



NYC Racial Justice Commission Public Meeting 12/27/21

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APPEARANCES:

- Jennifer Jones Austin
- Henry A. Garrido, Vice Chair
- Lurie Daniel Favors, Esq.
- Ana M. Bermudez
- Yesenia Mata
- Melanie Ash
- K. Bain
- Darrick Hamilton
- Reverend Fred Davie
- Chris Kui
- Jo-Ann Yoo
- Anusha Venkataraman
- Phil Thompson

Jennifer Jones Austin (JJA): 00:31

Good morning. After some technical difficulties, the Meeting of the New York City Racial Justice Commission is now in session. This is the final Racial Justice Commission meeting for this calendar year. I'm Jennifer Jones Austin. And today's meeting and vote are the culmination of over nine months of unprecedented dedication, time, and attention given to dismantling structural racism here in New York City. When we as commissioners, working alongside the Commission's Executive Director, senior leadership, and staff set out earlier this year to examine the New York City charter and determine what must be done first, to begin undoing historic and present-day racism in our city and government, we had high hopes and capable minds but little more. Never in any major city in this nation had such a feat been attempted and undertaken. We had no roadmap, no blueprint, no highly comparative models upon which we could base strategy and design. Thanks to Mayor de Blasio, we had a mandate, the legal authority and resources, but all at once we had to create and implement a plan of action. Fortunately, we had a body of commissioners and staff wholly committed to the task at hand, and more than 1000 New Yorkers and 150-plus thought leaders, subject matter experts, and community-based organizations willing to lean in and share their knowledge and experience to help us construct a pathway forward. Fueled by a passion or perhaps a calling greater than ourselves, we engaged in months of extensive outreach and public engagement, research, and study and thoughtful and a time-spirited deliberation, bringing us to this moment. Commissioners have arrived at a set of ballot proposals for charter revisions that are aspirational and actionable, and which hold the city government accountable for catalyzing sustainable change to dismantle structural

racism and advance racial equity. At their core, the proposals envision a city where all New Yorkers have the power, access, and opportunities they need to not only survive but thrive and the commitment of the city towards that sharing. On behalf of my fellow Commissioners and commission staff, I thank Mayor de Blasio and First Lady McCray for their bold vision and their courage to stand up this now historic Commission, the first of its kind, and for entrusting us with this awesome responsibility and me as chair. And I thank incoming Mayor, Eric Adams, for his demonstrated commitment to justice and inclusion for all and for embracing the work of the commission. We look forward to working with him and his administration to realize a more equitable city. Serving as chair alongside Vice Chair Henry Garrido, and every one of our esteemed fellow commissioners, K. Bain, Ana Bermudez, Lurie Daniel Favors, Frederick Davie, Darrick Hamilton, Christopher Kui, Yesenia Mata, Philip Thompson, and Jo-Ann Yoo and Executive Director Anusha Venkataraman and the dedicated commission team, Harold Miller, Melanie Ash, Erin Berry, Bianca Isaias, Rachel Cato, Tashawn Morgan, Jimmy Pan, Sam Stanton, Eden Mulate, Jacqueline Kennedy, Chi Nguyễn, Steph Halpin, and Davina Lee, and our Senior Advisor Kapil Longani. This has been for me will remain one of the most rewarding experiences of my life and career. And each of you lives an unfaltering commitment to undoing the strongholds of racism that have held captive BIPOC persons and communities. I express my deepest gratitude to you and the countless other New Yorkers who fight for racial justice and equity day in and day out. As I've shared at various points in times throughout this commission, I'm a daughter of the late Reverend Dr. William Augustus Jones, Jr, who was a national New York based civil rights leader. I'm a daughter of the civil rights movement. And as a daughter of the movement, I'm a beneficiary of all the work of leaders who have gone on to their reward, all of those leaders who gave up their time, their sweat, their tears, the bloodshed, to bring us to this moment and help advance racial equity here in this nation. As the daughter and the beneficiary, I am the burden bearer of this generation civil rights movement and we all are the burden bearers. For those selfless leaders taught us that our work would not be done until all people are free of racism and bigotry, and discrimination, marginalization and its many forms. Commissioners and staff today I'm humbled and I'm proud to say that we came together and we picked up the burdens laid down by those leaders of generations past gone on to their reward. We committed ourselves to fighting the continuing war against racism, and the marginalization of Black, indigenous, and other persons of color. And today marks the culmination of our work, a battle fought and won. No doubt, there's more to do. But I sense we've only just begun. Congratulations to all of you. Thank you for your service and your commitment to this city, and to this nation, and most importantly to the people who have been so marginalized for far too long. So today, what we're here to do is review and vote upon the proposals that will go to the New York City electorate, come November 2022. What I would like now is for every commissioner to introduce themselves, and provide any remarks that they may like to do, that they might like, in this particular moment. I will begin with our Vice Chair Henry Garrido.

Henry A. Garrido (HAG): 06:07

Good morning. My name is Henry Garrido. I'm the vice chair. And I want to say personally, that this has been a rewarding experience for me. I will say that it's been an honor to work with the chair. And I think we've really tackled some of the institutional racism that we've

seen. And I'm honored to be here and honored to have served with such esteemed commissioners in my role here. So thank you, and good morning.

JJA: 06:58

Thank you, Vice Chair Garrido. Commissioner Ana Bermudez.

Ana M. Bermudez (AMB): 07:06

Good morning, everybody. As Vice Chair Garrido said, I've been humbled and honored to be part of this group. Chair, Jennifer Jones Austin has been amazing as well, in keeping us sort of on a tight schedule. And so have the staff, you've been fantastic, Anusha, Melanie, everybody. Thank you for all the work that you've put in, because we did all the talking, and you did all the writing, basically, a lot of it, for the most part, so. And you've captured what the citizens and the people of New York communicated to us so well. And so I'm grateful to you, grateful to all of my fellow Commissioners. I learned a tremendous amount from you all, and we'll continue our work together and, you know, beyond this time, so thank you so much. And I look forward to what's to come.

JJA: 08:13

Thank you. Commissioner Bain?

K. Bain (KB): 08:19

Peace and blessings. I'm grateful for the opportunity to share, learn, and contribute in this body, Madam Chair. To the brilliant and authentic commissioners that have served, I have learned so much. And I know that we have accomplished something great in a short amount of time. I also feel there's much more to be done and for us to do. So again, in gratitude, I greet you this morning. Peace and blessings.

JJA: 08:49

Thank you. Commissioner Daniel Favors?

Lurie Daniel Favors (LDF): 08:55

Morning, everyone. I just want to start by saying I am so very grateful that when I got the phone call to participate in this commission, that I was moved to accept the call. And I say that because I've mentioned before that when I was in college, I majored in African Studies. We had a massive situation at Penn State where institutionalized racism was on display. Hate groups were at their height, and we had no idea just how well organized a number of the explicitly hostile and explicitly racist organizations we were dealing with were. That was my first time understanding what structural racism looks like, and that was, you know, just a year or so ago. But what I have come to realize in the decades since, is that the work of this commission is so desperately needed. And it has been an absolute honor to serve on this commission and to really set what I think is a model for the nation as it pertains to dealing with the centuries-old problems of which we could only scratch the surface in our nine months together. But that situation many, many years ago and our reality now have both led me to realize that this work must continue. As Commissioner K. Bain said, it is only the beginning. But I'm really grateful because of the integrity of the people of this group, and

because of our commitment to what is just and what is right and to the wealth and welfare of our communities, that we have been able to produce a skeleton that I think future generations of New Yorkers will be able to build upon in an effort to really continue the work that is going to be lifelong of dismantling structural racism. It's been a true honor, and I'm looking forward to doing the next round of work to implement and protect the provisions that we've worked so hard to come up with today, or over the course of the last year. Thank you.

JJA: 10:49

Thank you. Commissioner Hamilton?

Darrick Hamilton (DH): 10:55

Good morning. I will leave with gratitude as well. Thank you to the Chair, the Vice Chair, fellow commissioners, the Executive Director, as well as the staff. Definitely it was a great experience to get to know you all better, and to fellowship and to engage in analytical thought. We can have some pride in three dimensions of the report. There's a clear value statement with a preamble. There is the attempted establishment of a race equity office, as well as a commission by which to elevate these issues to not only hopefully cabinet level but an ongoing review board to do the dynamics as well as ultimately some attempt at measurement to really get the true cost of living. That said, we got a lot more to do. That said, there is accountability that needs to be elevated to the charter level, greater accountability with regards to holding people accountable when they are not engaged in equity. Greater accountability with regards to our measuring it at budgetary level, the value of race equity. So you know, all that said, I'm going to say gratitude. Thank you. More to do. And let's go forward.

JJA: 12:21

Indeed, indeed. Commissioner Davie?

Fred Davie (FD): 12:26

Good morning. And thank you. I want to thank you, Madam Chair, Vice Chair Garrido, Executive Director, rest of the staff for all of your hard work, leadership, commitment to this effort. Thank my fellow Commissioners as well for their leadership, their years of service to the city, and all that they do every day to address issues of racism and racial inequity in the city. I want to thank the mayor for the appointment. And I look forward to working with all of you and the new administration on ensuring that we get a positive vote on our proposals a year from now, November 2022. So thanks to all of you again. And I look forward to concluding what we have to do here today. But continuing for the time to come, not only over this next year, but over the next decades to make the city the city we all want to see. Thank you.

JJA: 13:34

Thank you. Commissioner Kui? Commissioner Kui you are muted.

Chris Kui (CK): 13:56

Yeah, hi. Uh, yeah, I also want to, you know, thank everybody and say that it's been an honor, you know, for me to be able to serve on this commission. And, you know, staff and commissioners, you know, for all your hard work, you know, and then for our ability to be able to, you know, listen to the New Yorkers from all walks of life, and from all the racial and ethnic backgrounds. And I just, you know, also especially want to thank the Chair and the Vice Chair, you know, for their leadership, so that we could actually be here today to be able to vote on these measures so then New Yorkers could vote on it. And, you know, on a personal level, I just want to say that, you know, it's just been tremendous that as an Asian New Yorker, that we are, you know, included in this whole process. And on a personal note, as an immigrant that actually came over as a teenager back in the 1970s, a long, long time ago, that I also faced many of the issues and challenges that we heard from many of the speakers and, you know, people who actually testified before us. And I would have never, you know, any time in my life is to, you know, to be able to imagine that I will be on this Commission to be able to vote on measures that's going to be able to change the city charter. And so for that, I really want to thank Mayor de Blasio and then also Deputy Mayor Thompson, you know, for this opportunity. And I know that what we've done today, is only the first step in the major journey. But then it's important that we continue to make sure that the community and New Yorkers come out to participate in the General Election to vote on these ballots. So again, thank you so much, and it's been an honor.

JJA: 16:07

Thank you, Commissioner Kui. Commissioner Mata?

Yesenia Mata (YM): 16:14

Well, today is a historic day as the final report is being presented. And this report echoes the voices of all New Yorkers from across all five boroughs. I am so grateful to have worked with my fellow Commissioners, and the Racial Justice Commission staff on this. We all come from different backgrounds, and different struggles, but are committed to the same fight to make New York City the most just place for all regardless of race, religion, sex, or immigration status. And equally important, I want to recognize the work that the advocates and organizers have done, like marching, protesting, and civil disobedience to lead us to this moment. But as we know, the work is not over. This report is just the beginning of a foundation. I want to thank everyone who came out and testified. And as a Staten Islander, specifically a big shout out to Staten Island, who made their voices be heard and made sure that we are no longer the forgotten borough.

JJA: 17:22

Thank you. Thanks, Commissioner Mata. Commissioner Yoo?

Jo-Ann Yoo (JY): 17:25

Good morning. I want to echo the sentiments of all of my fellow Commissioners. It has been an honor and a privilege. I can't believe nine months have passed so quickly. I think the friendships that we have formed in the Commission will make tremendous impacts. I think we will continue to find ways to work together, certainly. But for me, I think, you know, similar to Chris, you know, as an immigrant, I still considered myself a new New Yorker after

25 years. But being able to contribute to my city and to be able to elevate conversations that need to happen, especially during a global pandemic, has been a true privilege. For me, the most moving moments were the testimonies of the New Yorkers who came out to share their stories of personal pain and the tragedies they've endured and their own victories. And, you know, those stories I will carry for a really long time because they were so beyond moving. And those stories help to bridge a little bit of the chasms that each community feels because we may not know in each of our communities, what some of those stories may mean. But by listening and by providing opportunities for our neighbors to share their own struggles, I think has such a profound impact on my life. And I'm just really grateful for the Mayor. I thank you Chair Jones Austin, Deputy Chair Garrido and to all my fellow Commissioners. I know that at some point, we are going to need to wrap up, you know, good immigrant community gal. We're going to need to wrap it all up with a big meal and a big group hug. So I am looking forward to that day soon. But thank you very much.

JJA: 19:35

Thank you, Commissioner Yoo. Because of all the commissioners that have arrived at this point, the last commissioner to speak will be our Commissioner Phillip Thompson, who I just want to in this moment express my greatest, my deepest gratitude to. Working alongside Commissioner Garrido and myself and the staff, he helped us to navigate difficult terrain time and time again. He is most knowledgeable concerning government matters, history, just many different structures and environments that we had to navigate, and I can't thank him enough for the extra time. You all went above and beyond. He went above and beyond time and time again. And so Commissioner Thompson, please.

Phil Thompson (PT): 20:27

Thank you, Madam Chair. And it's really been an honor and a privilege and the highlight of my government experience and work in civil rights and in advocacy to really work side by side with this great body of commissioners. I want to thank Mayor de Blasio for opening up the city to include leaders and voices from our community, from all different parts of our community. And, you know, it's an extraordinary and diverse group of commissioners we have here. And, you know, I think the outpouring that we heard from many communities really showed that there was trust in this process, and in the commission members themselves that we would all listen. And we did. Many of the other commissioners said that our work has only begun. And I, as one of the Civil Rights beneficiaries, I hope my generation has learned that we cannot entrust our rights, our freedom, the welfare of our communities, to any governmental body, to any court of law. That ultimately, accountability has to reside in the will and determination of our people, of our communities to actually continue to keep the fight going. And not to abandon our collective hopes and dreams and democracy and desires that the values of this nation and that of this charter amendment that we're gonna add, that those values have to live within all of us. So I'm looking forward to the future struggle of actually making this city just. We kind of just said, this is the direction where justice lies. But the work of actually making it real we're just beginning leaning on, as our chair said, those who went before us. So thank you so much, Madam Chair.

JJA: 22:54

Thank you. Thank you, Commissioner Thompson. So now to the business at hand. The purpose of today's meeting is to discuss the ballot questions that if adopted today by the Commission will be put before the voters in the November 2022 election, as well as the final report that reflects the full body of the commission's work. The legislation ballot language and final report were all sent to the commissioners in advance of today's meeting for their careful review. The legislation ballot language and final report are available now to the members of the public on the Commission's website. By law, this commission reviewed the entire city charter. We set out ways to identify and root out structural racism through an extensive and very thoughtful process that included outreach to communities throughout New York City. We heard hundreds of ideas from New Yorkers in all five boroughs. We held nine issue area transforming foundations panels, with 71 thought leaders and practitioners covering a range of topics: overcoming racial disparities in health and mental health, eradicating education and equity for BIPOC communities, achieving racial equity in housing and land justice, planning for racially equitable future, ensuring a fair and just legal system for all persons, regardless of race and intersectional identities, achieving economic equity and closing the racial wealth gap, Racial Equity and Early foundations, ensuring civic and political engagement and empowerment for all persons, and intersectionality equity across identities. We held 12 public input sessions with at least one held in each borough. At these public input sessions, we had 364 attendees and received testimony from 134 individuals. We had 70 one on one interviews with community-based organizations. We made 42 presentations to community boards, civic groups, and New Yorkers reaching over 1200 participants. I'd like to thank the members of the public and subject area experts who testified throughout the process. We held 14 public meetings of the commission, 15 including this one. And even during the pandemic, we managed to hold four of these meetings in person, including two held at community centers in Manhattan and Queens. During these meetings, the Commission engaged in extensive deliberation leading up to and on the proposals that the Commission will be voting on today. Due to the pandemic and pursuant to allowances made under state law, nine commission meetings were virtual and the other four public input sessions. At our last meeting on December 3, the Commission discussed three proposals and voted on a resolution directing the staff of the commission to prepare the final report containing these proposals. Amendments to the resolution were considered and voted upon, and those that passed were incorporated into the resolution and served as instructions to the staff. The Commission also discussed a roadmap for racial justice, a list of recommendations for further exploration, and work to build on the proposals that we have put forward and to advance racial equity at the city, state, and federal levels. These proposals have been drafted, including the ballot questions and abstracts, and the report has since been prepared by the staff. Commissioners have reviewed the proposal and final report, and many of the proposed changes have been addressed in the version we are voting upon today. I'd like to thank and now invite Executive Director Venkataraman to briefly describe each of our proposals and our roadmap before we vote on each one and before we vote on the final report overall. What I will say before she comes is that the commissioners again have had the opportunity to propose revisions and had offered modest changes that have been incorporated. No significant changes were proposed. We're going to be voting on each proposal individually, and then voting on the record overall, including the roadmap for racial justice. Executive

Director Venkataraman will read out loud the abstract of each proposal. There'll be a motion on each ballot question and after the motion is seconded, discussions can be held. It isn't required but can be held. After Commissioners discussion, I the chair will ask for a vote and a roll call vote on each ballot question. After each of the votes on the three ballot questions, we will then have a roll call vote on the final report. Finally, I will call for vote on the commission resolution that delegates to staff the responsibility for getting these materials filed with the city clerk and taking other technical actions to make sure that proposals appear on the ballot in November 2022 and that voters are educated about the proposals. So I will now turn to our Executive Director Anusha Venkataraman for the first reading.

Anusha Venkataraman (AV): 27:55

Thank you. And I do see a hand raised from Commissioner Hamilton if we want to address that first.

JJA: 28:02

Please, Commissioner Hamilton.

DH: 28:05

A point of inquiry, Madam Chair. I believe at the last meeting the directions were we were going to vote on the report in totality and not the proposal separately.

JJA: 28:17

I do not remember that specificity. I thought that we had to vote on the proposals independent of the final report. I'm going to turn to our General Counsel, Melanie Ash to verify what is the process.

Melanie Ash (MA): 28:34

I think given the significance of placing individual questions on the ballot, it's best to have an individual vote taken on each ballot measure in the case that someone would like to express a vote against a particular ballot measure but support the report. We need to offer that opportunity. So hopefully, it will not take too much longer. But I think it's important legally just to individually vote on the proposals.

JJA: 29:04

And am I correct in understanding that that has been the pattern and practice of past Commissions?

MA: 29:12

Yes, that's correct, Chair. The pattern is to vote individually on the ballot proposals themselves and on the report as a totality. And then on the resolution that directs the staff to do the filing of those measures with the city clerk.

JJA: 29:27

Okay. Thank you, Commissioner Garrido?

HAG: 29:30

Good morning, Madam Chair. I just want to say for the record I'm not feeling 100% this morning. I'm exhibiting symptoms of whatever this is. And so my voice may be altered but I wanted to ask, actually, exactly what was said in regards to the precedent in voting individual actions. That as far as I know, this is the precedent. That we voted individual measures that have come up before, not us but I mean previous commissions have voted individually. So I want to make sure that we do that as well.

JJA: 30:18

Thank you. I see no other hands. I will now turn to our executive director to read the first ballot proposal.

Anusha Venkataraman (AV): 30:30

Absolutely. Thank you so much. I will now read the abstract of ballot question number one: to add a statement of values to guide government. This proposal creates a preamble to the New York City Charter. A preamble is a statement at the beginning of a legal document that explains its purpose or goals. The New York City charter does not currently have a preamble. Adding a preamble would allow New Yorkers to adopt a vision and statement of foundational values intended to guide city government in fulfilling its duties. The preamble to the New York City charter would read: Preamble: we the people of New York City declare that our city is a multiracial democracy, and that our diversity is our strength. We honor and respect the cultures, languages, and histories of all who call and have called this land home. And we celebrate their revolutionary imagination, courage, and resiliency. We strive to be a city where the value, talents, and contributions of every New Yorker are recognized and embraced and where equity and inclusiveness, community empowerment, accessibility, and opportunity for every New Yorker are the unwavering standards to which we are held accountable in all aspects of governance, business, and service delivery. We endeavor to assure that every person who resides in New York City has the opportunity to thrive with: a safe, healthy, and sustainable living environment, a resilient neighborhood served by quality and accessible infrastructure and services as well as a robust local economy. Vibrant and welcoming public spaces throughout New York City where everyone belongs and can move freely. Resources necessary to prosper economically and build wealth, safe, secure and affordable housing, quality and culturally relevant Child and Youth supports including early childhood and pre-kindergarten through 12th grade education. Compassionate and culturally responsive health, trauma, and mental health care. Access and opportunity to participate meaningfully in government decision making, and humane, empathetic, and respectful treatment. We recognize that New York City sits on the traditional territories of the original inhabitants, the Lenape, and we endeavor to honor their stewardship of the land by protecting our environment and all living things. We acknowledge the grave injustices and atrocities that form part of our country's history, including the forced labor of enslaved Africans, the colonialism that displaced indigenous people from their lands, the devaluing and underpaying of immigrant workers and the discrimination, racial segregation, mass incarceration, and other forms of violence and systemic inequity that continue to be experienced by marginalized groups, including but not limited to Black, indigenous, Latinx, Asian, Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern, and other people of color, women, religious

minorities, immigrants, people who are LGBTQ+, and people with disabilities. We also recognize that these systemic injustices are at the foundation of so many of society's structures and institutions, and have caused profound physical, emotional, social, and psychological harm and trauma to individuals, families, and communities. They have also resulted in widespread loss of economic opportunity and intergenerational wealth. The effects of these harms are deeply ingrained, systemic, and continuing. We are ever mindful that vigilance is required to prevent the recurrence of past or worsening of continuing harms. We must act intentionally to remedy these past and continuing harms and to reconstruct, revise, and reimagine our foundations, structures, institutions, and laws to promote justice and equity for all New Yorkers. The collective values set out in this preamble will guide the operation of our city government to inform and shape how the city carries out the duties, obligations, and authorities and upholds and protects the rights set out in the charter. We the people of New York City, united in our resolve to build a just and equitable city for all, recognize the efforts of those New Yorkers, past and present, who fought for racial equity and social justice, honor the contributions of those New Yorkers who have suffered in the name of freedom, and acknowledge all who fought, struggled, and dreamed for a better life and a better city. Together, we stand on their shoulders as we move boldly towards a brighter tomorrow for ourselves, our children, and future generations.

The proposed preamble, which I just read will be used to guide city agencies and officials in carrying out their duties related to planning, program reviews, and audits. It would not create a direct or indirect right of action to enforce its terms or the terms of any other provision of law. It would take effect upon certification that the electors have approved such amendments to the charter. Thank you.

JJA: 35:31

Thank you. I will now entertain a motion to vote on the first ballot proposal. Do I have a motion?

Fred Davie (FD): 35:39

Motion moved, Madam Chair.

JJA: 35:41

Thank you. May I have a second?

HAG: 35:44

Second.

JJA: 35:46

Thank you. For the record, that was Commissioner Davie who has made the motion. Commissioner Garrido has seconded. Any final comments regarding this proposal?

Fred Davie (FD): 36:04

Call the question, Madam Chair.

JJA: 36:06

I will call the question. Seeing none. I will now proceed with a roll call vote. Commissioner Bain?

AV: 36:15

Apologies. I did hear a question from Commissioner Davie. Was that correct?

Fred Davie (FD): 36:19

I was calling the question.

AV: 36:22

Oh, got it.

JJA: 36:24

Thank you.

HAG: 36:24

All right. You can't call the question, Madam Chair unless you have heard from both sides of the debate. I don't believe we have heard.

JJA: 36:34

We've heard no debate. I see no hands raised. No comment. And so I am now going to proceed with a roll call vote. Is that correct?

HAG: 36:47

Yes.

JJA: 36:47

Thank you. Commissioner Bain?

KB 36:53

I vote yay.

JJA: 36:57

Commissioner Bermudez?

AMB: 36:58

Yes.

JJA: 37:00

Commissioner Davie?

FD: 37:01

Yes.

JJA: 37:03

Commissioner Daniel Favors?

LDF: 37:04

Yes.

JJA: 37:06

Commissioner Garrido?

HAG: 37:08

Yes.

JJA: 37:09

Commissioner Hamilton?

DH: 37:10

Yes.

JJA: 37:11

Commissioner Kui?

Chris Kui (CK): 37:13

Yes.

JJA: 37:14

Commissioner Mata?

Yesenia Mata (YM): 37:16

Yes.

JJA: 37:17

Commissioner Thompson?

Phil Thompson (PT): 37:19

Yes.

JJA: 37:20

Commissioner Yoo?

Jo-Ann Yoo (JY): 37:21

Yes.

JJA: 37:22

And I vote yes. By a count of 11 in favor, none opposed, no abstentions, the proposal to put forth a ballot proposal relating to a charter preamble has passed. Thank you. We will now

vote on ballot proposal number two and first hear the ballot and the abstract read by our Executive Director.

AV: 37:52

Thank you so much, and this one is even a little bit longer. So bear with me. I'll channel my best speed reading as demonstrated by our chair at the last meeting. Ballot question number two: establish a racial equity office plan and commission. This proposal would create an Office of Racial Equity, require a citywide racial equity plan every two years, and create a commission on racial equity to represent communities needs and publicly review the citywide racial equity plan. Racial Equity means the achievement of equity with a particular emphasis on race and intersecting characteristics. That includes a process of closing gaps and wellbeing between racial groups with a purpose of greater equity for all. New York City's government does not have an agency that specifically focuses government on creating and promoting equity with an emphasis on racial equity. This proposal establishes a framework for planning and evaluating city government efforts to advance equity.

Office of Racial Equity. The proposed amendment would create an Office of Racial Equity led by a chief equity officer appointed by the mayor at the level of agency head or deputy mayor. The office would be available to work with every city agency to train and provide technical assistance on racial equity. Every two years each city agency with the guidance from the Office of Racial Equity would develop an agency racial equity plan. The office would incorporate the agency racial equity plans into a citywide racial equity plan. The office would establish standards for agencies regarding the collection and reporting of data to measure gaps and differences in well-being at the level of racial ethnic or other groups and communities. The Office of Racial Equity would identify priority neighborhoods to be highlighted in racial equity plans based on identified disparities in equity, health, or socio-economic burdens, or the neighborhood's potential to be disproportionately impacted by future events that can exacerbate those disparities. In addition to its role in the racial equity plan development process, the Office of Racial Equity would establish a citywide access design program to increase equitable access and reduce barriers to city programs, services, communities, and decision making. The Office of Racial Equity would also support agencies in prioritizing the development and implementation of policies and practices to address marginalization of individuals or communities, which could include work to limit the use of criminal history and background checks, establish alternatives to punitive enforcement, or improve equitable hiring and promotion within the city's workforce, create equitable distribution of resources across neighborhoods, and reduce or eliminate wage or occupational segregation. The proposal would also codify the taskforce on racial inclusion and equity, which was created in 2020. Under this proposal, the taskforce on racial inclusion and equity would be located within the Office of Racial Equity and be headed by one or more chairpersons appointed by the chief equity officer and in consultation with the mayor and other members appointed by the chief equity officer in collaboration with their employing agencies. The taskforce on racial equity, racial inclusion and equity will provide policy advice to the chief equity officer and coordinate governmental efforts to increase racial equity.

Racial equity plan: the proposed amendment will require the mayor to create a citywide racial equity plan and agencies to create agency racial equity plans every two years. The citywide racial equity plan and the agency racial equity plans as described here would identify and communicate publicly the goals and strategies both short and long term for improving racial equity and justice. The plans would also have data indicators including neighborhood level metrics to measure the extent of progress on racial equity work and show the effect the work is having on wellbeing and disparities. That progress will be included in a biannual progress report. The racial equity planning schedule is structured to inform the budget planning process. Timeline and schedule: a draft of the first plan will be delivered no later than January 16, 2024. With the final plan delivered no later than April 26, 2024 along with the mayor's preliminary and executive budgets. The short-term strategies would address the upcoming two fiscal years. The first full progress report would occur in September 2026. This timeline is designed to encourage agencies to put together their equity strategies while they're putting together their budgets, and in doing so allow those equity strategies to inform both the expense and capital budgets.

Commission on racial equity: the proposed amendment will create a commission on racial equity composed of 15 residents of New York City intended to bring perspectives of New York City communities into the decision-making process. The commission would identify and propose community priorities to inform the racial equity planning process and review and publicly comment upon agency and citywide racial equity plans, including what data should be collected. The commission would also publicly track agency compliance with racial equity planning process and could receive complaints about agency conduct that may be exacerbating racial disparities.

Commissioners: the commission would be led by a chair who is jointly appointed by the mayor and the city council speaker. The mayor would appoint seven commissioners. Five commissioners would be appointed by the City Council Speaker with a representative from each borough. One commissioner would be appointed by the Comptroller and one commissioner would be appointed by the Public Advocate. One mayoral appointee and one City Council Speaker appointee would be required to represent the perspectives and concerns of New Yorkers under the age of 25. And making appointments, each elected official would be required to consider, among other considerations, appointees who are representative of or have experienced advocating for people who are Black, Latinx, indigenous, Asian, Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern, and all people of color, immigrants, people with limited English proficiency, people with disabilities, students, youth, elders, people who are LGBTQ+, people who are justice involved, recipients of public benefits, residents of public housing and others. People with expertise in racial equity or racial justice shall also be considered.

JJA: 44:22

Thank you. Thank you very much. Now I will call for a motion to vote on the second ballot proposal.

HAG: 44:32

Motion to approve.

JJA: 44:34

Okay. May I have that motion seconded?

AMB: 44:37

Second.

JJA: 44:38

I'm sorry. Who seconded?

AMB: 44:40

Bermudez.

JJA: 44:41

Okay. Very good. Thank you. Is there any comment or debate?

FD: 44:51

Madam Chair, just one thing. At the beginning of the reading of this resolution in describing the office, it said the office shall be available. I'd like to at least raise whether or not that language should be-- it says the office shall be available to work with et cetera. I'd like to raise the question as to whether or not that language should be the office shall be required to. And I just like to put that on the table for conversation.

JJA: 45:33

Are there any other commissioners who would like to respond to that? Commissioner Daniel Favors?

LDF: 45:45

I do. I think that it is preferable to have language that speaks in absolute terms where it is most advantageous. And this is one of those areas where as opposed to making it permissive, framing it as a requirement, I think adds strength to the efforts that we're trying to see.

JJA: 46:05

Okay. Thank you. Are there other commissioners who would like to comment? Commissioner Thompson?

Phil Thompson (PT): 46:13

Um, I'd like to hear from legal counsel Melanie on this. My understanding of shall be available is actually pretty strong as opposed to saying maybe available, but I'd like to hear on legal interpretation from the lawyer.

MA: 46:39

I mean, by definition, I think shall is a requirement. It shall be available. They are required to make themselves available, required to offer assistance and to engage in a process of capacity building, et cetera, based on the specifics in the proposal. So, yeah, I think legally the word shall is a strong word. It is a requirement that the office support the agencies in their planning process.

AV: 47:17

I could read what is in the proposed charter language itself.

LDF: 47:22

If I could just clarify, my agreement with the statement is on not the word shall be. But what follows: available versus required. The shall I think is in keeping with the appropriate framing, but shall be available versus shall be required. And my preference is for required just to be clear.

JJA: 47:48

Thank you.

AV: 47:49

One point of clarification is that the charter language itself, what I read was a summary. What the charter language itself says is that the Office of Racial Equity shall have the power and duty to and then one of those items is provide technical assistance to and collaborate with agencies to support their capacity to engage in meaningful racial equity analysis, and support, confer with, and advise covered agencies as they draft equity plans.

FD: 48:20

That satisfies it for me, Madam Chair.

JJA: 48:23

Okay, Commissioner Davie. Commissioner Daniel Favors? Very good. Others? Okay. Seeing no hand, no further comment, I'm going to close debate. And I'm just going to quickly confirm that Commissioner Thompson your hand is raised from earlier, correct? Good deal. Okay. So I will now proceed with a roll call vote. On the ballot proposal number two, establishing a racial equity office, racial equity planning, and a commission. Commissioner Yoo?

Jo-Ann Yoo (JY): 49:14

Yes.

JJA: 49:16

Commissioner Thompson?

Phil Thompson (PT): 49:19

Yes.

JJA: 49:20
Commissioner Mata?

YM: 49:23
Yes.

JJA: 49:24
Commissioner Kui?

Chris Kui (CK): 49:26
Yes.

JJA: 49:27
Commissioner Hamilton?

DH: 49:28
Yes.

JJA: 49:29
Commissioner Garrido?

HAG: 49:32
Yes.

JJA: 49:32
Commissioner Daniel Favors?

LDF: 49:34
Yes.

JJA: 49:35
Commissioner Davie?

FD: 49:37
Yes.

JJA: 49:38
Commissioner Bermudez?

AMB: 49:41
Yes.

JJA: 49:42
Commissioner Bain?

KB 49:44

Yay.

JJA: 49:45

And I Jones Austin vote yay as well. So by a count of 11 in favor, zero opposed, and zero abstentions, ballot proposal number two relating to the creation of the Office of Racial Equity and commission on racial equity has passed. Now we move on to ballot proposal number three. Executive Director Venkataraman, read the abstract of ballot proposal number three.

AV: 50:18

Thank you. Ballot question number three: measure the true cost of living. This proposal will require city government to develop and report beginning in 2024 an annual true cost of living measurement of what it costs to live in New York City without consideration of public, private, or informal assistance. The proposed measurement is intended to focus on dignity rather than poverty by considering the costs of meeting essential needs including but not limited to housing, childcare, child and dependent expenses, food, transportation, health care, clothing, general hygiene products, cleaning products, household items, telephone service, and internet service. The true cost of living measurement would be reported in addition to standards that are used to measure poverty or set eligibility for public benefits. It would not create a direct or indirect right of action.

JJA: 51:17

Very good. May I have a motion?

HAG: 51:21

Motion to approve.

JJA: 51:22

All right. Motion to approve. Motion seconded?

AMB: 51:25

Second.

KB 51:26

Seconded.

JJA: 51:27

Okay. Any final comments?

MA: 51:33

Let me just clarify who the mover was and who the second was?

JJA: 51:36

I believe it was Commissioner Garrido and then Commissioner Bermudez.

MA: 51:41

Thank you.

JJA: 51:42

Okay. Any final comments? Hearing none, seeing no hands raised, I will now proceed with a roll call vote. Commissioner Bain?

KB 51:58

Yay.

JJA: 51:59

Commissioner Bermudez?

AMB: 52:00

Yes.

JJA: 52:01

Commissioner Davie?

FD: 52:03

Yes.

JJA: 52:04

Commissioner Daniel Favors?

LDF: 52:06

Yes.

JJA: 52:07

Commissioner Garrido?

HAG: 52:09

Yes.

JJA: 52:10

Commissioner Hamilton?

DH: 52:12

Yes.

JJA: 52:13

Commissioner Kui?

CK: 52:15

Yes.

JJA: 52:16

Commissioner Mata?

YM: 52:18

Yes.

JJA: 52:19

Commissioner Thompson?

Phil Thompson (PT): 52:21

Yes.

JJA: 52:22

Commissioner Yoo?

Jo-Ann Yoo (JY): 52:25

Yes.

JJA: 52:26

And I Commissioner Jones Austin vote in favor as well. By count of 11 in favor, zero opposed, zero abstentions, ballot proposal number three has passed. Congratulations. Thank you, all. I'm quite excited. All right. We've got some more work to do. So I'm going to keep it moving at this point. We now have to vote on a submission to the city clerk. I will now seek a motion to approve a resolution.

MA: 53:01

Actually, if I could interrupt. Sorry to interrupt. I think we need to also approve the final report or vote on the final report.

JJA: 53:08

Sorry. I'm a little excited. I'm a little ahead of myself. Okay, founded on the script. We have to vote on a final report with a roadmap. This is an important measure as well. I'm going to ask for a motion to accept and approve a final report, which contains the three proposals already voted upon. There's summaries, ballot questions, and abstracts and the text amendments to the New York City Charter. An introduction with background on the Commission and its process and a roadmap for racial justice, which outlines the ideas that the Commission recommends the city, state, or federal government further explore and pursue as appropriate. In the previous meeting, we discussed and took a vote on what should be included in the roadmap and staff produced a report consistent with that vote. May I have a motion to approve the final report with the roadmap?

LDF: 54:02

Motion moved.

CK: 54:04

I second

JJA: 54:05

Commissioner Daniel Favors moved the motion and seconded by Commissioner Kui. Is there any comment? Seeing no hands, hearing no comments, I will proceed with the roll call vote. Commissioner Yoo?

Jo-Ann Yoo (JY): 54:28

Yes.

JJA: 54:28

Commissioner Thompson?

PT: 54:31

Yes.

JJA: 54:32

Commissioner Mata?

YM: 54:35

Yes.

JJA: 54:36

Commissioner Kui?

CK: 54:38

Yes.

JJA: 54:39

Commissioner Hamilton?

DH: 54:41

Yes.

JJA: 54:42

Commissioner Garrido?

HAG: 54:46

Yes.

JJA: 54:48

Commissioner Daniel Favors?

LDF: 54:51

Yes.

JJA: 54:52

Commissioner Davie?

FD: 54:55

Yes.

JJA: 54:55

Commissioner Bermudez?

AMB: 54:58

Yes.

JJA: 54:59

Commissioner Bain?

KB 55:01

Yay.

JJA: 55:03

I vote yay as well. Counting 11 in favor, zero opposed, zero abstentions, the final report with the roadmap has now passed. Vote number five: submission to city clerk plus resolution. I seek a motion to approve a resolution that directs the staff to take the appropriate actions to deliver materials to the city clerk in order for the ballot questions to be placed before the voters and to take whatever action they deem necessary to educate the public about the ballot questions. Commissioners were sent this resolution in advance and have had the chance to review it. Is there a motion to approve the resolution?

Jo-Ann Yoo (JY): 55:47

Motion moved.

HAG: 55:47

Motion moved.

JJA: 55:49

All right. We've got Commissioner Yoo. May I have it seconded?

KB 55:52

Seconded.

JJA: 55:54

Okay. Commissioner Bain. Any questions or comments? Again, seeing no hands, hearing none, I will now proceed with a roll call vote. Commissioner Bain?

KB 56:15

Yay.

JJA: 56:16

Commissioner Bermudez?

AMB: 56:18

Yes.

JJA: 56:19

Commissioner Davie?

FD: 56:21

Yes.

JJA: 56:21

Commissioner Daniel Favors?

LDF: 56:23

Yes.

JJA: 56:24

Commissioner Garrido?

HAG: 56:26

Yes.

JJA: 56:27

Commissioner Hamilton?

DH: 56:28

Yes.

JJA: 56:29

Commissioner Kui?

CK: 56:31

Yes.

JJA: 56:32

Commissioner Mata?

YM: 56:33

Yes.

JJA: 56:34

Commissioner Thompson?

PT: 56:36

Yes.

JJA: 56:37

Commissioner Yoo?

JY: 56:39

Yes.

JJA: 56:40

And I vote yes as well. So by a count of 11 in favor, zero opposed, and zero abstentions, the motion to approve the resolution directing staff to take the appropriate actions to deliver materials to the city clerk in order for the ballot questions to be placed before the voters and to take whatever action they deem necessary to educate the public account-- I'm sorry, the public about the ballot questions is approved. All right. I will now quickly turn to our General Counsel Ash to provide us some information about the documents.

MA: 57:21

Thank you, Chair. This resolution that was just passed was directing staff to take action. Because the vote is being done virtually, we are not going to be doing the traditional signing of the resolution given that we're all located in a little Zoom screen. However, we are going to have three of the commissioners or sorry, the chair and vice chair as well as the executive director sign this and certify that this vote took place. But we've also prepared what we're calling an endorsement of the vote for eSignature by each Commissioner. And that will be emailed to you and with the instructions on how to do an eSign through DocuSign. And then that will be inserted into the final report as an appendix alongside the resolution, providing a visual documentation of your signature, essentially eSignature on the resolution. So we will be sending that to you. If it hasn't already gone out, we would ask that you do a DocuSign. If there are any questions, please reach out to staff and we can work on that. I did want to ask Chair Jones Austin, if now would be the appropriate time to vote on the minutes from the prior week.

JJA: 58:38

I was going to come to that at the end but we can do it right now.

MA: 58:41

Okay.

JJA: 58:42

If you'd like. So we-- backup. We have minutes from December 9th. And we would need to have those minutes approved. And so I would like a motion to approve the minutes from the December 9th meeting.

HAG: 59:00

Moved.

JJA: 59:02

I need it seconded.

FD: 59:03

Second.

JJA: 59:05

All right. I heard the second I think it was K. Bain. Any comments, proposed amendments, edits?

HAG: 59:15

Madam Chair, for the record, that was Commissioner Davie not Commissioner--

JJA: 59:21

Thank you, Commissioner Davie. Thank you. Commissioner Hamilton?

DH: 59:26

Are the minutes in our inbox?

JJA: 59:28

I believe the minutes were sent to you in advance of the meeting and are in your inbox. Why don't we take a minute for people to take a look at them if you haven't already had an opportunity?

AV: 59:42

They are also available online for the public and for commissioners to view as draft under the page about this commission meeting.

DH: 1:00:05

We don't have the chat. Am I the only one that doesn't have the minutes available? Is this a Darrick problem or?

JJA: 1:00:16

Is it possible to forward them?

AV: 1:00:21

I will send them to you, Darrick.

MA: 1:00:26

Given that we want to make sure that Commissioner Hamilton has had a chance to see the minutes, perhaps we move on with the programme and we'll come back to the minutes at the end if that makes more sense.

JJA: 1:00:43

We can do that. Just before we move forward, I just want to make sure that we have them in the hands of Commissioner Hamilton.

AV: 1:00:53

I have emailed them to you.

JJA: 1:00:55

Okay. It's not a lot of time. I'd rather just stay here for--

DH: 1:01:03

You know, I can abstain from the minutes so that we can move forward if I haven't had a chance to review it. If other commissioners have and I'm the only one, we should probably move forward with the programme.

FD: 1:01:16

They're actually pretty short.

JJA: 1:01:18

That's why. They're very short.

FD: 1:01:20

Yeah.

JJA: 1:01:25

Do you have them Commissioner Hamilton? I want to make sure we get this right. Do you have them?

DH: 1:01:29

I do now.

JJA: 1:01:31

Okay. Good deal.

MA: 1:01:34

Well, while we're giving Commissioner Hamilton a minute to read those, can I just clarify who it was who moved for the approval? I didn't catch the name.

HAG: 1:01:44

It was me, Henry Garrido.

MA: 1:01:46

Thank you. Thank you, Vice Chair.

JJA: 1:01:53

As Commissioner Hamilton is reading them, are there other commissioners who have questions, comments, proposed changes to the minutes?

DH: 1:02:04

I guess--

JJA: 1:02:05

Please, Commissioner Hamilton.

DH: 1:02:08

So perhaps my recollection might be off from the meeting. But I think we did discuss in the meeting at least a plan or roadmap for how this vote would take place. So you know, if it is the case that, you know, I misinterpreted or misunderstood how we would vote on a collective as opposed to each of the proposals which is useful, I wonder if we could reflect in the minutes that we had a discussion about how this meeting would take place in the minutes. And it can be vague. It can be fairly broad. We discussed that we would have a final vote in the next meeting that was called.

JJA: 1:02:53

General Counsel Ash, would you like to provide us with some very brief language right now so we can make sure that that's incorporated.

MA: 1:03:02

Sure. Let me just pull up the minutes in front of me here.

FD: 1:03:11

There is a section in the minutes that talks about the roadmap.

MA: 1:03:17

So, as I understand, let me just look and see. I'll make an edit and hopefully staff watching this can capture it, but I think the last entry talks about the chair in her closing remarks reminded the commissioners that the final commission meeting is scheduled to take place December 16, 4 to 6p.m. in person. At the time we intended it to be in person on December 16. At that meeting, commissioners will vote on the final report including ballot language. Is that sufficient as it reads or would you like, Commissioner Hamilton, for us to add that conversation was held amongst commissioners about the way in which a vote would occur?

DH: 1:04:02

Apologies. I read it fast. That's sufficient for me. Thank you.

MA: 1:04:05

Okay.

JJA: 1:04:06

Good deal. Thank you, Commissioner Hamilton, and thank you General Counsel Ash. So that being said, we have no edits that are being proposed to the minutes. I'm going to call the vote. All in favor of the minutes please say aye.

Commissioners: 1:04:24

Aye. Aye.

JJA: 1:04:26

Opposed? And I vote aye as well. The minutes for the December 9th Meeting have been approved. So I'd like to say that the heavy lift is now done. That we've done the work. We have put forward the three ballot proposals. They have been approved and will appear on the November 2022 Ballot. I can't contain my joy in this moment. You know if I wasn't on camera, I might be jumping up and down but inside I'm so grateful and thankful to all of you for all of the time, the commitment, the dedication that you've applied, and how sincere and earnest you've been in this work. And the countless New Yorkers who believed in this process and gave of themselves to it. I can't thank them enough and then the subject matter experts, the thought leaders, the community leaders, across this nation leaned in and said, hey, New York is doing a thing here. We need to lean in and pay attention and help set a new precedent for this nation. It's a big deal. It's a very big deal when a city determines to examine its constitution, if you will, its charter and speak to structural racism, and the steps that need to be taken to dismantle it. We've done a very good work here, collectively, as commission members, and the very able staff, and the New Yorkers have leaned in. This is tremendous. And I'm just so joyful in this moment. And again, deeply honored and deeply, deeply, deeply humbled. So we've done some great work here. But the work is not yet done. We've got a lot more work to do. And dare I say that the next phase of this work is just as important if not more important. And so I'd like our General Counsel Ash to now talk to us about the next steps for the commission and for these proposals.

HAG: 1:06:33

Madam Chair, I'm sorry. I just want to take a point of personal privilege to thank the staff for the great work that they did. You've done it before. But I want to be on the record to show that the staff has done tremendous work. And I want to thank them individually for not just their service, but their sacrifices. And I appreciate so much their guidance to this process. Thank you.

JJA: 1:07:00

Absolutely. Absolutely.

LDF: 1:07:03

Madam Chair, if I could just add by extension to that. I also want to just add a special point of thanks for the gentleness and the insightfulness and the intentionality behind guiding all

of our suggestions and never taking anything beyond what was being suggested. I know there were moments where many of us were very insistent that things must be this and so. And the staff which is absolutely professional and just so well learned at guiding us through this process, what could happen, what could not happen, even through the frustrations that came as a part of that. And so I just wanted to definitely add that on the record. You guys are absolutely amazing. And it has been an honor to serve with you.

JJA: 1:07:48

Absolutely.

FD: 1:07:49

Madam Chair, if I might. In addition to echoing what my fellow Commissioners have said, I want to thank you and the vice chair also for your leadership and guidance as well with a gentle hand. And I want to especially acknowledge the special effort you've made. I read a recent social media posting that might have had you on the other side of the pond doing this meeting, the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. And I'm so pleased that you're able to do it here in New York City, as opposed on foreign territory. But even more than that, I'm really pleased that your health is good and that all is well with you and your family. But thanks again to you, Vice Chair, staff, my fellow Commissioners. It's been an honor. Thank you.

JJA: 1:08:40

Thank you. And a true honor for me. Thank you all and I quickly just need to say a word of appreciation to Vice Chair Garrido. When I assumed the responsibility of serving as chair, I knew that it had to be with Vice Chair Garrido and I'm so glad that he stepped up. He was a friend, a confidant, a colleague, and he's become all the more so. He's made sure that I do not play in traffic. And I thank him for that. I thank him so much for that. He has been tremendous. So we've got some work to do. General Counsel Ash, tell us what we do next, what we can do, what we cannot do as commissioners. Please guide us.

MA: 1:09:31

Thank you, Chair. And on behalf of staff who are behind the scenes right now obviously not on screen, we appreciate very much your support and your words of encouragement and your thanks and it has been our honor to work with you and to help facilitate your vision as it's reflected in the report. So thank you for that. So next steps, a couple of things I want to just highlight for you. The first is that although the massive amount of work that you put in has resulted in this report and these ballot proposals, the work is not technically done. You continue to remain commissioners until Election Day in November 2022. So this means that all of the many legal requirements and restrictions, FOIL-related, conflict of interest, and other rules continue to apply to you. So as always, if you have questions before you are intending to take some action, and would like our guidance, please reach out to staff to help you through that process. I think the next thing that I really want to highlight is the importance of what you do in the weeks and months to come leading up to the election. And that is basically around the education campaign for this proposal, these proposals. There are legal restrictions on what you can and cannot do in connection with the ballot proposals. So the first thing I want to say is that you can and you should work to educate and

inform the public about the proposals. But that must take place in a neutral and informative way without advocating for the proposals. With respect to your work, at our events, at public events that are publicly funded, any discussion of the proposals must be educational, and not advocacy. So if I could explain a little bit what that would look like. So you are always free to explain what the proposals are, what the commission is intending them to achieve, why the commission chose to undertake certain proposals. For example, in a press release, or in an interview you give, you could state the commission believes the proposals would help to ensure the city's policy decisions are racially equitable. You could describe the proposals and what they're intended to achieve and explain how you think the proposals will achieve the goal and how that's your intention. You can encourage New Yorkers to vote and we encourage you to encourage New Yorkers to vote. You can encourage them to register to vote. What you cannot do is to cross the line and state which way they should vote or to advocate for a particular vote. So it's always welcome and important for everyone to be encouraged to go to the polls and express their own opinions and to have their voices heard. We have to be careful not to cross the line into advocating for a particular vote. And the key part is really, you can't use public resources, including the paid time of your staff, public facilities, computers, letterhead, materials, to advocate for or against proposals or to place them in an excessively positive light or negative light. So public resources would mean the work of the staff, for example, scheduling and coordinating interviews, preparing talking points, drafting social media points, or posts. All of that work must be done only for purely educational purposes, to make sure the public is aware of the content of the proposals and is aware of election date, is aware of that in a neutral way. So again, explaining the proposals, including why the commission chose to do something, what the goals were of the proposals, what they are hoping the proposals will achieve, and what they believe they will achieve, all of that is educational and is allowed with the support and assistance of staff.

JJA: 1:13:32

General Counsel, if I just may seek a point of clarification. You speak to us you are speaking to us as commissioners?

MA: 1:13:42

Yes.

JJA: 1:13:43

Right. And that is distinguished from your personal life and your private work life?

MA: 1:13:50

Right. And that's the next the next prong of it. So I think the important distinction to hear is that it's with the use of public resources. And the use of public resources must be done in a purely educational way. In your own private lives, in your own time with your own resources, you may advocate for or against the proposals. You may write op-eds. You may conduct interviews, and you may speak about you know, about your intention to vote and about encouraging people to vote. And if you are doing so, you may mention that you're a commissioner, but you can't speak for the commission as a body in encouraging a particular

vote. So important to know, you know, as a New Yorker, as a citizen, you're entitled to your first amendment rights to speak in your own private social media account or in interviews or in an op-ed, in a letter. And so you should feel free to do that. It's when you're using public resources that you have to be aware of the strict restrictions on education only. And again, when you're speaking in your personal capacity, and not on behalf of the commission as a whole, you may of course advocate for the proposals. And so because this is complicated, we will be providing you with some written instructions to help guide you. And we always encourage you to reach out if you're unsure of whether you're taking a step that would cross the line from education into advocacy.

JJA: 1:15:19

As a commissioner?

MA: 1:15:23

Right, as a commissioner and using public resources, at a public event, at an interview that was coordinated through the staff in some way where you're acting in your capacity as a commissioner. Again, in your own private life with your own money, funded through private fundraising, you could do a campaign. That's something that we could talk about more, we could explore more if you have an interest in that. And we can certainly, as I said, will provide you with some more guidance on any individual event or effort that you wish to take. But keep in mind when it is public resources, that is where the restriction lies.

JJA: 1:16:06

Okay. One other just complication. If you are employed by a private entity, a nonprofit entity, an organization that will explicitly want to ask this question, an organization that may have received government funds, but the government funds are not being-- how does that work? If you work for a nonprofit, and it receives government funds?

MA: 1:16:34

I think your nonprofit is likely governed by a set of rules that apply to the use of those funds anyways.

JJA: 1:16:41

I think we need to speak to have some clarification around that. That's what I'm really speaking to.

MA: 1:16:47

Yeah, I mean, I think, you know, we will send out a more detailed guidance. But essentially, if public funds are being used for whatever the event is, I think it would be best to be bound by the rules as if it's public funded. You know, obviously, private events, not funded by public dollars would fall outside of those requirements.

JJA: 1:17:11

And we will provide further clarification. I just want to make sure that the clarification speaks to those individuals affiliated with organizations that may receive government funding, but

not necessarily funding that would tie to advocacy activities in connection with the proposals.

MA: 1:17:35

Right. We can absolutely address that in the guidance that is provided.

JJA: 1:17:40

Very good. Okay. Are there any questions? Any comments?

FD: 1:17:47

Madam Chair, at the risk of talking way too much, I just want to encourage as soon as is appropriate, after January 1, to find a time as a commission collectively to brief the mayor elect and his staff on our proposals and our work. And I suspect you already have that in the works. But I just wanted to be on record as supporting.

JJA: 1:18:18

Thank you. Very much agreed and underway. But yes, thank you. Anusha?

AV: 1:18:26

At this point, I'd be happy to offer a little bit more detail about what you can expect in the coming year and specifically from January through November 2022, November 8, 2022, which is when the General Election is scheduled to occur. So you can expect more limited staff to be in place to facilitate outreach and public education on the ballot proposals, coordinate with incoming administration as well. The goal is to educate New Yorkers on the opportunity to turn out and vote on these proposals and on the substance of the proposals themselves. This education campaign is expected to consist of media and advertising, grassroots outreach, and outreach through key stakeholders and partners that have already been engaged in the process perhaps including, but not limited to, the organizations that you're affiliated with. You will receive more information about the public education campaign, including ways that you can participate in the coming months. The Commission may also choose to meet next year to provide input on or participate in this public education process. It is not required but it's absolutely an option should the commission choose to do so. And transitioning to our next and last piece of business today. I did want to formally let you know that this is likely to be my last commission meeting as executive director. I will be transitioning out of the role in the weeks ahead. I don't have a firm date yet, but I will certainly let you know when I do. Before I go, you will receive an updated staff contact list. The staff will be even smaller than it is. Now we're currently at 10. But we'll have a much smaller group of folks that will be on hand and available to you. And if I may just take the moment to say that it's absolutely been a pleasure and truly an honor to work with you over these last nine months, which has felt both like 10 years and a few weeks at the same time. It's certainly been an intense and very fulfilling part of my career. And I know it has been in yours as well. I just want to extend a huge thank you to the incredible staff of the commission, a very small staff, who have all probably worked harder than they ever have in their entire careers. And I want to thank each of you as commissioners and congratulate each of you, for your truly authentic, impassioned leadership, in charting a path forward

towards racial justice for New Yorkers. You and we are truly making an impact for many, many years to come and for generations. And lastly, I want to thank our Chair and our Vice Chair, especially, as well as Deputy Mayor Thompson and Mayor de Blasio, for entrusting me with this great responsibility. I have learned so much from you. It has been so wonderful getting to know all of you and working with such fabulous inspiring people. And just thank you, thank you, thank you.

JJA: 1:21:36

You've been tremendous. I mean, we all just need to pause and give you an applause. And just thank you, because you stepped into this, very much like all of us not knowing what the future would hold but having a vision and having faith. And you brought us to this point. There were times along the way where several questioned whether or not we would meet our timeline, and you stayed the course and you kept us moving at every turn. There never was a moment that you were unresponsive, even at 3 o'clock on a Sunday morning. You were immediately responsive, and you've carried a lot during this time. You've carried so much, and you've done it so ably and so admirably. And so we would not be here were it not for you and your very capable leadership team and staff. Never, never, never waivering. So we thank you. And, of course, we are sad to see you leave us. But we're excited about what the future holds for you. And I can be certain that I'm never going to lose contact with you because you're somebody who you want to stay in touch with. We're excited about you and your future and your family. And I just can't thank you enough. So what we need to do now-- Thank you. We need to act on a resolution. You may recall that back in April of this year, the Commission passed a resolution delegating authority to the executive director to conduct day-to-day business of the commission. With our Executive Director Anusha Venkataraman now leaving us, we need to pass a resolution to ensure the continuity of the work and a smooth transition. So a resolution has been prepared and was shared with the commissioners to essentially delegate authority for conducting the day-to-day business affairs of the commission to the Deputy Executive Director, Harold Miller. And so this amendment was submitted to commissioners in advance and I would like a motion to approve this amendment to the resolution.

HAG: 1:24:04

Moved.

JJA: 1:24:05

Seconded by?

FD: 1:24:06

Second.

JJA: 1:24:08

I heard Commissioner Davie. Any questions? Any comments? All right. Roll call to approve the amendment to the resolution. Commissioner Bain?

KB 1:24:23

Yay.

JJA: 1:24:24

Commissioner Bermudez?

AMB: 1:24:27

Yes.

JJA: 1:24:28

Commissioner Davie?

FD: 1:24:30

Yes.

JJA: 1:24:31

Commissioner Daniel Favors?

LDF: 1:24:32

Yes.

JJA: 1:24:33

Commissioner Garrido?

HAG: 1:24:37

Yes.

JJA: 1:24:37

Commissioner Hamilton?

DH: 1:24:39

Yes, and profound gratitude Anusha.

JJA: 1:24:43

Commissioner Kui?

CK: 1:24:45

Yes.

JJA: 1:24:46

Commissioner Mata?

YM: 1:24:48

Yes.

JJA: 1:24:49

Commissioner Thompson?

PT: 1:24:50

Yes.

JJA: 1:24:51

Commissioner Yoo?

JY: 1:24:53

Yes.

JJA: 1:24:54

And I vote in favor as well. Count of 11 in favor, zero opposed, zero abstentions, motion to approve the amended resolution has passed. And I want to take a minute to welcome our deputy now who will assume the role of the Executive Director. Harold Miller, we want to welcome you into this new role. Excited for you, continuing on this journey with us. I've had the pleasure of working with you over the course of the last now eight years. And I'm excited about what is now next for us as you assume this post.

Harold Miller (HM): 1:25:29

Thank you, Chair and profound gratitude to the commissioners and to Anusha and the entire team, for trusting me to assume in this role and help guide us to the end. So I'm looking forward to it and looking forward to working with everyone, continue to work with everyone moving forward. Thank you.

JJA: 1:25:51

Thank you. Thank you. So just a point of clarification. The commission was put in place for two years. And so the commission still technically even though we pass these ballot proposals, we're still here. We've got work to do. We will be gathering to spend some time with the staff and recognize the great work that has been achieved. And tomorrow, those who are able, will join us. I think we will meet at Foley Square. Is that correct? At 10 a.m. or 10:30 a.m.

HAG: 1:26:25

10:30 a.m. at Foley Square.

JJA: 1:26:28

To march to the city clerk's office to deliver the ballot proposals and the final report. So hopefully, as many of you who are able to attend will attend, and I hope to see you there. So we will convene again in the new year, and we'll begin the work of looking at what must be done via public education to make sure that our voters, the New York City electorate is fully informed about these ballot proposals, and has all that they need to act come November 8, 2022. So um, let's see. Does anybody have anything they'd like to add at this time?
Commissioner Thompson?

PT: 1:27:09

Yes. I'd like to request that the Commission send a letter in tribute to Bishop Tutu. In many ways, Bishop Tutu and the South African people were an inspiration and guide for what we have been doing. And I remember Bishop Tutu came to New York in 1984 expressing solidarity with the struggle in this country. I remember when the president of ANC, Oliver Tambo came to New York City in 1985, to express support and solidarity. When Nelson Mandela came soon after his release from prison to visit the city's first African American mayor, and we held a ticker tape parade. And in so many ways, the South African struggle has been so close to our own. I think it would be very much appreciated by the people in his family in South Africa, if we were to do so.

JJA: 1:28:15

Yes, I agree. And we will indeed do that. And if I may just say, I did share yesterday on a radio programme that I co-host on Sunday morning that very early on in the commission's work, we were fortunate to learn from persons who worked with Bishop Desmond Tutu, when he led the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for South Africa. And it was those first conversations I had with our very own Senior Advisor Kapil Longani as well as persons he was in touch with who worked with Bishop Desmond Tutu, that we grew to appreciate the importance of reconciliation in this work. The importance of people who've been harmed, and the persons who harmed them having the opportunity to engage one with another and try to find a pathway forward. We were very humbled by what we learned from those persons who were privileged to work with Bishop Desmond Tutu. And I'd like to think that those lessons really served as a foundation for the work that we sought to accomplish here. And so I thank you, Commissioner Thompson, for making the suggestion and I agree with you.

PT: 1:29:38

Thank you.

JJA: 1:29:39

Are there others?

Harold Miller (HM): 1:29:40

Madam Chair, I just wanted just to clarify, going back to our walk tomorrow is that it is open to the public. So those who are watching on our various social media channels right now, they're more than welcome to meet us at Foley Square at 10:30 as well. And any other commissioners who have membership-based organizations are more than welcome to invite staff and members where appropriate to join us as well. Thank you.

JJA: 1:30:13

Thank you. All right. Ah, seeing no hands, not hearing anybody chime in, the work of the Commission for today's meeting has concluded and so I am going to be-- bring this meeting to a close. I ask for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

HAG: 1:30:37

Motion moved.

JJA: 1:30:39

May I have that seconded?

PT: 1:30:41

Second.

JJA: 1:30:43

Good deal. All in favor of closing this meeting and going and celebrating?

Commissioners: 1:30:49

Aye.

JJA: 1:30:55

The motion is adopted. The meeting is adjourned. Thank you, all.

AV: 1:31:03

Thank you, everyone.

FD: 1:31:04

Thank you. Bye bye. Happy New Year.

Commissioners: 1:31:06

Happy New Year. (Garbled)

KB 1:31:16

Love, love, love.

JJA: 1:31:18

All of the above.