



Public Meeting 4/15/21 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
- Tashawn Morgan
- Petra Casares
- Andria Alefhi

Jennifer Jones Austin (JJA) 0:00

I am calling as the Chairperson of the Racial Justice Commission and Charter Revision Commission, the first public meeting, to order. I want to begin by telling you all that I'm honored to be serving on this Racial Justice Commission and I'm truly honored and appreciative to all of you and for all of you for serving as well. I hold the title Chair and I will honor and respect that, but I do want you all to know and appreciate that I see all of us in this work as equals -- it's just my job to make sure that we've got the wheels on the bus and that we achieve our aims and our objectives, but we all have a vital role to play in this and we are equals in moving this work along. I want you to know that I have received a certificate of appointment signed by the Mayor, establishing us all as Commissioners for the Racial Justice Commission and again, I just want to let you all know that I'm really looking forward to working with you, leading this Commission, learning from you, engaging with other New Yorkers that you helped bring to the table, and collectively working to put forth a report and recommendations in the coming months. I want to acknowledge that our Vice Chair, Henry Garrido, is with us as well, and he and I will be doing a lot of, I guess kind of loosely using a sports term, we'll be

quarterbacking or you know he'll be quarterbacking at times then, I'll be taking a back seat -- that type of thing. But glad to have him with us. Glad to have you all with us. We are having our first public meeting and what we are going to do is to walk the Commission on the whole through the kind of, the rules of engagement, we're going to take a look at the mission the scope, our schedule and timeline, and then we're going to dedicate a significant portion of this meeting to the Commissioners getting to know one another. And those who are listening, you know through Youtube and other mechanisms, just leaning in to see what this Commission is all about, giving them an opportunity to meet you and learn about you as well. Our Executive Director who I will introduce in just a minute will be walking us through the schedule of activities, and then again at the end we will have an opportunity to share with everyone a little bit more about ourselves so, I am going to quickly for everyone just do a brief introduction -- just your name and your affiliations and appreciating that my name begins with "A," I begin because we're going to do this alphabetically, I am Jennifer Jones Austin and I am the CEO and Executive Director of the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies FPWA, which is an anti-poverty social policy and advocacy organization, based here in New York City. And in my downtime, I am the co-host of the WBLS Open Line Sunday Morning Radio Program, centering on issues of concern to primarily the Black Community in the tri-state area. Henry Garrido, our Vice Chair is the Executive Director of DC 37 AFC. K. Bain is Founder and Executive Director for Community CapaCity Development. Ana Bermudez, Dean, Esquire, is Commissioner of the Department of Probation. Reverend Fred Davie is the Executive Vice President for Union Theological Seminary and now Senior Advisor, and he is the Chair of the Civilian Complaint Review Board. Lurie Daniel Favors, Esquire, is Interim Executive Director at Medgar Evers [College]. Darrick Hamilton Founding Director of Institute on Race and Political Economy at The New School and Henry Cohen Professor -- and Henry Cohen, Professor of Economics and Urban Policy. Chris Kui, Former Executive Director of Asian Americans for Equality. Yesenia Mata, Executive Director for La Colmena. Phil Thompson, Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives. And Jo-Ann Yoo, Executive Director of Asian American Federation. All will have an opportunity as we move towards the latter half of this meeting to introduce themselves and to help you all appreciate who they are and why they are engaged in this work. They've been selected because of their backgrounds and their experiences and what they will bring to the table in this moment and we are just fortunate to have them on board. A few housekeeping matters, just want to note let's see it says AV here, but I'm not sure who that is so --

Anusha Venkataram (AV) 05:21

That's me. I can chime in. Thank you. Jennifer, I just want to let folks briefly know, Jennifer is going to formally introduce me a little bit later but for members of the public who are joining us either over Youtube or over Webex, I just wanted to let you know that this meeting is a public meeting, but it is one where the discussion will be among the Commission members, so there will not at this meeting, be the opportunity for comment or for questions, but we want to make sure your technology is working and our accessibility functions are working so if you are having any issues, you can email requests at charter@nyc.gov and we will assist you. That's request at charter@nyc.gov.

JJA 06:12

Thank you. Thank you Anusha. I'm laughing at myself because I saw housekeeping and AV and I was like, is that audiovisual that we hadn't yet introduced you? Let's see -- So I want to say a few words to just set the stage and you know there's a part of me that appreciates that in many, in many respects -- we don't really need a setting of the stage because any one of us who has been awake and not living under a rock

for the last you know, I'd say now 15 months, but I'm going to go back even farther right, if you are alive and woke in America, then you know, we would hope that you appreciate that systematic systemic racism didn't just occur didn't just kind of arise over the course of the last 15 months -- but what has transpired in these last 15 months with COVID wreaking havoc throughout the country but particularly and especially in communities of color, and then with the killings of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Rachel Brooks, Breonna Taylor, and most recently Daunte Wright. We all can appreciate that this nation has a lot of answering to do if you will, that our Communities of Color, beginning with Indigenous people and then centering on African and people of African descent, have for far too long been marginalized, oppressed and racialized in every pillar of our society -- not just policing, but in education, housing, jobs, and wages, health care, and even the arts and culture -- the list goes on and on. And so you know these are reasons that we all can appreciate, reasons why we need to come together when the evidence is just you know, continuing to build in the form of senseless killings and deaths and hate crimes. You know the rise in hate crimes visited upon Asian Americans and just inequity as it continues to grow in every pillar of our society -- this is the time when we've got to step up and look at our nation's laws, our state's laws, and our cities' laws, appreciating that we can try to you know, kind of work our way out of this through incremental change with policies. But unless we address systemic structural racism at the core, we're just never going to get ahead so, sharing this belief and this conviction, Mayor De Blasio has established the Racial Justice Commission and has appointed us as Commissioners. The mission of the Racial Justice Commission, being empowered with the legal authority of a Charter Revision Commission is to seize the transformative potential of this moment in history -- to identify the structural changes and significant policy reforms that will advance racial justice and equity, and begin to dismantle structural racism for all New Yorkers.

JJA 9:35

The Commission is charged with producing a rigorous community-informed and data-driven guide to shape the path forward towards a fair, equitable, and just New York City while focusing on what can be uniquely addressed through the New York City Charter. The Commission may also include recommendations on state and federal changes, and even those private companies should undertake to address the roots of inequity here in New York City. Our scope, the Commission is mandated to look at the entire Charter but must focus its work to ensure that the Commission's recommendations get to and address structural sources of racism and inequity. We're going to look at and also center on agency systems, City agency systems, and policies. We're going to work with agencies on what they can do even before we release our recommendations at the end of this year to bring about systemic change and we are going to through our work on a continuing basis engage with other sectors private sector arts and culture nonprofit sector to examine what changes they too can undertake to address systemic and institutional racism here in New York City. Reconciliation is going to be an important part of this process, we've got to build trust and we've got to begin doing that by naming and seeking to repair the harms that have occurred for centuries now intergenerationally. We're aiming for large impactful structural changes that we can make, and we also want to inspire institutional and cultural change. Our work is going to be informed by experts, beginning with our Commissioners, but also we're going to engage with experts around the nation to hear from them, what they can help lend to this process, in this moment, and we're going to hear from and learn from as best we can, experts in the form of persons with everyday lived experience here in New York City. Our work has to be driven by the communities that have been challenged the most by systemic racism, our work has to be informed by

persons with lived experiences. We are an independent Commission appointed by the Mayor. The Mayor wrote and has signed an executive order, establishing the dual nature of this Commission -- a Racial Justice Commission and a Charter Revision Commission because it is through Charter Revision that we can bring about the changes in structural laws that have served to birth and perpetuate racism and inequity here in our City. The Commission is tasked with delivering recommendations for ballot proposals in a final report by the end of 2021. By the end of this year we may decide to submit proposals for the 2021 ballot, but if we do that, we have to do so by July 26, July 27 of this year. We will take action more than likely on things that don't require Charter Revision, well before December. Again, looking at agency policies and agency practices --Where we can make changes sooner rather than later but, always remembering that we want to center, both on policy and law because policies can be changed from one administration to the next, it's more difficult to change the laws. I want to reiterate that we're very much interested in and anxious, I dare say, to receive input from the communities throughout New York City.

JJA 13:56

We want to hear the voices of people throughout this City, this large community, if you will -- varied communities, different communities within a larger community that is New York City. We want to take their voices and then align them, crosswalk them, with the structure and with policies and practices in government and then put forward revisions that we believe will do the most to end systemic racism and advance true and lasting justice, and inclusion for all. I'm going to talk just for a few minutes about the framing, and I'm just going to speak to this very loosely just to give you kind of a sense of how we as the Commission at this juncture are thinking about this work what I want to say at the outset is that we're going to learn and we're going to grow. As we go and so on, thoughts that we have today about how to frame and structure will be informed by what we learn, what we hear, what we read from you know, other Commissions, from all the Commissioners, from experts again, including persons with lived experience. Our thinking right now is that the Charter, which is, as I've shared with others, is better than 300 pages in length with single spacing throughout, and as a lawyer, I can say with words -- every single word having meaning, meaning there's no fluff in there.

JJA 15:31

The words have meaning, it can be very difficult to try to unpack 300 plus pages of single-spaced words and language and get to the work of finding the meat if you will, just by reading the Charter line by line - now we are going to do that reading, but we need to put some structure to this and so what we've been centering on in terms of developing a structure is thinking about how systemic racism plays out, what it looks like in everyday life, and what we are appreciating is that systemic racism in everyday living essentially looks like power differences -- who holds power, who does not. Power to decision making, power when it comes to elections power when it comes to who holds office who makes decisions about what happens in various communities throughout New York City, so we want to center on power. We also appreciate that we need to center on access -- who has access to resources and services and supports in New York City, and how does that play out differently for persons of color, immigrant communities, gender wise, sexual orientation, and others. We also appreciate that you know that opportunity and equity as an outcome are central concerns. Just because you have you may have diff, you may diversify power and bring about greater access to services, resources, and the like doesn't mean now that we have achieved full equity or that you know opportunity presents for everybody to

engage the playing field isn't necessarily completely equal, so we want to take a look at and we're toying with, is it opportunity or equity as an outcome, but we need to look at that and then we're also appreciating that we can look at the Charter, we can look at policies and practices through this frame, and we can make the changes that are necessary to diversify power, achieve greater access, and bring about greater opportunity or equity, but that you know we can set this structure up, but because people have been denied for so long. We also have to center on capaCity, to help and ensure that as we make these changes, people really can take full advantage of them, and we have to center on accountability. We're not going to do this work, revise the Charter, bring about changes in policy, at the agency level, inspire others to engage accordingly, and then let this just sit on the shelf -- because there are no real accountability mechanisms, so that's a loose framing, and this, we're gonna do the work of listening to people, hearing specific issues and concerns, and trying to figure and think about whether or not what we're hearing is a power issue, a capaCity issue, an equity issue, an access issue, an accountability issue, and look at with the Charter -- and what it tells us about that.

JJA 19:02

Look at policies and practices in government and what can we learn from that and where are the changes that need to be made. And then we're going to look for outliers, things that don't necessarily fall neatly in this framing. We're going to look at the harms that have been exacted upon people because of systemic racism and appreciate to the greatest extent we possibly can, that not everything is going to be addressed through structural change on a going forward basis. We may have to look at how do we redress these harms, and do something for people who've been denied access, power, and equity for so long. That's a loose framing -- again, it is going to be nurtured over time, but we just needed a construct with which to begin because this work can be daunting -- but if we can give ourselves a frame and show ourselves some grace as we jump into this work, we'll be in a better place. I want to take a moment right now to do the work of appointing our Executive Director, Anusha Venkataraman -- She has served the City for the last several years at the NYC Service and I have had the pleasure, the good pleasure of working with her for the last, I'd say, three weeks or so, to get this Charter up and going, this Charter Commission up and going. I have to tell all of my fellow Commissioners, Commission members, Commissioners and those who are joining us, that I am confident we are in the best hands with Anusha as our Executive Director. Now, in order to officially appoint her as Executive Director. I need to share with you a resolution and then we have to vote on the resolution. So Anusha, can you pull up the screen?

AV 21:23

Can I have sharing abilities?

JJA 21:34

As she gets sharing -- okay. It's coming up. Let me just share with you that the role and responsibility of the Executive Director is to conduct the day-to-day business of the Commission. She, our Executive Director, has responsibility for managing the resources, the services, and the funds of the Charter Revision Commission, the Racial Justice Commissioning, Charter Revision Commission -- She works very closely with the Chair and with the Vice Chair and I may from time to time, delegate to her the power to convene the Commission. I want to read the resolution to you, if I may first though, ask for someone introduce the motion to hear the resolution, and then I need a second, and then I will read it to you. If

there's any questions or debate, we will hear that, and then we will move to a vote on the resolution. So I am seeking a motion, resolution to be introduced here.

Henry Garrido (HG) 22:50

Motion to introduce a resolution?

JJA 22:54

Okay, we have a motion from Henry Garrido, Vice Chair. Is there a second?

Ana Bermudez (AB) & HG 23:00

By second

JJA 23:01

Thank you. I believe that was Ana Bermudez Dean. Yep. Thank you. Resolution of the Racial Justice Commission, whereas the Mayor of the City of New York has established the New York City Racial Justice Commission, otherwise known as the Commission or going forward, the Commission, the first Commission of its kind in America to push forward changes to the City's Charter based on Racial Justice and Equity and whereas the Mayor of the City of New York has also appointed and empowered the members of the Commission to serve as the New York City Charter Revision Commission, pursuant to Section Thirty-Six, Paragraph Four, of the Municipal Home Rule Law and whereas this resolution is intended to promote the effective functioning of the Commission as it does its work in reviewing the entire New York City Charter. And now therefore, be it resolved that the Racial Justice Commission hereby appoints Anusha Venkataraman, as Executive Director of the Commission, and may it be further resolved that consistent with Municipal Home Rule Law Thirty-Six, the Executive Director shall have the power to conduct the day-to-day business of the Commission -- including but not limited to the authority to appoint and remove staff, fix their compensation, and establish policies and procedures for staff necessary to ensure the professional and orderly conduct of the staff's work, and may it be further resolved that the Executive Director may request and accept any and all services, facilities, materials, data, or funds, on behalf of the Commission in accordance with Municipal Homeland Law, Home Law Thirty-Six, and may it be further resolved that the Commission delegates to the Chair, who may further delegate duties to the Executive Director, the power to take all steps necessary, consistent with any actions taken by the Commission, to ensure that the Commission meets as appropriate -- including scheduling and providing notice of meetings and hearings, and preparing and distributing agendas, and determining the order of business for meetings and hearings. Having heard the resolution, are there any questions? Hearing none, I am going to move for a vote on the resolution. All in favor, please say yes.

All 25:39

Yes.

JJA 25:45

Thank you. Are there any opposes? Alright, the resolution passes -- and now I will turn the meeting over to our Executive Director, Anusha Venkataraman.

AV 26:01

Wonderful. Thank you so much, Jennifer, and I'm so excited to be here now formally, as your Executive Director. This is a huge responsibility and an opportunity for you, as it is for me. As a long time, before I came to work for Government Community Organizer and Community-Based Urban Planner, this truly is a dream to address those structural challenges that prevent true equity and true racial justice in our city. I've also seen firsthand, the power of government through my my prior roles with the City starting at the Department of Housing Preservation and Development, moving over to the Mayor's Office under the Deputy Mayor for Housing and Economic Development, and most recently, promoting civic engagement as the city's chief service officer -- so I want to thank you all for your support, and for appointing me as Executive Director. I will note that we will have more staff joining our meetings at subsequent meetings. So far it is formally just me -- Starting next week to Sean Morgan who you will see here on our Webex, will begin formally as Deputy Chief of Staff -- he's helping out with this meeting today while he's still in, under his previous duties, and I look forward to introducing to you other staff members in the coming weeks, which will include a General Counsel, some Policy Team Members and Community Engagement folks. So at this point, unless there are any comments or questions, I have some information to share with you in the Powerpoint in terms of what you can expect from the process over the course of the remainder of the year, as well as the schedule for our initial meetings. Alright, I will go ahead and pull those up on the screen here. Alright, so what to expect -- it will be a full year. It will be a busy year, and we have much work to do among the Commission and with the many communities around the city that it is incredibly important that we engage in this process, so in order to get to our recommendations and ballot questions by the end of the year. We will start with this month, April, which are our initial Commission meetings. I'll do a more in-depth overview on those in a second -- the Commission will begin over the next four weeks, meeting weekly, or about weekly, and then we'll drop down to either monthly or bi-weekly as needed. We are ramping up for community engagement to begin in May and for that intensive phase of community engagement to go through the end of June, given the continued pandemic. This first phase of public engagement will be virtual in formats -- varying from online public hearings for community-based events and partnerships with organizations. We'll invite in some experts to speak to the Commission and to community members and we will complement all of that with extensive digital engagement, given that in-person gatherings are still not advised. July and August, we will continue community engagement in a lighter fashion but, the staff and the Commission will really be spending that time, synthesizing what has been heard today, trying to sort of hone in on which are the areas of the Charter we want to focus on, where the other policy areas outside of the Charter that we may also want to submit recommendations on, and what may be the work that we do with city agencies or even partners in other sectors to advance equity and racial justice and in their spheres as well. September and October, we will release a preliminary report and we'll move into the second phase of public engagement based on that preliminary report. To be decided whether that engagement will need to be virtual or if some of it can be in person in November. We'll start to draft that final report, moving us towards December, where it will hold our Commission meeting to finalize recommendations which will include but may not be limited to the ballot questions that we'll submit to the City clerk for appearance on the November 2022 ballot.

AV 31:27

As Jennifer mentioned earlier, there is the option of submitting questions for the ballot in 2021. We would need to decide by roughly the end of July, if that is something that we want to do for appearing

on the November 2021 ballot -- so that is still an option for the Commission. And we will check in as we get closer to that date to see if that is something that we want to do as on our way to, our sort of more comprehensive set of recommendations by the end of the year. Moving to the next slide, here we go. So going into a little bit more details as to what our initial Commission meetings look like or will look like, we are in our first public meeting. This is the introduction to the Commission and the Commissioners -- We are looking to schedule towards the end of next week, our second public meeting, which will focus on the City Charter and overview of the forms of functions of government in the City Charter. And looking at the history of Charter revision through the lens and through the structure that Jennifer shared earlier, that we're starting to look at our work through focusing on power, access, and opportunity or equity. The third public meeting, we're looking to focus on truth and reconciliation processes, what can we learn from other cities and countries who have undergone these processes, examples of outcomes from those processes, and discuss as a Commission how our process can create and form that path for reconciliation, which can often take many years if done well. But what can we as a Commission do to jumpstart the process of reconciliation based on past harms in New York City? Moving towards our fourth public meeting, this one is a little bit more open in terms of agenda right now.

AV 33:42

Getting into May, we will be kicking off our public engagement -- we want to give an orientation to the Commission on that public engagement, as well as follow up on any discussion from previous Commission meetings, whether it's around the framing of our work, continue the reconciliation conversation, and also probably discuss the decision-making process for the Commission. So that, I think that's all that I have in slides. Oh, one more thing -- for members of the public, we're still putting together so many of our systems and gathering our plans for the Commission. We will be building a dedicated website for the Racial Justice Commission, but for now we are putting all of our public updates on the existing Charter Revision Commission website, which is at nyc.gov/charter -- that's where we posted the public notice and information about today's meeting. You can continue to check back there for updates as we schedule meetings. Those will go up on the website in the form of a public notice at least 72 hours in advance, as well as distributed to the media as required by law, and we also wanted to provide a way for members of the public to be in touch with the Commission while we are forming our community engagement, which will launch in May, so in the meantime, you may reach out to Racial Justice at charter.nyc.gov with comments or questions. Thank you for sharing my screen here. Okay.

JJA 35:31

Thank you. Before we proceed with the rest of the remaining agenda item, which is introductions of the Commissioners, I just want to ask the Commissioners, Commission members -- Are there any questions, given what has been presented thus far? Any questions with respect to the schedule? Any concerns about the schedule and the activities? Any questions concerning --

AB 36:05

Yes, I have a question. So I was trying to reconcile the -- so what's happening in the April, May, you know, meeting. Topics to the larger scope where we said, so that we would be getting public input and whatnot for a certain amount of time and I couldn't, I honestly could not retain from the two you know,

slides, whether what the overlap is because it looked like then the only time we're gonna get public input was that condensed version that you just put up of the various weeks in April.

AV 36:59

Sure, I can take this would it be helpful to see those slides again, or should we just talk?

AB 37:03

Maybe yeah. Yeah, that might be helpful.

AV 37:24

So the Commission meetings begin in April, and this is the more intensive deep dive which really goes sort of starting mid April through early May, and then sort of that second week of May will begin the public engagement. Public engagement, okay.

AB 37:48

Got it, got it.

AV 37:50

Was actually don't overlap a lot, we wanted to fit in the meetings that get the Commission sort of ready to engage because we're doing a sort of variety of formats where we will do this sort of public hearing that's more traditional to a Charter Revision Commission, but also would expect Commissioners to join sort of more participatory more interactive meetings -- we wanted to make sure Commissioners are prepared for those and we have a sort of a base for the Commission to build off of as we enter the public engagement period, which will be through more intensive, through May and June but expect it to continue throughout the summer as we start to do the more intensive work on the report. Yeah

AB 38:40

And now I get, now I'm like yeah, got it. Got it.

JJA 38:44

Okay, and I will just add that it's my intention and expectation that these public meetings and public hearings if you will, will help the community at large to have a sense of how we're thinking about the issues, how we're framing the issues and doing the work -- I should add, of engaging with various entities outside of the Commission. Different forms of engagement to help raise awareness about these conversations so that people do, they, I want to be as transparent as we possibly can, and as engaging so that we don't get to September with the release of a preliminary report, people say well where'd that come from

AB 39:37

right? No, I mean I think we should also at some point then have a discussion about those, the types of engagement and I mean, having been in in various, you know, settings in which we were trying to do community engagement in communities particularly affected by structural racism -- it's not always that easy, and so, for a number of reasons obviously, and so I think we probably should spend time as a

Commission talking about you know, which communities particularly, want to make sure have input, and then how do we get that, the best connection with them.

JJA 40:21

You know, I think that I appreciate that and consider it done. We will do that, very much appreciate it.

Lurie Daniel Favors (LDF) 40:30

Hi, I also have a question as it pertains to the decision. Hi, this is Lurie -- as it pertains to the decision, and greetings to everyone. Sorry, the decision as to whether or not we would be interested in making recommendations for this year's ballot, you indicated that that would need to be decided by the end of July. Are there any, beyond just the time frame, is there any other touch point that we're using that would sort of indicate this is something that should be considered for this year's ballot as opposed to next? Are we gonna build in any flagpoles or touch points at all that would sort of help us determine if that is something we would want to consider? I just want to sort of know what that process would look like before we get to those summer months and that decision has been upon us.

JJA 41:21

Absolutely. So some of the next steps are going to be beginning to engage when we do the engagement with individuals city agencies -- people who've been looking at the Charter and looking at various experiences that people have been having and is there anything that's right in this moment to be brought forward? And of course, as a Charter, we'll have to as a Commission, want to come together and figure out is that, is this something that is ripe, is this what we want to lead with, do we want to do that in this year? How does that set us up, there's also, let me back, listen, it's also very for me a strategy piece here too -- like what we do in 2021 can inform drive and even dictate what may happen for ballot proposals for 2022, so I think there's the substantive piece that will engage in first and then we need to think about all of the other to your point Lurie, all of the other, like factors at play. I mean we're about to, we're entering into a what, three I guess, it's three City-wide positions that are up for you know, election, and more than half of the City Council is turning over, so I think we have to look at all of those factors sooner rather than later. To your point, got a lot of work to do but this is a group that has never shied away from a lot of work, is that fair? I think that, I think that's fair -- I think that's fair and if there are no more questions on this then, I think this is a great time for us to turn and learn more about each other and have those who are tuning in learn about us. You know what I appreciate when I look at all of you and as I learn more about each of you -- we all come to this moment with different life experiences, different stories, different backgrounds and so much of who I am is informed by the household in which I grew up. I tell people that I am that kind of social justice, work is like the family business I am. I tell people that I'm a fourth generation leader of faith and social justice. My my mother is an artist and was the first African American to ever curate and establish a career -- a Fortune 500 corporate art program. That's important because she is a Black woman who grew up in the South and was told that that is not a career to pursue, that Black women had no place and space in the arts, and she started her work by being an art therapist for mainly for people of color struggling with substance challenges -- use of all drugs and narcotics, and so that like, she didn't step out of the house for a long time but when she did, that was the work that she began doing, and I remember as a little girl the stories that she would share. My father was a faith leader and was a social justice leader and a leader in the civil rights movement. He was the President of the New York chapter of the Southern Christian

Leadership Conference when Martin Luther King Jr was president of the SCLC. My father was president first of the New York chapter of Operation Bread Basket and then National Chair of Operation Bread Basket, which was the economic justice arm of the SCLC and so I grew up in a household where you know issues of civil rights and the challenges that Black people experienced in America, beginning with slavery and continuing to today -- these were issues that were as common and talked about as much as what we were going to have for dinner, or you know like how what what homework we had for the night and so you know, growing up in a household like that, you must be sleeping and not paying attention or you know not, not you know not doing what you should be doing if it doesn't become a part of who you are and how you think and how you move to the world. I'm an Attorney by training, I also have a degree in Policy and Management, and I undertook this work because I appreciated that at a very early age that so many in my community were, were kind of kept out of the game and it felt like a calling and a responsibility to engage in this work. I've served in the New York City government as a Deputy Commissioner, and as the City of New York's first Family Services Coordinator. I also was Deputy Bureau Chief for Civil Rights for Attorney General Eliot Spitzer, and in more recent years, I've served in the non-profit space.

JJA 46:39

I like to say as my daughter has helped me to appreciate that there are moments when I operate from a war position -- meaning I try to work with the system to bring about change from within, and there are moments when I operate from a war, a position of war of maneuver where I sit on the outside and I stand on the outside and I try to agitate and bring about the change. It is necessary but in all of my work what I've come to appreciate is that we can do all the policy changes in the world, we can bring about new programs and initiatives, but unless we also complement that work with efforts to dismantle structural and institutional racism that are propped up by the laws of this society, the laws of this land then we will you know, just, you know, forever be at this, and frankly we'll probably always be at this, just given the beast that we are trying to strike down but we have to go to the root and we have to upend structural racism by addressing the laws of this land. So that's who I am, and I guess I'll quickly share because maybe it's relevant to some -- I live in Brooklyn, New York -- I've lived here all of my life. I went to church in Bedford, statistics and I went to school in the Midwood section, so I straddled two communities. I lived in Crown Heights for a long time, next door to people of the Hasidic community, and so I've had some diverse experiences here in New York City, and I have raised a Black daughter and a Black son in Brooklyn, New York, and that has had challenges at times. So that's who I am. Henry, we're going to go in order, alphabetical order, and we'll switch it up in future meetings, but we just thought that would be a good way to do it this time. Henry.

HG 48:38

Yeah, thank you. Good afternoon everybody, I'm Henry Garrido, I'm the Executive Director of District Council Thirty-Seven, here in New York, and I have to say that it is an honor to be serving with you all with the list of people that are here and most certainly, with my Chair, Jennifer Jones and the tremendous respect that I have for her, for her body of work for her history that has become you know, you know, so inspirational to so many people. I'm an architect by training, but a troublemaker by profession. I am without a doubt the leader of the largest municipal union and we by its nature, we are always creating trouble but good trouble I should say. I want to make sure that everybody understands that it's that, good trouble is always necessary. I represent 150 000 city workers, that's about one out of

every three a little over one over three city workers, and about a hundred thousand retired members. Our union has a unique experience to provide health care coverage that do not we do not proxy to the health care insurance that is unique to the union and we provide services to the union families in general, a total of 387,000 people. I serve on several ports of the City of New York, in addition to my position as executive director DC Thirty-Seven, I am also in the workforce development board for the City of New York, which sets up policies for hiring recruitment retention and training workers in general whether they're in the union or not, and I have been serving that for the last three years in some change, I am also one of three labor trustees aside who represents the pension for, in the New York City retirement system, which have holes and invest assets on behalf of the work expansion for about 300 billion dollars worth of assets right now. I sit on there as one of the three member trustees. I'm an international Vice president for the national union. I'm serving 1.4 million people I serve that role, I'm elected to that role which means, is my position, it's not just local -- I also represent international union complete regions that include all the eastern seaboard and Puerto Rico and I have one more job, which is I'm the Chair of all the Funds -- so one of the things people don't know is DC37 represents 150,000 people but we hold a bargaining certificate for all other unions in the civilian realm, that means teamsters it means CWA means all of these other unions so we negotiate on behalf of their behalf, on their behalf, and that that's almost 300 000 workers so I stayed as the Chair for the fund and the Co-Chair of the Municipal Labor Committee which represents all actors and retirees I reside in the Bronx, I'm a native of the Dominican Republic -- I came here I was 11, 12 years old to New York, speaking English or doing anything and I hated it because all I wanted to do was play baseball and talk to the girls in my neighborhood, so I went back home and finished high school there and came back here and enrolled the School of Architecture, Environmental Studies at the age of 15, which was quite something in my family. First person ever graduate from college, I have formal training now, teach and train at the Harvard trade school which is an international school that trains union leaders from across the country and I do that very proudly and all I can say is I'm honored to be here and looking forward at the discussion. I will say this, this is a defining moment for us with people in our generation and I take this responsibility of what we're doing quite seriously and I'm sure you all do, but I don't think ever, we've ever been in a position to have the combined commitment structure talent that we have on this board -- with this moment in time, with the opportunity to do so much, so forgive me if I'm a little ambitious and I would just add to what Jennifer said that, yes we're not going to be able to amend 300 pages of the Charter, but if we can do enough, if we can highlight enough of what I have seen as the institutional racism that have completely perpetuated the kinds of inequities that we're seeing, then we've done our job. Thank you for listening and I look forward to the work together.

AV 54:10

Jennifer, you're muted.

JJA 54:20

My apologies. K. Bain. And thank you Henry, inspired -- Did we lose K. Bain? We may have lost, if you can try to get him back but we'll keep moving. Ana Bermudez.

AB 54:43

Hello, I'm very excited to be here -- You know, as part of City government now but if you had asked me, I don't know how many years ago oh, do you want to work at City Government? I'd be like no. And so

this has been a tremendous experience. I've been at the department of Probation for 10 years -- the last seven of which have been as Commissioner, and I I am as others, I'm a lawyer by profession, but really an educator and a bit of a troublemaker but maybe not as much as Henry you know by avocation and you know I've been, I've been working with young people throughout my entire career in one way or another, especially and within the juvenile justice and criminal justice space so that's where all the perfect storm of a lot of the structural racism that we see in our city comes together. And so I was born and raised in Puerto Rico and you know that's the place where I feel most me you know, although I have to say, being I identify as a Brooklynite now, you know as a New Yorker in that regard, and so you know I'm here because I believe in alright, you know, in our collective and moral responsibility to fix this you know, and to be part of the solution and not always complaining about all the things that that are happening and can and seem not to change so I'm very committed to what we're going to be doing and it's a privilege to work with all of you, you know, in this in this endeavor, so I'm really looking forward to it. Just to tell you a little bit about, you know sort of probation, because a lot of people confuse it with parole. You know, so probation is the entity in the City that works with people who've been, who actually don't go to jail as part of their sentence of a criminal case or an adjudication in family court, and so we work together to really tr we've changed. A lot of what you know probation used to be how my predecessor described it -- trail them, nailed them, and jailed them and we have a very different approach and in fact, I'd love to change the name of our agency because we totally approach this from the, a base of humanity and we're trying to reestablish people's humanity in all of this, and so, so we serve about 50,000 cases a year you know, and we have 26 different offices -- we've sort of decentralized our work into communities most, that are most affected by the justice system, and so we work in partnership with communities. We have a lot of programs not just for people on probation but for communities as well, to try to get folks to a better better better future I guess, so, so thank you for having me in the Commission and I look forward to her work.

JJA 58:10

Can I also just add that you're a great baseball coach.

AB 58:16

Alright, yes, well yes, I coached our children -- full disclosure -- for many years and you know Channing is now at UVA if I may say being you know, pursuing his dream. So it's great, yes I love the outdoors, I love sports. You know some people say you're a contradiction because I'm an anti-violence person but boy, do I love watching football. So I'll leave it there and you know, I'm sure other things will come up later too. **JJA:** Excellent, thank you. Ana, thank you, Fred Davie.

Fred Davie (FD) 58:56

Thank you, Jennifer, and hello everyone. I too am very pleased and honored to be able to work with all of you on this Racial Justice Charter Revision Commission. I've known Jennifer for a very long time, and I think we've worked pretty closely over these last eight years or so on a variety of issues so it's really exciting to be a part of this work with her. As Jennifer said, I'm the Executive Vice President at Union Theological Seminary where I've been for 10 years -- I'm about to transition into a less intense role there in a couple months as a Senior Strategic Advisor to the President at the Union. I've been primarily responsible for sort of day-to-day management of many parts of the, of the institution, as well as engage with the institution in its public-facing programs, the tagline -- that is where faith and scholarship meet

to reimagine the work of justice, and we've tried to do that, but being very much involved in the public square with such professors of ours as James Cone, the father of Black Theology and now Cornel West, who's coming back to us this fall and many others in addition -- As Jennifer mentioned, I chair the Civilian Complaint Review Board. I'm also a Commissioner on the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom. I was appointed by Chuck Schumer to that Commission last June -- Senator Schumer and that's a nine-member Federal Commission that has a responsibility to advise the Congress, the White House, and the State Department on U.S. foreign policy, and international religion, international religious freedom or belief. I've been in New York City for almost 40 years. I came here right out of Yale Divinity School. I'm a Presbyterian Minister, but I spent most of my time in the city in non-profit management, philanthropy and government -- I actually was Chief of Staff to Carl McCall when he was President of New York City Board of Education, Chief of Staff to Joyce Brown when she was a Deputy Mayor in the Dinkins Administration, where I actually met the Mayor and his wife, who were not husband and wife then and then I was Deputy by President of Manhattan, second term for Ruth Messenger, and did a lot of work on her campaign when she ran against Rudolph Giuliani in 1997. Ford Foundation, Arcus Foundation, working on criminal justice reform, social justice issues, LGBTQ issues, and then did some work for a research and demonstration firm, where I developed a national program on reentry for returning citizens, and that landed me doing some work with the Obama Administration -- I served on the White House Council on faith-based and neighborhood partnerships appointed by President Obama -- I also was on the transition team and did some work on the campaign, and I'm just glad to sort of bring 40 years of work to this effort. I think, as has been said, the time is right for, to look at the systems and the structures, at the city that stand in the way of full and complete engagement, particularly by Black and Brown people -- but others as well in, in the life of the city, and if we can address some of those barriers through this work, then we will have I think, gone a long way to fulfilling the mission that's been set before -- so I'm just glad to be here to work with all of you, and I look forward to this opportunity. Thank you, Jennifer.

JJA 1:02:55

Tremendous thank you. Lurie, Lurie Daniel Favors.

LDF 1:03:04

Good evening everyone, my name is Lurie Daniel Favors and I am a Racial Justice Attorney by training. I currently serve as the Interim Executive Director and General Counsel at the Center for Law and Social Justice at Medgar Evers College, which is a part of the CUNY System -- CLSJ is a 36 year old Racial Justice Law Center and there I spend my days thinking about how to address Racial Justice issues by providing legal advocacy, conducting community education, campaigns, facilitating research, and working to build organizing capaCity on behalf of New Yorkers of African descent and the disenfranchised. Prior to that, I founded Sankofa, or co-founded I should definitely say -- co-founded Sankofa Community Empowerment, which is a community education and empowerment organization that focuses on the specific cultural and historically crafted needs of Black communities. I was always raised to speak explicitly and unabashedly about issues of racial justice and to I guess, unapologetically occupy the seat that my ancestors had prepared for me. And I am an army brat -- I spent a significant portion of my childhood in Germany, where I studied American history in general and Black History in particular through the eyes of someone living in a country whose worst moment -- the rise of Nazi Germany, was one that was largely based on what White Nationalist Germans were able to learn from studying

America and how America has not dealt with its racial history. Currently our house is on a Bed-Stuy block not far from where my dad spent the earlier part of his life before he moved to Harlem. It's one of those blocks that was in the news, not just last summer but even within the past few weeks because of incidences of gun violence and I am crystal clear that the vertical oppression that communities of colors face across the country generally and in our city in particular is a type of oppression that leads to horizontal violence, and that was actually one of the reasons that I decided to accept the request to serve on this amazing body, and I am an adherent of the honorable Thurgood Marshall's admonition that when it comes to tough legal questions, that we should simply do what's right and let the law catch up -- and that is certainly something that has guided me throughout my professional career. In my downtime, I host the Lurie Daniel Favors Show on Sirius XM's Urban View Network, which is a national, daily racial justice and equity talk show on Sirius XM, so I literally spend my work time and my downtime grappling with issues of racial justice and equity -- and my husband does much the same, so you can imagine our household. That said, I'm looking forward to bringing my vantage point to the work that this body is doing -- as was previously stated, the time certainly is ripe and I'm excited to get moving forward.

JJA 1:05:55

I muted into the, you all missed my, you know how like my excitement, the words that -- Rev FD: You're muted again Jennifer. I'm still muted. I just said the most amazing things, it's about all of you.

LDF 1:06:15

We missed all of it. I'm sure it was wonderful. The next person to present is Darrick Hamilton.

Darrick Hamilton (DH) 1:06:26

You are definitely at a disadvantage if you don't go first in this group. After everybody else goes, so tough acts to follow -- in all seriousness, it is an honor and a great responsibility to serve on this committee. I'm confident in our leadership, both Executive Director and our Chair, and I'm humbled to be amongst you all, my fellow Commissioners, and I believe we're going to do really good work -- I'm inspired to do really good work. I'm trained as an economist, but I don't shy away from conversations around race, gender, social stratification, in general -- so rather than looking at them as peripheries, I look at them up front. I understand that social identity is inseparable from our political economy writ large, that it's a problem if we think we can separate politics, economics, and social group identity from an understanding of how things actually work -- that they work in an iterative way. And you know it's not just a Black issue, if White people want to understand why we don't have Medicare for All, I think it's useful to understand our ways in which we basically racialize poverty. So that's my framing. What else do I want to say -- I'm from Brooklyn, Brooklyn New Yorker. I lived in New York most of my life -- Went away for college and grad school, maybe a short stint for a job, but for the most part, born and raised in Bed-Stuy. What else -- last thing I'll say is ultimately I want to change our political economy, and I know I can't do it alone. I want to live in a world where one's race, gender, or any type of identity has no transactional value as it relates to material consequences. That's unjust, so I'm here to try to develop and promote a moral economy -- and public power is an essential place by which we can begin to establish that.

JJA 1:08:35

Alright, I just went to church but you didn't hear that. The next person to present: Chris Kui.

Chris Kui (CK) 1:08:44

Yeah, hi everybody. It is an honor and privilege to be able to serve on this Commission. I guess I always consider myself as a community organizer and then community developer, and at the same time, fighting for social justice -- and so I, you know, for the past like 30 years or so, I've been you know, working in the Asian American community, immigrant community, in terms of helping to access services, building affordable housing, and then also more importantly, also economic development opportunity, in terms of helping folks to really gain access, especially women and minority owned businesses to gain access to financing capital, to start and expand the businesses, and that's something that I'm very very passionate about. And so I kind of, you know, I feel that I, what I can bring to the Commission will be, you know, the experiences of the Asian American community, where, you know, for a long time I think the community has been kind of overlooked in many ways and even though we are part of the rainbow but, but then I think it's been ignored many, you know, in many ways. I think some of our experiences has been, have been hidden in, hidden in the, you know, from the mainstream and the folks feel that the Asian American community doesn't have any need, so we are the model minority -- and so, then I think that especially now with the response from the community fighting against the anti-Asian violence really, you know, have kind of put a new lens I think, to the Asian American community, and so I hope that that we could, as a Commission, really kind of bring the energy of the Asian American community together so that we can make that systematic change. And I think that, and so my experience with the Charter Commission also go back, I would say about what, 30 years ago, when there was a major change in terms of the elimination of the Board of Estimate -- And so expand, and then there was an expansion of the City Council to 52 members, and that was something that at that time, was a very important cause for the Asian American community because at that time, there was no Asian Americans represented in all any level of New York City or New York State Government. and I know I, you know, work with, you know Phil Thompson and other folks, and then you know to try to bring that change, and then so, so there's been some, I think positive change, but then it's not enough because it's still -- we have very few Asian Americans represented in the city government, and so I hope that we can make that, also change as well, so again I look forward to working with everybody, and I think it's an honor to be able to serve so, thank you.

JJA 1:11:42

An honor to serve with you. Yesenia Mata.

Yesenia Mata (YM) 1:11:49

Hi everyone, my name is Yesenia Mata. I am the Executive Director of La Colmena, a day labor and immigrant rights organization based in Staten Island, New York. I'm also a 31 Bravo Military Police Specialist in the U.S. Army Reserve. Currently well, I'm in Staten Island, but I was born and raised in the south side of Chicago, so a lot of people always told me, how did you end up from Chicago to Staten Island, and I rep Staten Island very hard just FYI. But I was born and raised in the south side of Chicago -- both of my parents immigrated from San Jose, Mexico. Growing up in the south side of Chicago at a very early age, I was able to see how there was a school-to-prison pipeline system in place. I actually lived like five blocks away from the county jail. I also saw how many of my friends and family members were also diagnosed with asthma, how certain people were dying from cancer, and it was because we

had a coal plant literally five blocks away from my house. And I would see ICE raids happening all the time -- At times, how certain of my neighbors, friends, were targeted during these ice raids, so at a very early age, I was able to, I believe I was 16 or so, I started asking the question like, why is this happening? But most importantly, who's letting this happen? And my father, he was always in protest in the neighborhood, and he would take me with him. At the time I didn't know exactly what I was doing, but my dad would tell me to go and I would go. And subconsciously, I started getting involved locally in my neighborhood and I started realizing the power of, of the community, of the Latino community in my neighborhoods specifically, I then started organizing it at 16 years old -- that was about 14 years ago, I started organizing the youth in my neighborhood, getting them politically engaged and as I was getting involved in, in organizing the young Latinos and the Latino vote, I then started saying wait, we should get involved in the presidential election. I started then getting involved in the presidential elections, and that is where I was then recognized by Bernie Sanders to join on his Latino team as the National Latino Outreach Strategist. I started traveling the country doing the work that I do, getting Latinos out to vote, organizing the Latino community, and then that is where I ended up in New York, and I was sent to Staten Island, and I realized how different Staten Island was -- I didn't even know that Staten Island was part of New York. I actually thought it was part of New Jersey so I was like, what am I doing here. Why, why Staten Island. But then I ended up meeting a, various people from the community and someone took me to La Colmena, and they said when you get to La Colmena, you will know why you need to be here. So I went to La Cormena, and that is where I saw a group of individuals speaking an indigenous language and organizing and, and I was like, how is this happening in Staten Island -- I, this group is organizing and that is when my husband now, he's from Staten Island, he mentioned this is why you need to stay in Staten Island, to continue organizing the community -- And I ended up, I stayed here, and it has been very difficult, especially Staten Island is one of the most conservative boroughs, but it has not been easy, it has definitely been tough -- But just seeing the community, how they are engaging and they are organizing and just last year in Staten Island, we had the first Mexican Independence Parade that just showed how the community is getting together, organizing, and just seeing the Black youth in Staten Island doing a march from the south shore to the north shore -- that was new, that was exciting to see because the community is working together to bring change and I'm just very excited to be on this panel with you all, really eager to learn from you all and as I hear your stories, I just, I feel very hopeful -- and I usually feel at times that I'm alone, and I don't feel alone, I feel like I have a huge community now with me and with many experts that I know, that we would definitely be bringing change to New York City.

JJA 1:16:27

I'm gonna hold on to that I like that you don't feel alone, we're in this together and really, really, I'm looking forward to learning from you. I'm looking forward to learning from everybody. Let's see, let's see -- we'll go to next -- Phil Thompson.

Phil Thompson (PT) 1:16:46

So hi everyone, I am really humbled and excited to be working with all of you, and you know, this is, you're an, amazing this is going to be an amazing process I think in with so many wonderful and amazing people here. I'll just start at the beginning -- I was listening to Jennifer and actually, I'm the son of a school teacher and a Baptist Preacher from Philadelphia, and at an early age, I was exposed to many of the civil rights sort of movement events and activities as Jennifer was and actually, I knew Jennifer's

father because he used to babysit for me when he was in divinity school, and I knew her older brother and sister -- Jennifer wasn't born yet. And you know, it's definitely, you know, I just think about our parents and what they would think you know, seeing us all doing this work together now. But after college, I worked for five years as an organizer, community organizer, and after the Jesse Jackson campaign in '84, in which I worked in the south, I came back to New York to go to Planning School at Hunter, and then I went to school at CUNY Grad Center and all the way through school, I worked for David Dinkins, so I ended up working for him when he ran for Borough President. When he was Borough President, and then when he was Mayor, I was the Housing Coordinator in the office and worked with Fred Davie and a whole bunch of other people. I then went to academia for a quarter century and taught urban planning and political science, but I did always, a lot of community projects in the Bronx for many many years in Central Brooklyn many many years, but also in Haiti after the earthquake for years, in Peru earlier, after an earthquake, there in the Afro-Peruvian coast, in and then, in Colombia on the Pacific coast which is 90 percent Afro-Colombian and 10 percent indigenous, and I mentioned that because it became really clear to me that race is a transnational construct coming out of a global system of slavery, and I even worked in Malaysia and saw, it was a worldwide system that we're dealing with. One thing I'll mention also is, I was able to work with others including Derrick Johnson, who was then Head of the Mississippi NAACP, some other labor leaders, and about 10 years ago, we hosted 500 Black youth who were then fighting around racist violence issues in four states, and a hundred Latinos from Los Angeles who were organizing around undocumented students and their rights, and we invited a hundred SNCC activists, who were mostly in their 70s, and we had a week and a half convening at Tougaloo College, in which the SNCC activists really worked with the younger folks around the importance of non-violence as a strategy, and how they got to that strategy, and the lessons they had learned, and many of the people there like the leaders who came there, were the ones who started this Black Lives Matter thing, and united We Dream and started a national protest movement to fight for the Dream Act, and all of these folks continue to work together and to me, it was just an inspiring example of like, what we can do when we all come together. So now I'm a Deputy Mayor, I've been here about three years. I work on a lot of different issues and this is definitely going to be the highlight of my work as a Deputy Mayor, so thank you.

JJA 1:21:01

I'm really glad you're on this journey with us. I'm really glad. Jo-Ann Yoo.

Jo-Ann Yoo (JY) 1:21:12

How smart can I be if I can't find a mute button. A mute button. But anyway, it's a privilege to serve on this Commission. My name is Jo-Ann Yoo and I'm the Executive Director of the Asian American Federation. Like Jennifer, I am the daughter of a Minister, and I grew up as the language and cultural broker for my community from a very early age as an immigrant kid, and I don't ever remember a time when somebody wasn't at our dinner table. So that's the, you know, it was always about community. Like Lurie, my parents insisted that you are able to stand up and speak for yourself, and if you saw something that was an injustice, then you'd better not bring it home because you better be talking about it, and you better be doing everything you can to make sure that you right that wrong. And I have a law degree, I am a, I always say I'm a new New Yorker, but I've lived here for almost 25 years. I recently found out that I am, my ancestors, you know, one of my great great great great grandfathers way back when, was the person who helped to transform Korea from military rule to civil law, and then

my, you know, another ancestor, is the one who is a national martyr of Korea, and so under a faith, tradition, and so, you know, my dad or my parents always laughed that, you know, this is of course, I'd end up here. And speaking of, I spent a lot of time thinking about what does equity look like and you know, I look at what is happening in our society right now and I'm very moved by what is happening and all the young people who are leading the way in such a fearless way and so I am very excited to serve on this panel because I know that there's a lot of work to do up on this Commission, because there's a lot of work to do – but you know, we can put it all and put it off, but unless we start to set the conversation and take that first path, we are always going to be wondering and left wondering, and so I'm excited to learn from all of you and to participate and it's a, it's an honor. Thank you.

JJA 1:23:48

Yeah, it's truly an honor. I'll quickly share that Jo-Ann and I became Facebook friends, I don't know, a little while ago, and it just seems like you know, after we became Facebook friends, we just found ourselves increasingly in each other's orbits, and so I'm excited about working with her as well and closing out the Commission members introductions is K. Bain, really excited to hear from you.

K. Bain (KB) 1:24:22

Alright, there it is, peace and blessings all. What an incredible assembly of genius -- I just want to start by saying, I love Black people and I think we all will do better to embrace our Blackness. I think Africa is a remarkable continent with just incredible value and riches and wealth and knowledge and information in countries that we could all spend centuries exploring and admiring and learning from in the spirit of the, of the cycle of energy that we in Ramadan Mubarak, I'm not a Muslim, but a wise man told me that all things submit to the will of Allah, even the trees submit to the will of Allah. There was a wise man I read about once who found his way into places where the activity was deemed out of sin, to the places where those who were most marginalized, despised, and rejected were and he did miraculous things -- this Black man's name was Jesus. And so when I study, I learned from these examples and these leaders I was listening to, and the names of some of the people here, I mean Lurie, Phil, like there's just people that I've only heard about, maybe been in the shadow of, seen from a distance, but admired your work, imitated some of your leadership there are incredible genius brought together, so I'm thankful to the Executive Director Anusha and Jennifer, who both are so humble and gracious to this point. I have a sister, her name is Angela, she said the challenge of the 21st century is not the demand for the equal opportunity to participate in the machinery of oppression, but rather to identify and dismantle those structures in which racism continues to be embedded -- this is the only, this is the only hope for freedom, for all people, and that was Angela Davis who said that, and I'm inspired by those words when I hear you all. I come from very humble beginnings as well. My mother didn't have shoes when she was a little girl in Trinidad. I'm a Brooklyn boy throwing through, shout out anybody who said Brooklyn, I heard you loud and clear, born and raised in the Bed-Stuy -- I see you. You know what, that's about, not me, and I just remember really quickly you know. I've oops, I've done some things that I think are worth mentioning, but more importantly, in terms of humble beginnings and how we approach this enormous task, this privilege and opportunity to look at systemic racism and oppression right -- I remember in elementary school, my brother and I were deemed ineducable they said we couldn't be formally educated. They said in order to stay in the school system. We would have to take Ritalin with some other narcotics, and at the time in a single parent home, they offered a check to my mother -- now mind

you, I said I'm [unclear] from Trinidad and Tobago, to Brooklyn New York, was the migration -- that means it was nine people in the apartment right in Flatbush. Alright, you already know y'all, everybody understands that comes here like we have to support extended family. We won't go down that road but you're with me, so what happens next, my mother, God bless, thank you mothers for your infinite wisdom and instinct, said no. She said my two sons, the third was on the way, are just not motivated and challenged by what you're doing in classroom. She knew in her infinite wisdom that children learn differently sometimes and so she denied us taking those narcotics but some mothers didn't have that moment or some families needed that extra supplementary income that came -- it was a check that would be there every two weeks for the doses of ritalin that we were supposed to take and I think about this, I think about being deemed special education and not able to learn in a school building, etc. when I watched my brother graduate from Columbia University as the President for four years in a row, Valedictorian when he went to NYU Gallatin, or Harvard Law School at the top of his class -- I think about all of these things that they said we couldn't do. When my high school principal said at 14 or 15 that I would be dead or in prison for the rest of my life if I lived to be 21 years of age, I remember those things. I remember the way that we were labeled, I remember the way that we were positioned, and I think about all that when I'm asked to be on a committee and a Commissioner amongst leaders like yourselves as motivation. Our Chair said lived experience is important here. I'm someone who survived the underground economy -- I was 15, looking at 15 years in prison. I helped to start the New York City Crisis Management System with 4.8 million dollars from Speaker Quinn in 2010 and grew it to 70 million dollars of investment currently, and it's still growing. The work that we do is human justice work -- human justice, not criminal justice -- if we start from criminal, how could we ever end in justice. We have to start from human, we have to start from human so this provides an opportunity, an outlet for me to get around great minds, talk about some of the things that we have been working on. I learned from people like Eddie Ellis, I learned from people like Dr. Devine prior, I learned from the great minds who taught me that thoughts become things, so in the last year when we interrupted over 5,387 potentially front-page violent incidents in the City of New York, things that you don't see on the newspaper -- I'm in a room with more people that are on this Zoom or on this Webex, and everyone has a gun except myself and my comrades who are defusing and de-escalating and mediating situations -- that's the work that we do in the wee hours of the night and it doesn't make the paper, and you don't get a lot of accolades and you don't get honored and acknowledged because it's not on the paper. All that to say, privilege and honor to be amongst you. I look forward to learning and hopefully adding and contributing some value to the incredible work that you all have done. I'm blown away by your resumes, by your experience -- this is a great opportunity and like the brother said, initially, let's cause some good trouble let's shake shit up, let's make this crazy, let's not use, let's not lose this moment to make sure we got nice suits on, you know, we look good in the picture. Let's get dirty, let's pull our sleeves up -- you know what I mean, and get to it. Peace and blessing, salute.

JJA 1:31:21

Indeed, indeed, as you talk K. Bain, and I'm thankful you closed this out. I was reminded as you talked of two things that that that as a child, when I was coming up that I used to hear all the time -- the first one was, my father used to say to us freedom is the ability to say no to a lie, to veto an untruth -- true freedom is the ability to say no to a lie to veto an untruth, and that's what we are to do. We're going to say no to the lies and we're going to veto these untruths and then I'm reminded of a poem that he would recite to us that is accredited to Benjamin Mays by some but not by others and when something

along, it's like I've only just a minute, only 60 seconds in it forced upon me, can't refuse it, did it seek it didn't choose it but it's up to me to use it and it's something like God help me like I must suffer if I lose it. You guys know something like it's something like a [unclear] if I abuse it, you know like 60 seconds in a minute but eternity. Only 60 seconds in a minute but eternity is in it. And so I'm looking at this moment very much like that -- we collectively have a diverse and far-reaching, a range of experiences but all of you've heard I'm a person of faith, I believe we've been purposed, we are here in this moment and we are purposed to live in this moment and all of our truths and all of our experiences heretofore we need to bring to the table also appreciating that not everybody's experience, everybody's journey, is not represented in this Commission of 11. So it's also our responsibility our collective responsibility to make sure that our brothers and sisters, their voices and their experiences too are heard, and that we do the work of translating their experiences into meaningful change -- we're going to close in a moment, we're going to remind you of the meeting dates, but I did want to take a second just to ask Anusha if she'd like to tell us a little bit more about herself.

AV 1:33:52

Sure, thank you Jennifer. I am so inspired by everyone's stories and your perspectives and what you bring to the work. I shared a little bit about my professional background anyway, but I can share a little bit more about my personal background too. I'm a first generation American child of immigrants. I grew up in Columbus, Ohio, but I feel that I am a person of the world -- I have family in many countries and up and down the East coast, and I bring that perspective to, I think my work and my life and I'm so proud to now be a New Yorker -- been here for about 13 years I think counting. I also want to mention that I'm a mom, I've got a two-year-old, the life of being a mother in New York City has informed my work professionally in terms of the perspective I bring in and what it is like to raise a family in the City, the supports that are there for families, I think I'll leave it at that just in terms of you all knowing where I come from, but I do want to just remind something that I mentioned earlier, which is that while I've worked within government for the past I think six years now, and I've, you know, been in a variety of roles, whereas for feel, like I'm an operator within government. I feel like I'm a community organizer at heart and I'm so excited about being able to engage communities in a participatory way in this process, where ultimately the Commission and all of you will be making decisions, but I'm excited to bring along our fellow community members across New York City in that, in that process what matters to me is empowering folks to be decision makers in their own lives, and drive change in our city, so thank you for the opportunity, Jennifer.

JJA 1:36:10

Absolutely. Alright, so it is 6:21 PM, I think our time together was to run from 4:30 to 6:30 PM, so I would love to be able to say that we did the work that we set out to do in this first meeting, and that we ended on schedule. Maybe we'll even give you back a few minutes of your time, your life's time. Any questions? Any concerns? Okay, Anusha. Next meeting

AV 1:36:49

just remember you will hear from me in terms of confirmation by email, it is looking likely to be the same time next Thursday or on Friday afternoon -- I know everyone doesn't love a Friday afternoon meeting, but it'll be one of those two, so you'll hear a confirmation from me. Members of the public,

you will see that public notice go up on the Charter Revision Commission website at nyc.gov/charter under the meetings page.

JJA 1:37:25

Excellent. Alright, please remember to make use of your Charter emails when conversing one with another. That's just critically important and I'm just gonna tell you, I'm gonna get off now because I feel very very emotional in a very good way I'm just, my heart is full and I just feel very grateful to be in this moment with all of you. Feeling very very confident that we're going to do some good things and we're going to benefit more people I dare pray than we could ever imagine possible. So, just thank you all and have a good evening, and I'll see you next week. Thank you all.

All 1:38:18

Thank you all. Thank you. Bye-bye. Thank you. Thank you all. Thank you.