



## Greater Tulsa Area African American Affairs Commission

Regular Meeting | February 11, 2025 | 6:00 – 7:00 pm

City Hall at One Technology Center | 10 North Meeting Room

### Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present: Patricia Carter-Breeckner, Marquess Dennis, Dewayne Dickens, Brian Humphrey, Margaret Love, Tracye Love Chandler, Burlinda Radney, Jon Paul Ray, Maybelle Wallace, Juddie Williams

Commissioners Absent: David Harris, Larissa McNeil, Jameelah Stuckey, Kandy Whitley-White, Kristi Williams, Tony Williams

#### I. Call to Order and Introductions

- a. Chairman Dickens called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm. A quorum was not yet present.

#### II. Guest Speaker: Erran Persley, Chief Economic Development Director at City of Tulsa

- a. Erran introduced himself and discussed his role at City of Tulsa.
- b. Notable projects recently announced for Tulsa:
  - i. Tulsa Space Testing Center: The first rocket thruster testing facility in the country, will attract other aerospace companies to Tulsa. Average salary for jobs will be \$67 – 70k.
  - ii. Crusoe: An artificial intelligence project that makes switches for large data centers. Will bring about 100 new jobs.
  - iii. NorSun: Norwegian company moving to Tulsa that manufactures a part for solar panels.
  - iv. Tulsa Hills Marketplace
  - v. Kirkpatrick Heights Greenwood: City has given funding and acreage to a Community Development Corporation, enabling the community to make decisions about what happens in their neighborhood.
  - vi. Convention Center Hotel: Will have 500 – 600 rooms and create 400 new permanent jobs. Goal is to have hotel open by 2029.
  - vii. Education Begins with Home Initiative: Collaboration between Green Country Habitat for Humanity and Tulsa Public Schools (TPS) to provide \$50,000 in down payment assistance to TPS teachers for the purchase of a home through Habitat's homebuyer program.
  - viii. Zink Lake opening
- c. Housing and transportation options need to reflect the reality of our city.
  - i. 26% of Tulsa households include children.
  - ii. More than 13,500 Tulsa households have no vehicle available.
- d. Challenges:



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- i. How do we ensure that everyone benefits from the economic development boom in Tulsa?
  - 1. Opportunity for the Commission to advise.
- ii. Building the workforce of the future at the earliest stages of education. What are the future opportunities we need to prepare our children for?
- iii. Rebuilding local communities with local talent and skills. How can we ensure the people in a community are working on the projects?
- iv. Creating an even playing field so everyone is competitive.
- e. Ask for commission input:
  - i. Community history and dynamics.
  - ii. How do we think a different way to ensure inclusion and equity?
- f. Commission Discussion:
  - i. Commissioner Love: What is the plan to train current Tulsa residents to be ready for the new jobs?
    - 1. Erran: Most people for several of these projects will be hired locally. Must get people qualified for those jobs, so in conversation with the companies to learn what training is needed. Working with local colleges, though not all jobs require college education.
  - ii. Commissioner Ray: Colleges sometimes create specialized training programs to fill an upcoming gap in the job market and encourage students to build needed skills to be hired. Can guarantee a job to students and certain salary. Benefits community and companies.
    - 1. Erran: In conversation with TPS about virtual reality training programs so students can have experiences while in high school.
  - iii. Commissioner Dennis: There is such a focus on children and families, but most households in Tulsa don't have children. What challenges come up because of that?
    - 1. Erran: Need to shift our mindset around what types of housing is needed (ie: single-family homes are not as needed as apartments). Encourage more density in housing development projects.
  - iv. Commissioner Carter-Breeckner: Can you share more about the Kirkpatrick Heights project?
    - 1. Erran: The CDC is fully operational, currently visioning for the site. Companies are already looking at it for development. Anticipate process will go relatively quickly, could have development on that site by this time next year. Decisions made and funds generated belong to the CDC.
  - v. Commissioner Love Chandler: Heard a hospital will be built downtown near the convention center hotel, do you anticipate anything will be affected?



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1. Erran: Don't anticipate it will be affected. Looking to make the entire convention center and arena area of downtown more developed and attractive.
- vi. Commissioner Radney: Assume the households with children younger. Families often move to suburbs when children get older. There used to be a youth employment service for younger folks to find jobs. Unsure if something like that exists now.
  1. Erran: The mayor announced the new Office of Children, Youth, and Families today. Having a program like that will greatly help our city's youth.
  2. Commissioner Radney: Would be nice to have more formalized program to engage youth.
- vii. Vice Chair Humphrey: Is it perceived as an issue or opportunity that most households in Tulsa do not have children?
  1. Erran: Opportunity, this is who we are as a city. Must know the data.
- viii. Chairman Dickens: Great to see the development downtown and near Greenwood. Are there plans to go further into north Tulsa to develop those areas?
  1. Erran: Having conversations about how to attract the right kind of companies to come to that area. Not prioritizing big box stores. Want to encourage more local people to invest in the area, and more small and medium size businesses. There is an infrastructure challenge.
- ix. Commissioner Love Chandler: With the growth in the next five years, feel good about existing organizations (such as Urban Coders Guild) and programs that are preparing students for the future.
  1. Erran: Need to better connect organizations doing good work together to expand impact and share ideas.
- x. Erran offered to connect with commissioners or host a working session to discuss further.

### III. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- a. Chairman Dickens entertained a motion to approve the January meeting minutes.
  - i. Commissioner Dennis motioned, Commissioner Love seconded.
    1. Aye: 10, Nay: 0
  - ii. Motion carried, January meeting minutes approved.

### IV. New Business

- a. Chairman Dickens entertained a motion to revise the order of the agenda to address New Business next.
  - i. Commissioner Wallace made a motion, Commissioner Humphrey seconded.
    1. Aye: 10, Nay 0
  - ii. Motion carried, the Commission proceeded with New Business.

- b. Commissioner Radney shared that it is time for her to roll off the Commission, and it has truly been a privilege to serve. Represent the Business and Agents and Networking Group (BANG) on the Commission, now have a National Association of Real Estate Brokers (NAREB) focused on African American realtors. Made a recommendation to Chairman Dickens to replace BANG seat with NAREB seat.
- c. Chairman Dickens thanked Commissioner Radney for her service on the Commission.
- d. The commission will work with the Mayor towards the recommendation that Commissioner Radney has provided.

**V. Chair Report**

- a. Chairman Dickens noted we will continue to fill Commission seats and solidify the calendar of events. Want the Commission to be driven by the committees, so calendars should be clear and attainable.

**VI. Committee Reports**

- a. Policy Recommendations
  - i. Commissioner Dennis: Discussed possible committee goals in the last committee meeting. Need members to fill out their surveys to narrow focus for the year. Also discussed how GTAAAC can engage in policy.
  - ii. Will identify who will take the lead on connecting with other commissions.
  - iii. Commissioner Dennis suggested Commissioner Kristi Williams would make a good Policy Committee co-chair. Chairman Dickens noted that attendance at Commission meetings are important if someone is to lead a committee.
- b. Community Engagement and Culture Promotion
  - i. Commissioner Wallace: Commissioner McNeil created a wonderful newsletter. Had planned to meet this past month and weren't able to.
  - ii. Chairman Dickens: When there's a product you're producing every month, it speaks for itself. Activity is visible.
  - iii. Commissioner Wallace: Trouble in Mind is February 15 and 16 at the Tulsa Performing Arts Center. About a Black actress who is auditioning for a play on Broadway.
- c. Education and Skill Building
  - i. Commissioner Juddie Williams: Met last week, working to refine 2025 goals and determining how to support Black and African American families in schools. Considering literacy, chronic absenteeism, and family engagement.
  - ii. Commissioners Juddie Williams and Stuckey attended a cross-commission education meeting with education committee members of other Title V Commissions. Discussed past, present, and future of each commission's support of educational outcomes. Will meet again in April to identify actionable ways to collaborate.
  - iii. Commissioner Carter-Breeckner: Also working on a resource guide for families.

iv. Commissioner Radney: Much has changed under the new presidential administration. Tulsa Public Schools's Superintendent has affirmed safety of all children in schools. Has the commission considered a letter of support to the district?

1. Commissioner Love Chandler added the efforts to dismantle the Department of Education.
2. Chairman Dickens: That has not been discussed yet, something for the Policy and/or Education Committees to take on.
3. Commissioner Radney: This issue is important, especially when discussing how to retain people in Tulsa.
4. Chairman Dickens: Committees can determine the avenue they'd like to take. Can be a letter of support, panel discussion, or op-ed.

d. Human Rights Commission

- i. Lexi provided an update from the Human Rights Commission's January meeting, which included the 2025 Lifetime of Compassionate Service Award Ceremony—honoring Mike Brose—and a presentation from Human Rights Commissioner and Asian Affairs Commissioner Parisa Pilehvar on the intersection of literacy and civic engagement.

**VII. Old Business** – no old business

**VIII. Announcements / Public Comments**

a. Public Comments:

- i. Member of the public shared information about the 2025 winter commencement for Tulsa Public Schools. Also conducting a survey of students' post-grad needs.
- ii. Jaymie Collum, Community Engagement Coordinator at Municipal Court introduced herself and spoke about her goals to build community connections.

**IX. Adjournment**

a. Chairman Dickens entertained a motion to adjourn.

- i. Commissioner Dennis made a motion, Commissioner Ray seconded.

1. Aye: 10

b. Motion carried, meeting adjourned at 7:10 pm.