



**JOINT COMMITTEE
COMMON COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

FINANCE, ASSESSMENT AND TAXATION
Sonia Frederick, Chair

HUMAN RESOURCES AND HUMAN RIGHTS
Jahmel Robinson, Chair

Finance Committee Members Present:	Frederick, Chair ☒ Balarin ☒ Farrell ☒ Adams ☒ Keegan ☒
Human Resources and Human Rights Committee Members Present:	Robinson, Chair ☐ Johnson ☐ Love ☒ Keegan ☒ Farrell ☒
Other Council Members Present:	Anane and Romero
City Personnel Present:	Shaniqua Jackson (City Clerk), Demetra Brown (Deputy City Clerk), Jake Eisland (Research Counsel), Bryan Jimenez (Senior Legislative Aide)

Minutes

Topic(s) of Discussion:

• **Local Law I of 2022**

A LOCAL LAW CREATING A COMMUNITY COMMISSION TO STUDY THE ENACTMENT OF REPARATIONS REMEDIES RELATED TO THE SALE OF CANNABIS IN THE CITY OF ALBANY

Discussion:

- Chair of the Finance, Assessment and Taxation Committee, Council Member Frederick, called to order the joint committee meeting.
- Council Member Romero spoke on the purpose of Local Law I of 2024.
 - Council Member Romero discussed replacing the Alice Moore Black Arts and Cultural Center in a proposed amendment with the Black Chamber of Commerce.
- Council Member Frederick discussed the inclusion of cannabis store operators and growers on the Commission to have their viewpoints be considered as they were directly affected by the War on Drugs. Council Member Romero spoke on Council appointments in the legislation that can be used for that purpose.

- Council Member Anane discussed the purpose behind Local Law I of 2024 and the addition of the Black Chamber of Commerce.
- Council Member Romero discussed the possible addition of a Council appointee in place of an appointee by the Black and Hispanic Caucus.
- Research Counsel Eisland discussed the appointment of members and possible amendments to the legislation to allow the Council to make the appointments upon the recommendation of particular organizations.
- Council Member Frederick asked Council Member Romero to clarify whether members of appointing organizations will be on the Commission or if the organizations are able to select an individual outside of the organization to which Council Member Romero responded that the organizations would be able to select a City of Albany resident as their designee.
- Council Member Keegan asked if the Council is constitutionally allowed to pursue reparations to which Research Counsel Eisland responded that those concerns are not explicitly relevant to the Commission's exploratory purpose and offered to conduct additional research on that point.
- Council Member Romero discussed the broader scope of reparations to which Council Member Keegan responded. Research Counsel Eisland discussed the legal issue further, suggesting the inclusion of a lawyer or other legal counsel on the Commission.
- Council Member Keegan spoke on community expectations with regards to reparations and the scope of what the City would be able to do.
- Council Member Romero further discussed the purpose of the local law and suggested an amendment to change the reporting requirement to one year.
- Council Member Anane spoke on existing reduced expectations for reparations and spoke on community expectations.
- Council Member Balarin expressed concern with the use of the word "reparations" as it increases expectations among the aggrieved population but discussed the need for programs to address historical disinvestment in Albany communities. Council Member Balarin suggested including representatives from some neighborhood associations on the Commission.
- Council Member Farrell spoke on the Commission being an advisory group, supported the inclusion of an attorney or legal counsel on the Commission for the development of reparations remedies, and suggested a discussion on reparation remedy recommendations on a yearly basis for the budget process.
- Council Member Adams asked what the timeline would be for the Commission to start fulfilling its mission to which Council Member Romero responded that the Commission could be established by the summer of 2024 to be able to provide recommendations by the start of municipal budgeting in the following year.
- Council Member Adams asked if the Commission would be coordinating with the County commission to which Council Member Romero responded that the Commission would be solely responsible for actions that can be taken on the municipal level with the cannabis tax revenue. Council Member Adams spoke on reducing the duplication of work.

- Council Member Frederick asked about the clause in Section 2(B)(5) regarding including sales tax revenue in funding reparations. Council Member Frederick also discussed the use of the word “reparations” and suggested adding clarity to the Commission’s purpose.
- Council Member Anane spoke on expectations of government action understood by affected communities and the importance of the intent of the Council’s action as it relates to the establishment of the Commission.
- Council Member Frederick asked about the termination of the Commission after its report to which Council Member Romero and Council Member Anane responded. Council Member Anane spoke on having an independent organization appropriating the cannabis revenue to address implementing reparations.
- Council Member Frederick spoke further on recurring reporting.
- Council Member Balarin recommended moving the legislation.
- Council Member Romero asked if Council Member Balarin would not vote for the legislation if it contains the word “reparations” to which Council Member Balarin responded that he would ask that the sponsors consider a replacement for the word “reparation” to ensure that the legislation is advanced given concerns by others.
- Council Member Romero suggested that there should be an initial, substantive report in its first year of existence and that the Commission should provide recommendations yearly thereafter.
- Council Member Farrell recommends that the lesser form of the Commission be composed of other individuals. Council Member Farrell addressed Council Member Anane’s suggestion that an outside organization serve to administer the revenue.
- Council Member Keegan added additional clarity to earlier comments regarding the use of the word “reparations”, citing the situation in Evanston, Illinois and reparation application backlogs in that community. Council Member Keegan spoke on New York State’s projected revenues from cannabis legalization.
- Council Member Frederick summarized proposed changes:
 - Changes to the make-up of the Commission
 - Change in the reporting deadline from six months to one year
 - Addition of language regarding the City administration providing revenue details
 - Exploration of a title change
 - Addition of a lawyer, Corporation Counsel, or other legal counsel
 - Exploration of Neighborhood Associations involvement
- Council Member Romero and Council Member Anane spoke on the legislation.
- Council Member Balarin emphasized the need to be realistic with expectations about reparations and what the Commission would recommend.

Adjourn:

There being no further business, Chairperson Frederick asked for a motion to adjourn, which was duly made by Council Member Adams, seconded by Council Member Keegan, and the meeting was adjourned at 6:45PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Bryan Jimenez
 Senior Legislative Aide