but at some point we might get into conversations where all of us are going to want to chime in so, I guess I'll make a suggestion. Should we think about using the techno, technology functions to raise hands and be called on that?

AV 29:47

It's a good note, thank you.

DH 29:48

And if I, if I you know, would go back to the race equity slide, I guess I still have some issues with that one. And then I have some comments on the systemic racism slide as well. You know in this slide, we're treating equity as both an input and an output on, on the one hand you know it makes sense that equity -- you know, the way I would frame it is, we want to make sure that everyone can have access to economic outcomes, political outcomes, that race has no meaningful input as it relates to economic, political, social, and psychological outcomes. I think that that's a value we may want to move. But then on the other hand, if we were to technically define equity -- race equity means that there is proportional distributions of individuals. Of individuals based on their race at every level of distribution in society, and that's more of an outcome orientation. I think both are important. I think on the one hand, we want a society that ensures that your race plays no bearing as it relates to those material, as well as political, psychological, and social outcomes. But on the other hand, we should be striving for a society that at least people aren't stratified in an unwilling way in distribution

JJA 31:25

I like that.

AV 31:26

That makes sense.

DH 31:29

And, and then on the slide that we're talking about currently -- the systemic racism slide. you know the things I would add is, you know perhaps one of the things that we're having some discomfort with is the definition of whiteness has changed throughout society. Ultimately, you know I pretty much agree with, with this initial slide. Perhaps we could think about using whiteness and defining whiteness somewhere else rather than white people because you know again, whiteness is a placeholder for power and it's dynamic. What we define as whiteness today wasn't what it was defined as in the past, and won't be what it's defined as in the future. But nonetheless, we all know what it means -- we all know that it is a placeholder for the empowered group that has greater political and economic agency and greater status is conferred upon them so you know perhaps we need another slide to make, make that mistake, make that definition. And then a term that's currently being used is bipot. If we want to think about inclusion right, or we could define it as non-white if we want but I, I suspect that my fellow Commissioners might have discomfort with that ubiquitous, ubiquitous categorization.

JJA 33:05

All very helpful. So Anusha, is there any, let me back up and ask, are there any Commissioners who would like to offer additional points, comments, considerations?

DH 33:20

And you know, one more at the risk of droning on, and you y'all heard me before -- it would be my preference to substitute equity instead of opportunity. Right I, I think opportunity is a political

ruse. I think opportunity serves to function from a literary standpoint of shifting responsibility from the state onto individuals and it's somewhat synonymous with access already but equity as an, as an outcome is, is something that I think would be preferable than opportunity.

JJA 33:55

So what we're going to do is, I knew she's going to -- We've heard you. we're appreciating what you're saying, what you're sharing. We're going to walk you through -- Well, she's going to walk you through in just a few minutes more of how we've been thinking about this to make sure that we're capturing whether the word is "equity" or "operative opportunity," we're looking at this issue in the same way. And then together we'll make whatever adjustments need to be made. Is that fair? Yeah, let's go on board.

AV 34:24

Okay, absolutely. And I will note that we can share this with all of you via email. We will also be posting it online for the public to view. I welcome feedback and input between meetings too, so we'll send that out and please feel free to reach out on any content or any comments or questions that we might not get a chance to get to today. I think we introduce all of these as working definitions -- the process of working through them with the Commission is just as important as what we land on I think, but we want to make sure we're clear on this structure and this process and really our theory of change as a commission before we go into public engagement.

J. Philip Thompson (JPT) 35:15

Can I add one thing?

AV 35:16

Yeah.

JPT 35:19

Since Jennifer mentioned racism, capitalism, and militarism, and the way Martin Luther King and DuBois talked about those things was very much in a relationship. There's a lot of nuance you know there, I just think it would be useful at some point if we actually had a conversation about the interrelationship so it becomes clearer what we mean.

JJA 35:48

So in about a week or so you all will get a an autographed copy. I'm joking, of the reprint of "God in the Ghetto," which really breaks down the system which is racism, capitalism, and militarism. I'll share that with you all.

DH 36:05

Cool. Derek, you're already on board.

AV 36:09

That's a good flag and I think if there are other things that come up that are you know, it would be great to dive into this further in a future meeting -- we want to hear it. But I do want to move us on to the next portion and then we can continue our conversation here. Eden, can you advance the slide? So we wanted to introduce these definitions and, and I think particularly the portion of systemic racism that you all seem to agree with -- which is that it is embedded in structural institutional and cultural norms and conditions because the work of the Commission is really focused in on this structural portion, so the city charter is a foundational document that

sets up the laws, the values, the way things happen in the city, that structure, and open up or deny access to power access and opportunity. The approach that we're taking here is that by focusing in on the structural, we can come up with recommendations to the city charter that shift these structural foundations, or that propose or advocate for things outside of the charter that we may want to push for. Those are the structural changes that we want to make sure the work of the Commission is really honed in on while also addressing and inspiring changes at the institutional and cultural levels. So we've spoken a little bit about the work that happens within agencies. City agencies are the homes and the creators and the perpetrators of policies, practices decision making product processes in the day-to-day work of their agencies. We want to work with those agencies to identify the major changes that they can undertake the changes they may already be working on that may change policy design, implementation, or even their assessment of impact. Some of the changes we're talking about here could include changes to the city's administrative code, agency rulemaking, or changes that don't require any formal policy making procedures. This is a sort of area of secondary focus that we will touch on through collaborating with and partnering with agencies including through the city's task force on racial inclusion and equity we have some agencies that are represented here on the commission as well -- Commissioner Bermudez in particular, runs one agency that may be a place where we may decide to start and focus our work. And then lastly, when it comes to changing cultural norms and, and systems, we want to work with other sectors to see what changes they may want to take on -- either through partnering with them or proposing changes to them and under a sort of cultural, societal change that's also where we might see room for growth and continuation of the reconciliation process that we will begin during the work of the Commission, so this is sort of how we're thinking about really, the focus of the commission's work and emphasizing the structural but touching on the institutional and cultural. You can go to the next slide. And lastly, I will just highlight how we're seeing all of this come together conceptually so -- systemic racism as the inequitable system that we're, we're starting with that's the starting point. That's where we are now. We're going to go into it shortly and I'm going to hand it off to Eden in a minute to go further into power access and opportunity, as well as capacity and accountability. But we're really thinking about power, access, opportunity as the pillars of this framework, and then the end point is racial equity. We're obviously not going to reach complete and total racial equity through the next eight months and the changes to the charter that we propose, but this is the framework through which we see the changes that we're proposing happening and where they start and what they're leading towards. We'll come back to this later but I, I think it's important here to start to go through the power access, and opportunity. Yeah go ahead. Third question.

HG 40:54

Yeah, so I just want to quickly go through, I asked a question about a practical example of -- If affordable housing, for instances in the lottery system and the way it does in my, in my opinion disenfranchised --

JJA 41:16

Henry, we can't, we can't hear you. Am I the only one who can't? No it's not just you.

AV 41:25

Yeah Henry, you're cutting in and out, mostly out. Oh well, I think he's at a delay too, so he can't hear us. Henry, oh

AB 41:51

it's mute I think he's, he's muted. Can somebody unmute him? No, I don't think he is.

AV 41:58

Oh go ahead. You're back.

HG 41:59

I'm sorry, I'm

HG 42:01

I'm sorry -- I'm going to turn off my video maybe that would improve the quality. It's better, yeah. Okay. So let's say affordable housing or housing, the ways implemented, applied now, in my opinion represents one of the greatest impediment and access to good housing and the way that the, that, that we apply what would be systems or selections on individuals and we deny them. If for instance this Commissioner wants to look at or redo what is already been a practice of how you apportion affordable housing within the city's housing affordable plan, would that require change in the legislation or is that something that we could do as a commission within the structure of the agency -- would that be agency based or structurally based? In other words there may be a reason why the city had reached a position that it took on affordable housing in the past which we may not be privy to in terms of negotiation, so my question is, is that one of the things that you consider structurally or is that something that we may want to get in, you know some discussion by those who work on it to figure out the genesis of it, before we go out and making that as a recommendation, recommended change by the Commission?

JJA 43:33

So Anusha, if I'm [AV: Go ahead], the way that I think about that is you set up the issue and then we look at what governs and guides the issue. So if we're talking about increasing, let's see, if we're talking about increasing access because some people have been left out -- that may in fact be a structural issue if it's tied to you know, a NYCHA policy, as to who has and who doesn't and it's tied to budgeting, what have you, it may become institutional in nature. But I think we have to first understand the issue and then understand, I'm just speaking in general, but using this as an example, understand the issue, understand the you know, who, like what the power levels are, levers, and figure out whether or not it's something that you know is it that, in this, in the charter, we need to speak to what, just borrowing you know a term that I've heard Derek use it on a couple occasions, what are basic economic rights, and is a right to affordable housing a basic economic right. If we say that it is, then that seems more structural. For the city of New York, if we're talking about, you know, like how to ensure more housing slots or make decisions around what that looks like, it may become more institutional. I think it's -- we'd have to work it through in that way. Is that helping? Is that helpful?

HG 45:07

It's helpful, thank you.

AV 45:08

Yup, if I may, that's also a question or type of question we could come back to after the Charter 101 Presentation, which I want to make sure we can get to.

JJA 45:20

Phil, did you have a point? **JPT**: I just wanted to say that fortunately we have a lawyer on staff now who can also weigh in. I remember being sued while working at NYCHA 30 years ago on exactly this issue where we had a community preference system, and we were sued and forced to shift to a lottery system. So I know there's a long history of litigation on this.

JJA 45:47

And what, and what I just want everybody to appreciate is some things are like are we talking about what is the structural, gets into like what are the rights and then the institutional gets into how that's actually played out in government systems, another.

AV 46:06

Exactly. so I want to move us along so we can get to the Charter 101. This is certainly only the beginning of these conversations. Eden, you can go to the next line. And this is actually the point at which I'm going to hand it over to Eden to briefly go a little bit more into the pillars of racism through which we're addressing our recommendations for structural change. And then we'll sort of come, come back to the sort of conceptual conceptualization overall. So Eden, I will hand it to you.

Eden Mulate (EM) 46:52

Thank you Anusha. So as you've heard of Anusha speak about institutional, structural, institutional, and cultural, our main focus for our work is going to be around structural change, and we have identified the pillars of racism upon which the structural change rests and we wanted to share some of the framing that we've been doing over the course of last week with you and, and begin to get feedback and hone in on these ideas. So we have three pillars that we want to introduce -- power, access, and opportunity. We're going to do a little bit of definitional work in terms of these three pillars, so here we're defining power as the ability to make and influence decisions that impact people's lives, and how government reinforces that ability. Moving on to access, we're defining access here as the ability to procure and benefit from services resources and capital, and how government denies or unlocks that ability for either individuals or communities. And lastly we think that opportunity is one of the pillars upon which racism sits, and we're defining it, we're defining it here as the ability to take meaningful advantage of power and access to achieve prosperity. And to drill in on a little bit of what we mean by power, again we're defining power as the ability to make and influence decisions that impact people's lives and how government reinforces that ability we understand that power exists in different forms and in different spaces. We wanted to have a visual representation of how we are understanding power, beginning with individual power and agency, whether that be the ability to make decisions about oneself or one's family. And moving on to institutional power within government and lastly power and movement, social power and movements which we think is a collective power that is often galvanized through movements, and going into framework, the framework, the access as one of the pillars of our framework -- access again is the ability to procure and benefit from services, resources, and capital and how government denies or unlocks that ability. And we see access as you know, access to power and access to basic goods, access to prosperity, whether that means economic prosperity or other opportunities, and then access to capital and contracting as we begin to think about city government. And lastly, opportunity which is our third pillar here, and we're defining opportunity as the ability to take meaningful advantage of power and access to achieve prosperity, and we've listed some areas where opportunity props up as one of as the people's ability to actually have a way to take advantage of power and access, and that include economic prosperity, arts, and cultural expression, quality education and other resources. This is not meant to be comprehensive, but just beginning to think about where opportunity might lie. And then I will hand it off to you, Anusha, to take you through. These last bits.

AV 51:15

Great almost done here so reflecting back to our mission to identify and propose those structural changes that we can undertake that will advance racial justice and equity, there are a few things that need to be in place to make sure that that can happen. One is to create capacity -- there needs to be the capacity for individuals, groups, organizations, businesses, to be able and ready to engage participate and even take advantage of power, access, and opportunity. And once we have done that and have identified what those proposals or changes are, there absolutely needs to be accountability, accountability in place -- systemic and institutional mechanisms of accountability. Accountability specifically that ensure changes are made and that they are made effectively and meaningfully and have the -- and that there are consequences in place if they are not implemented or not implemented effectively. So coming back to that overall sort of map of how these things fit together, I think you know the staff has had conversations about this. and we have with the Chair a little a little bit with the Vice Chair as well, but we do want to hear from you. Is this helpful? Does this make sense? Is this something that is doing what we want it to do in terms of conceptually framing our work and enable us to focus in as we move towards public engagement? If it's not serving us, we change it. But I just I just want to put that out there very clearly that you know if this is not helpful, we should change it. If it is helpful let us know. So that's the end of our framework presentation -- it informs the presentation on the Charter 101 that the mayor's office council will lead us through.

JJA 53:12

So let me just jump in here and say that nothing is etched in stone. What we are trying to do is to you know create a framework, a straw man if you will, something like you know, set up a structure that we can then take the information that we, you know that, that we, that we, we receive from various stakeholders and put it through a process where we're able to see -- is it touching upon the issues that you know that allow racism to be propped up and to persist to the disadvantage of many persons? I want to say a little bit about --- And I want to first go to Derek first and just talk a little bit about this opportunity versus equity. I very much appreciate the points that are being made. My concern is, and this comes from day-to-day practice working with government and with systems -- my concern is that what often happens is we set up structures, we create you know, laws and policies and on the face they appear to open up the playing field but when you look at how they are designed and how they are structured, opportunity is not you know available to everybody. The example that I always provide is because, it's just, it's an example that everybody can grasp the education system here in New York City. Specialized high schools you know, are available to everybody but we know that here in New York City, your early beginnings in education have everything to do with where you will wind up in high school and beyond. We know that elementary schools are largely zip code based and that if you go to a elementary school in one part of town versus another part of town, your early learning experiences are going to be very different in New York City alone. If you go to public school in Park Slope, you know you may have to be, have equal per pupil allocation but the PTA Association there is able to raise funds. They give kids access to robotics, mandarin, additional adults teaching in the classroom on a daily basis. That's not happening in other you know nearby sections of Brooklyn, New York, and then those children do better on their standardized tests than others other things and they get into the top middle schools. And then how you do in middle school has everything to do with the schools that you can access for high school. But on its face, it looks like we've created access, but the opportunity is not really present.

AB 56:10

Jennifer, can I say something about that
56:12

too?

56:13

There's also the issue and I don't know

56:15

where it fits, whether in access or

56:16

opportunity --

56:17

honestly, but it's just also the types of opportunities are not responsive to the needs of bipoc people, okay? In the sense that, the example that I tend to use based on my work is that the most common, the most likely victim of a violent crime in New York City is a black male 18 to 24 years old, and when you think about the opportunities for healing and for, you know the ability to access victim services, there's access, there's a lot of victims here, but no victim services tailored to black young men who are survivors of violence, right? So I don't know if that's an access issue or not over an opportunity issue because we also have to make sure that the right types of opportunities are available to be able to then have them match to access. So I don't know where that fits but --

JJA 57:20

If I meant to say with, what I'd love to hear from Derek is, is that consistent with what you're talking about what your concern is, or are we saying, are we talking about two different things?

DH 57:30

So again I think opportunity is a political ruse. I think it's a co-opted term used as a mechanism to deny. I think the people that advocate for that privileged structure of a Stuyvesant, education that you describe often make the case that everybody has an opportunity to get into Stuyvesant -- all you have to do is perform x well on a test and you can get into Stuyvesant. I think if we defined it as access, it would be more defining, more clear, and one cannot deny that Stuyvesant does not provide access in an equitable way in, in New York City, so to me I think that example kind of makes the case. And then I guess if I -- let me let, before You.

JJA 58:16

Let me just respond to that very quickly because I guess what I'm saying in, is you, that the system may be set up to give the appearance of, of access. But when you look at opportunity I guess I'm taking it from a different vantage point. Break down what opportunity really means and what it doesn't mean, and you could maybe tie that into access but what I'm really saying is opportunity and this speaks to the honest part, is not real. And I don't want to I don't want to lose that you know, like opportunity may, we may say it's one thing but it's really not, so it's got to be captured somewhere -- and access alone won't do that because structures and systems say we have it.

DH 59:00

So actually, I mean, I guess if I were to go on, I guess I kind of disagree -- I think access makes the point with more clarity than opportunity, especially in the jargon, in the ways that it has been used. It's similar to the ways in which Martin Luther King's phrase of content of our character has been misused in modern time, so to me I think we would do ourselves more justice if we exercise that word "opportunity" from the framing and we're more clear, and I guess I'll say some other things about the slide presentation. I don't think we're just interested in equity as an outcome. I think power as an outcome is important to us as well. I think the ability to have agency over your life or agency as, as it relates to civic engagement and how your community

operates should be an outcome not just a foundation or a function. Similarly, I think that access should be an outcome. So I, you know, I would, I would substitute the word, clearly I've said it multiple times, the word "access" for "opportunity," and I think it would work better structurally and in a framework because all three of them are not only inputs, they're outcomes, and things that we should be concerned about. I think that everywhere in the document, if you were to even substitute the word "access" for "opportunity" it would work just fine. I think having both access and opportunity as pillars is redundant to a large extent. I think we would be nuancing to try to find distinctions. I think a third pillar that would fit a three-legged stool would be to treat equity as the, as the pillar because equity also implies that people engage with a certain level of resource so that they can engage equity. You know if we, if we talk about both access and power in some sense that, and of course all these terms are interrelated, but if we talk about even purchasing a home -- we know that one of the most critical ingredients is capital itself. So equity in my mind as a pillar would relate to the fact that when we have large inequity to begin with across race so we need as a pillar, to be focusing on ensuring that there are more equitable resources by which we can begin. Madam Chairman I have a question. I also want to know that they're unable to have their answers --

AV 61:33

Yeah go ahead.

Yesenia Mata (YM) 61:35

I just also wanted to add I, I am hearing about opportunity and access and just, I want to keep, I just want us all to keep in mind that as we talk about opportunity and access to also keep in mind of people who are undocumented. Because even though opportunities are out there and me as a Latina, as a US citizen, yes there were a lot of opportunities that were taken away from me but there were further opportunities taken away from my friends who were undocumented. It really, they, some of them were able to get DACA, others weren't and that really limited their access to even get an education or to further their education -- and when we talk about access, a lot of that requires, a ton of that requires a citizenship right? Like when the stimulus was being distributed, that didn't include undocumented individuals and now with the fund excluded workers bill, even though it has passed still many undocumented individuals don't have the documentation that they need to even get that funding so just keeping that in mind, when we also talk about opportunity and access, to also keep in mind of people that are undocumented or those that don't have any sort of documentation.

JJA 62:48

Thank you. Henry, did you want to come in and then, I see Anna.

HG 62:52

It was a question for Hamilton if, if I may because I think the issue of opportunity or access to me I think it's a valid point, but are we talking about an implementation of whatever the word is -- whether it's acts of opportunity and I say this to you because people may have access and there's a perception that the access is equal, but in reality if you set the ground rules so that that access does not become a reality as, as you just heard for some folks, as just this matter just anyhow -- sorry if I may call you so --if that's the case, it's an implementation of an ideal, and I'm thinking about the civil service system in the city of New York where hiring is theoretically the same, the opportunity is the same, the access to the job is the same, but if you put in as a cost of hiring four hundred dollars for a test for somebody who's making very little money, that's a, that's a half a month right -- and so that's, that's one areas. And then, if you then for you know, people are able to get that funding on themselves and fund it and take the exam there are these

points that have been applied for people who've taken the points in order to give them a better scoring system to the so-called legacy system that exists within the system. The opportunity is the same, the access is the same but it's the application of the rules that makes the system inherently inequitable in its application, so I'm wondering if your work is if, if it's, you know your suggestion about changing opportunity to the word access or to the concept of access it doesn't go through the same the same scrutiny of, of the current opportunity -- yeah it's just a question.

DH 64:50

Yeah well, well you're gonna need all three pillars to begin with power, access, and equity. My point was that access and opportunity as two pillars is somewhat redundant -- that equity adds a different concept altogether. And then the, and the last another point I, I guess I'll interject to drive home the point is, opportunity has a framing of putting the onus on individuals that if there's opportunity, individuals will seize it. If we use a word, if we use other words like equity instead of opportunity, the onus is put on the state and the structure, and that is our task that is our job -- our job is to focus on municipal dealings and municipal work and I think opportunity again for all the reasons I've been saying, does us a disservice.

JJA 65:43

Yeah I appreciate this. I want to hear from Anna, I guess you know it all comes down to how we frame it and how we define it, and so some what I'm hearing is that some of us are saying that opportunity -- I hear the concerns around the politicization of the word, but it's all a matter of how we define it, how we think about it. I'm not gonna die on the sword on this one, this is not where you know we need to part ways, but I do wanna make sure that the concerns that are being raised are addressed in our framing and what I think what many are saying is that government and others continually say we have access but we don't really have opportunity, and so this was a calling out of the issue concerning opportunity. Yes, it might be flipped back on people who've been marginalized and oppressed, but you know we can also take this moment to flip it back, if we so desire and say this is what true opportunity would look like. Let me hear from Anna real quickly. Yeah

AB 66:51

I, I mean I'm, I've gone back and forth of whether this is even a good idea so a couple of things -- one thing is that we could use a modifier of saying something like meaningful access because, so what we're attacking is, that type of access that means nothing or the opportunity you know this whole, and I agree with you about the, you know, all the ills of the word "opportunity," so we could do by saying meaningful to both access and meaningful opportunity or switch opportunity to and mulling with the idea of responsiveness right, of like that, that this thing you know that some sort of responsively principle here to the needs of people you know, that have led to this disparity in, you know, in the disparities that we're trying to, to think. I'm not so convinced about that one but I was trying to look for a different word that got at what we're trying to identify without you know running into the issue of "opportunity" as a word, but

CK 68:00

or maybe something like fair access and equal opportunity or something you know, something like that yeah? I don't know so I think access and opportunity are two different things-- you know, you know I think we have to deal with a lot of the ordinary citizens, how they look at these two words as well, you know, so then it's like for most ordinary people it's like you know opportunity means like what they can access you know, and then access as a term, more like you know traditionally for people in the political or whatever you know, beyond just ordinary

people. But I don't know, it's like we always tend to hear like equal opportunity you know, access could be fit, I don't know the right words for you or something yeah.

JJA 68:47

We're gonna thank you Chris and let me just say to you Christopher that was a consideration when we first began – we were trying to use words that people could easily relate to, so that you know they could

see themselves and see their issues as they were presenting them through this frame but you know maybe it's some other term and I am, I'm open. Joanne and Lurie have want to add to this so Joanne and then Lurie.

Jo-Ann Yoo (JY) 69:16

Sure, thank you. I guess why I have struggled, what I'm struggling with, with both words “opportunity” and “access” because it assumes that if you create opportunity or if you create access, that people can actually take advantage right? And so in our communities some of them we can give them the opportunity we can give them the access but they're so far behind that they can't even take advantage of the situation so I guess that's what I'm struggling with, is how do we encapsulate that, how do we capture the fact that you know, systematically like you can create something, an opportunity for somebody but they might not be ready to even take advantage or to, and or even if you give somebody access they might not be ready because they've never been prepared like the high school, the school example right? Like if you continue to go to an underperforming school, under resourced school, you might have opportunity, you might have access, but you will never -- that's not, you're not going to make it right, and so I'll just, I'm gonna say that I've been, I'm struggling with both terms right now, right.

JJA 70:22

So Joanne just in response to your, the point of, in an early conversation with Phil and with Henry, they too raised that concern and that was the thinking around building in as another if you will filter or lens or framing the capacity and accountability. So if you, you know if we make these changes then what more needs to be done to help build capacity to be able to respond to, and you know this is maybe some of your concern Derek, and you create the opportunity but if you do, don't create the capacity, then you say people aren't really taking advantage of the opportunity. So how to address that, and the thinking was doing something with capacity as well and accountability to bring that in.

Marie.

LDF 71:18

So again I'm trying not to think too much with my lawyer hat on but I'm thinking about definitions and the way in which these phrases just in the course of this call, we've seemed to approach some of these, these terms even within this call as Commissioners from slightly different vantage points and I don't want to suggest that we need a definition section of this agreement, but I'm wondering if perhaps we just need to define specifically what we mean because it's not clear to me that we all mean the same thing and I am, as I'm hearing the conversation evolve, I am not as clear -- the, the more we talk about it, the less clear I am on the distinction between access and opportunity, and I think there is a lot of persuasive weight to what Commissioner Derek put forward in terms of using the phrase “equity,” and I think that that is a phrase that is being imbued with a lot more life as people are having much more nuanced conversations about racial and social justice and other equity-based issues. So I'm just hesitant to settle on any of the language that can cause this much meaningful discussion among our own body without at

least being able to define clearly what we mean by each of the terms so that we're leaving as little to artful interpretation from a later administration or folks coming after us as possible.

JJA 72:45

So that's fair and that is part of the work -- what I will submit to you just appreciating all who've commented, I think that some of what we're seeing play out in this moment is a lot of our background in perspective and so if I think about Christopher and myself, Anna, you know speaking about centering on how we distinguish between access and opportunity -- I think it has a lot to do with having worked with government systems like on a day-to-day basis in terms of delivery of services and working with community organizations, even Yesenia, bringing some of that out, and so that may be some of what is the kind of the, the difference of thought or how we're coming at it -- it's just an observation on my part. All good points, so here's the deal -- we've heard, we're embracing, we're listening, these, this frame is not etched in stone. The definitions need further development. We will keep noodling it and we will bring it back to you but I also ask you all to share you know whatever additional thoughts you may have on this. I appreciate Derek has put some information in the chat for us to take a look at. I do want to say there to you that I think that we're all, I think we all believe in increased power as an outcome, access as an outcome in itself, even increased opportunity if that were the word that we stayed with, or the term we say with as an outcome and racial equity is kind of that overarching, so it wasn't we weren't thinking that it's just you know like power towards equity or access towards equity but fair points.

DH 74:33

For clarity though I guess I'm equating power and access with equity. I'm saying that those things, it isn't equity. Overarching outcome to me, having power is as important as important as it is to have equity in, in certain contexts.

JJA: Yeah I think that, I'm saying that I think that equity I think that they're all important but I'm also saying that increased power leads to greater equity as well. That's my opinion, that's my goal.

DH: And vice versa that's the point right?

JJA 75:09

No no no, I think in some ways we agree but maybe we're coming at it from different places and spaces, and we have to figure out where we get to that common ground okay? We're gonna get there, we'll get there. I promise you. Like I said I'm not dying on the sword on this, I just, we need to get the work done -that's where I am right? And so whatever, however we need to get there, whatever is best then we'll do that.

AV 75:38

Absolutely.

JJA 75:39

We don't want to cut off the conversation but we do. Yeah.

AV 75:41

I will, I'll chime in here and say I propose a change in agenda and that we take the Charter 101 Presentation and do that hopefully this same time next Monday or another time on Monday so we can really spend adequate time -- I know we were only scheduled to go until five-thirty and some folks have to drop off, so that is a proposal that I put forward and I believe that, that works for Kapil Longani who was going to present the Charter 101, that way we can really spend the time we need on the Charter 101 and we have a few more minutes to continue this conversation. I'm also happy to provide that community engagement update before we close

JJA: I think that is good. Thank you and as long as Kapil and his team are good, we're good.

AV 76:37

Okay okay.

JJA 76:38

Alright, so we've got a little we've got some more time, a few more minutes to just noodle this thought a little more. Are there other Commissioners that want to engage?

KB 76:52

So I was I was waiting, I was trying to follow Commissioner Hamilton's suggestion of raising our hand instead of jumping in.

JJA 76:58

I'm sorry. No that's, that's perfectly fine because I was listening and I was taking in some great information -- I think I'm very familiar from personal life experience with the change of psychological slavery and the invisible force fields and barriers that exist as we look at and tackle this topic. I think access and opportunity are different -- the devil is in the details, and so access is a precursor or prerequisite to opportunity. I think they're related and everyone has pretty much said this in different ways -- I don't think we're that far off. I think there's a power in us really using some of you incredible legal minds and even the economist here to really pinpoint some of the definition because in opportunity we, we can talk about equity specifically in a very direct and laser focused way as it applies to opportunity. "Opportunity" is not a bad word it needs some help it needs some support, it needs some clarification and clarity to take into account some of these larger framework structural ideas of power etc. But I believe access plays a very important significant precursory role to opportunity that's the way that I would see it, and so when I talk about invisible force fields --If I'm provided access, that's great. That's a starting point. But it's not an opportunity yet and then once provided an opportunity quote-on-quote opportunity, again there are certain aspects of the implementation of this opportunity that are relevant and valid and have to be flushed out, and I think that is part of the defining process that we're in. That's my two cents. Thank you for hearing me.

JJA 78:53

Very much appreciate it. Very much appreciate it Phil.

JPT 78:58

I, I think that we all these terms are mushy like equity is a mushy term and I think whatever terms we use, the important thing is going to be to really explain what we mean by that term. So you know Darrick's explanation of equity, how he sees it was very helpful. I know other people

who use equity in a different way to essentially mean equal opportunity and not power and the other things that Derek is talking about, so I just think defining what we mean will help us to be clear and unified. I also take Derek's point on the word "opportunity" within the history of civil rights litigation and all of that, equal opportunity has been used to imply that there exists a meritocracy. And Jennifer's example of Stuyves, you know they select high schools like Stuyvesant, was really a critique that there is no meritocracy. You know systemically it doesn't exist, so I actually find that example totally consistent with what Derek is saying is wrong with the use of the word. And I just think is whatever, wherever we end up on language, if we're clear on what we mean by the word or clear on why we are not using this word and using that word, then we can be unified because actually I think you and Derek are on the same page actually.

JJA 80:39

Well I think that's I, I think I said the same -- that I think that we're not as far apart as it may seem. What I'm saying and it's maybe a different approach, like I'm saying like let's look at what opportunity really is and what it's not --that has been my take, that's why I don't think it's wholly consistent with you know, I'm not arguing against myself. What I am saying is that in this society, we've claimed that people have had opportunity but until you look up under the hood, you realize that opportunity really is an opportunity and I'm just one of those persons that say -- I'm the kind of like, you know deep, I don't know -- I don't want to go into the defund the police conversation, but using that yet is another example of how it was used against us, but what were people really mean and I understand that, like you know we've had this kind of walking around you know had to walk around the issue to get to help people understand what many people did mean. Not everybody meant abolish the police by defunding the police some people meant something different -- they meant disinvestment and reinvestment, and so part of me is saying if this is, if society uses the word, then let's call it what it is and define it as it should be defined. But again I'm not here I, what I want to do is do the work I want to get at, the changes that we need to see and, we will revisit the language that is used, we'll try to put some more exacting definitions on them and examples which is what I believe the staff began to do and what the what the pell, the Mayor's Senior Council was going to do, to show us how it looks in everyday charter in the charter world -- I should say not an everyday charter life but in the charter world.

JPT 82:30

Yeah I'm in agreement. I just, I'm in agreement. I just think as we talked, it became clear that we're actually not on different pages on this issue.

JJA 82:42

This is good, very good. Are there other thoughts?

CK 82:49

Yeah in terms of access, but the more I think about it's more like you know, that it's almost like we open up the door you know, so then the door of opportunities, and then the opportunity would be like people, citizens you know, you know people of color, whatever the definition of you know, folks, have been denied that they can actually take another step to exercise and get the benefits and et cetera you know so that's how I see it -- opening up that door to access you know, so in a sense it's a little different and they're not technically the same but they're all interrelated.

JJA 83:29

So helpful all of this, all of your feedback. So we're going to keep working with this. I do believe I think it is fair to say that we are moving in the right direction, and we're going to build on that.

AV 83:46

One technical note, I discourage people to use the chat function because it's not visible to the public and this is a public meeting so, just a technical note there. Thank you so much for that.

JJA: Right, I do, and let's just share that Lurie has suggested that we develop a glossary for you know, for the report for the depth for the terms that we use so that it's very clear to all of us as well as to the public what we mean when we say certain things, and the messages that we're seeking to convey with the work so I concur Lurie, I think we're on board. I agree, I think it's a great suggestion. Yeah

DH 84:35

I mean you know, I feel remiss if I don't make this point Commissioner Kui makes the point of why I don't think we should use the word "opportunity" when he described that analogy, that access opens the door and then we need people to walk through the door to seize opportunity. That, that to me is the exact point of why we should stay away from opportunity because this ain't about what people need to do, it's about what we need to do as Commissioners and reforming government.

JJA 85:10

Yeah I hear what you're saying I, interpreted what he was saying is the door may be swung wide open but that doesn't mean -- This is Joanne's point, that you can walk through it. It's like you know we say that the city is accessible to everybody but then we don't make it ADA compliant. I'm just using that as an example -- is the opportunity really there?

JPT 85:35

But this is going to be an interesting truth, K Bain made the point that of psychological slavery or cultural, like how we just don't even recognize certain things even when they're in front of us and that goes back to Carter G. Woodson -- Carter G. Woodson said "If you open the door, the negro has been trained to go close the door because they're psychologically conditioned that way," and so I think we're going to have a lot of fun with our glossary on this with this group.

AV 86:11

Absolutely, and I'll note that there's no way we can be exhaustive with the glossary -- I think what we should aim for is defining the terms and the concepts that will be useful to advancing the Commission's work, just to keep us focusing focus in on why this is important to do at the outset of our, of our process.

JJA 86:34

What I will commit to you is that I will spend some time reviewing the transcript of this conversation and I'll work with Anusha to make sure that the points and the concerns that have been voiced, particularly on the definitions and the pillars as we structured them, are incorporated into the thinking and don't be surprised if we come back and you see something that looks different than what was presented today.

AV: Absolutely and we may have some follow-up questions on some of your comments and your input over the next week or two, so do look out for that -- this has been incredibly valuable as feedback as the staff and with our chair, we've had some great conversations. We've now

dug even deeper and I think we're arriving at something that is starting to feel like something we can share from the commission. So thank you for your honesty in this process.

JJA 87:39

Anything you want to say about community engagement before we wrap up Lurie?

LDF 87:43

Yes I'm using both the hand raise function and on screen just to be just, honestly some of us are using a variety of things. But that point that Deputy Mayor Thompson just made about the point K Bain made, which goes back to Carter G. Woodson, I think this is a great conversation as to why equity is the preference over something like equality because we don't all need the same thing. In the African-American community and that quote Deputy Mayor made, is not only "will the negro see the door," they will go to the back door because their psychological training convinces them that that is the only route for them, so having the opportunity doors swung open for people who have been trained to not seize it and to not see that they have capacity to walk through it, would not be equity for the one of the communities that has been most traditionally marginalized and excluded – so I think even in the context of this conversation, the recognition that we don't all represent communities that need the same thing though we all have needs, I think it's just a great, it's an encouraging conversation considering all the work that we're going to be doing going forward. And I just want clarity are we raising hands on screen or are we using the raise hand?

JJA 88:48

But what happens is sometimes you're moving so fast and the participant screen also gets stuck and can't move quick and I can't move quickly enough through it. Derek did you have an additional comment? I just see your hand raised.

DH 89:02

Sorry I should lower the hand. No sorry.

JJA 89:05

This is good. Are there any other points, thoughts, concerns to be shared?

AV 89:16

I do want to show that community engagement slide but yeah.

JJA 89:19

Right before you go there just wanted to make sure are there any Commissioners with additional –

KB 89:23

My time is very short I had till five-thirty. Okay. But this is very engaging, I'm appreciative of you know, the way people are showing up. Just the authenticity is inspiring to me

JJA 89:37

Thank you. We appreciate you. All of you. Anusha very quickly, anything on community engagement that people need to know before we move forward?

AV 89:47

Yes, so we are busy building out a team that can implement wide broad and inclusive community engagement which will begin in May. I wanted to bring you in at a high level on the thinking and give you a little bit of guidance because you're probably getting some questions. Right now the plan is to begin the community engagement process with listening sessions. We want to hear from community members about lived experiences, about what they think the Commission should be focusing on, their thoughts on our framework and so we really want to start from that position of listening -- both doing sessions that are in partnership with specific community groups and sort of sets of, of partners as well as ones that are open to broader public. From there the plan is to move to some more focused expert forums where we bring in folks with either learned, academic, or practical experience, lived experience to offer as experts as there is a full range of expertise that we want to recognize here. As we go through those first two phases that will enable us to move towards a more sort of topic based and focus engagement with communities so to wrapping that first phase of engagement in the summer. So I wanted to highlight for you that this is coming, I know you as I am eager to kick off the community engagement and public engagement but we're sort of building out our systems team and infrastructure to get us there. If you are getting questions about how can I engage, how can I follow the Commission's work, do direct them to the places where we're publicly posting updates right for now it's at nyc.gov/charter which will be replaced with a Racial Justice Commission website that is a little more comprehensive than just charter revision. And any comments or questions can be sent to a general email that we've set up. I'd say as you're getting feedback, as you're hearing from your partners, your communities, do send any feedback that you hear to the staff. You can send that for now directly to me -- we want to make sure we're documenting it and that we know who we're hearing from, even as individual Commissioners are starting to hear from folks. And for people that you know want to be and should be more deeply engaged, let them know that we will be doing listening sessions and sort of ask them to wait just a little bit until we're ready to start planning and scheduling those, so I just wanted to provide that guidance since we are getting questions and comments right now. But we are on the verge of being ready to move into broader engagement of the public. It's certainly a priority we need broad buy-in for our work, we need to hear the thoughts and experiences and input from community members with a vast array of experience, and will be a priority over the coming months so I wanted to flag for you what is to come and what you can do in the meantime.

Melanie Ash (MA) 93:16

If I could just jump in really quickly and just with a, on the point of engagement I just want to issue a bit of a reminder to use your charter email account for your engagement because that is, this is public and if you use your private or personal or business email accounts it could subject them to foil requests or to disclosure. So just to maintain your own privacy, direct your emails that you receive from someone back to your charter account and then respond from the charter account if you're going to respond to something, just to preserve your own privacy.

JJA 93:54

Excellent. Thank you, thank you. So, now Melanie, is it okay to do the Conflict of Interest Review at the next meeting anything?

MA 94:06

yeah I think I think it's definitely. okay. I would just highlight if you're if, if before then between now and then you have any questions or concerns or want to get clarity around Conflict of Interest rules and what they might mean for you, just reach out because you know it's very fact specific, but I will do an a high ten thousand foot overview at the next meeting but in between

now and then, to be saying, you have any questions just direct them to Anusha or to me and we can help get you clarity from the Conflict of Interest Board.

JJA 94:37

Thank you, thank you. Alright

AB 94:40

So I'm sorry I don't wanna, so Melanie, I think I know the answer to this of course, but I'm going to ask anyway -- does the fact that I have to file as a Commissioner of Probation affect whether I have to like what I need to do for here, can it count or is it a totally different TOIB process?

MA 95:02

I'm we're going to have to get back to you I I don't have clarity on that. I know the Conflict of Interest Board was intending to send out some communications and I don't know if they've done that yet. I think they're just waiting on us to provide all the email addresses. But if that doesn't come out and clarify for you, then we can find out.

AB 95:19

Okay,

JJA 95:20

Good deal. Thank you. Alright, any other issues that people want to service? Questions? Any closing information that Anusha you or the staff need to provide?

AV 95:37

I think we're good on what we need to present, I'd say continue to reach out in the interim with questions, feedback, things you'd like to see in future meetings. Thank you to those of you who have done that so far.

JJA 95:46

And do we have a set date for the next meeting?

AV 95:51

I believe this same time or thereabouts worked for everybody we'll confirm the exact time but we will do it next Monday. Okay

JJA 96:02

good deal. Well good meeting. if there is no further business then I will ask for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Question to adjourn? Alright, all in favor of closing this meeting say aye.

All 96:22

Aye. The meeting is adjourned. Thank you all. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.