

# **CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

**MARCH 26, 2024**

**DOCUMENTS RECEIVED AFTER  
PUBLISHED AGENDA**

**Item # 10**

**WS 24-005**

**Russell City  
Reparative Justice  
Project**

**From:** [Claire Dugan](#)  
**To:** [List-Mayor-Council](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Russell City discussion  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 19, 2024 5:34:16 PM

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Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Claire Dugan [REDACTED]  
**Date:** March 19, 2024 at 5:19:35 PM PDT  
**To:** List-Mayor-Council@hayward-ca.gov  
**Subject:** Russell City discussion

I think the time is coming for the city council to decide on the Russell City issue. As council members now know from the available information re: the relocation of Russell City, it is clear that the city of Hayward was not responsible for their relocation. Alameda County owned all the Russell City property; it sold that property; it was Alameda County who relocated residents. The city of Hayward did not own, did not sell and did not relocate any Russell City residents; that was 100% done by Alameda County.

It is Alameda County that should pay all monies, if any, to the residents of Russell City.

There are many more tax payers in Alameda County than in the city of Hayward to pay any potential monies. As a resident of Hayward and Alameda County, I strongly oppose the Hayward City Council using our city taxes to pay for something that the city was clearly not responsible for. It is fiscally irresponsible to do so.

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Francesca Thomas](#)  
**To:** [List-Mayor-Council](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment for March 26, 2024; Meeting (Item No. 10)  
**Date:** Monday, March 25, 2024 4:41:20 PM

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Greetings Mayor Salinas and City Council,

My name is Francesca Thomas and I am a descendant of the Alves and Hightower Families as well as a member of the Russell City Reparative Justice Steering Committee. My Great-Great grandparents Leona and Manuel Alves resided in Russell City for over 25 years and they owned and operated Ideal Dining for over 20 years. Ideal Dining was a family-run establishment that was a restaurant by day and a nightclub (Miss Alves Club) in the evenings, where many renowned local and national blues musicians performed. In addition, my maternal grandparents met in Russell City and my mother and her 3 siblings (all living) were raised there.

When Russell City was destroyed, it impacted my family significantly. The Alves and the Hightowers not only lost their homes, they lost their livelihood, friends and strong community base. My grandmother, Leona Alves, was quite involved in the good fight to save Russell City and was active in numerous campaigns to save Russell City from destruction. In 1963, my grandmother, Leona, along with many other community members attempted to prevent the destruction of the City and attain basic human services, however the conspicuous climate of racism and discrimination prevalent at the time prevented any progress and their voices were ignored. Even amidst this turmoil, Leona tried to save her livelihood. Since she couldn't keep her home, she tried to keep her beloved restaurant open to service the workers who would soon come to tear down Russell City, but her request was denied.

I write to you with a twofold perspective – as a concerned resident and as a Russell City Reparative Justice Steering Committee Member.

As a direct descendant and concerned resident, my roots run deep. I was born in Hayward, raised here and Hayward is still the place I call home. I even earned my Associate's degree from Chabot College and my Bachelor's from Cal State Hayward.

Growing up, my mother and her siblings shared stories of Russell City. It was shocking to learn that a thriving multicultural community over 100 years old could be simply wiped away. Never seeing my grandmother's restaurant, my mother's childhood home, or even the school she attended was devastating. I find it unconscionable that American citizens living in America were denied permits to improve their properties and had no (or limited) access to sewage, water, fire and emergency services. A haunting account of my grandmother's testimony can be found on pages 193-195 of the Transcript of Public Hearings on the Russell City Redevelopment Project. My grandmother, Mrs. Leona Alves, was not permitted to improve her property and felt that if her home was to be annexed then she should at least be provided with a home that was already paid for as both her home and restaurant were paid for and mortgage-free. Equally disturbing is that under the guise of eminent domain, these acquisitions were not and have not been used for any public purpose that benefits the residents of Hayward.

The City of Hayward's "No Room for Racism" stance, which encompasses all forms of discrimination, has always been a source of pride for me, representing values I believe in and hold dear. What other Bay Area city openly displays this loud and proud, bold claim at its borders? Thank you for issuing an apology to the former residents of Russell City and their descendants, and for forming a Steering Committee to recommend reparative action.

As a member of the Steering Committee, I fully support and stand by the research and reports prepared by both the San Francisco Research Team and the Ceres Group. The San Francisco Research Team provided historical timelines, relevant historical news articles, and access to public records, then organized this data into an unbiased digestible, comprehensive report. The Ceres Group facilitated team meetings, created and analyzed public surveys, provided numerous reports, and provided invaluable guidance and support to the Steering Committee.

I also fully support all 26 Steering Committee Draft Recommendations which align with UN Resolution 60/147 and offer fair and reasonable solutions for those whose lives were uprooted. Based on the reports received and on the comprehensive data provided by the San Francisco Research Team and the Ceres Group, it is undeniable that residents were not fairly compensated for their property, lost generational wealth, were disenfranchised, disconnected from their community and suffered psychological harm. This multicultural community deserves rehabilitation, compensation, restitution, guarantee of non-repetition, and satisfaction. The draft recommendations, however, are just the beginning. This work needs to continue for the Steering Committee to draft a collective statement and collective recommendations.

Hayward has a unique opportunity to not only live up to its non-discriminatory "No Room for Racism" motto but to become a shining national example. By actively addressing past harms to its citizens and supporting the Steering Committee's Draft Recommendations, Hayward can demonstrate a true commitment to justice for this generation and the next. I urge you to thoughtfully consider these Draft Recommendations, allocate necessary resources, and seize this pivotal moment to make history.

Please hear your community's voice this time and keep this good work moving forward.

Respectfully,  
Francesca Thomas

**From:** [Gloria Moore](#)  
**To:** [List-Mayor-Council](#)  
**Cc:** [Aisha Knowles](#); [Regina Youngblood](#); [Josephine Ayankoya](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment for March26, 2024 City Council Meeting/Item #8  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 19, 2024 6:07:06 PM  
**Attachments:** [2.29.24 Address to HCC Revised SW \(3.docx\)](#)

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Dear, Honorable Mayor and City Council Members, please accept the attached document for Public Comment during the City Council Meeting scheduled for March 26, 2024, Item #8, at 7:00 pm.

Should you have any questions I can be reached at [REDACTED] or via email [REDACTED]

Thank you for your consideration.

To: Mayor Salinas and Members of the Hayward City Council  
From: Gloria Bratton-Moore, Former Resident/Descendant of Russell City  
Date: March 19, 2024  
Subject: Public Comment for March 26, 2024; Meeting (Item No. 10) (Revised)

Good evening, Mayor Salinas and City Council Members. My name is Gloria Bratton-Moore. I am a former resident of Russell City, and a descendant of the James Sanders Family. In 1946, when I was three years old, my family relocated from Portland, Oregon to Russell City. My Mother, Doris Sanders, was employed as a cook at Russell City's Elementary School. My Dad was a Long Shore man at Todd Ship Yard in Oakland. I lived in Russell City for 15 years until I was 18.

As a Member of the Russell City Reparative Justice Project Steering Committee (RCRJP), I am here today to support the 26 recommendations set forth in the Ceres Policy Research Report submitted to the Council for review.

First, I would like to thank the City of Hayward for being one of the first cities in the Nation to issue an apology for the Harm to the residents and descendants who lived in Russell City. Also, for forming a Steering Committee to recommend reparative actions, and making an extraordinary effort to address the ramifications of systemic and structural discrimination.

I would like to reference Attachment VIII, the "Reporters Transcript of Public Hearings on the RC Redevelopment Project, held on January 8, 1963 and share how we were able to provide a copy of the Transcript. Approximately two months following the "Apology" from the city of Hayward I was cleaning my garage and going through dozens of books. Lo and behold, one of the books fell to the

floor. Unbelievably, it was a copy of the “Transcript” of the 1963 Public Hearings which had previously been apparently lost and unavailable. It was as though my Mother dropped a copy of the Transcript from Heaven and said to me, Gloria Jean, “This is What Happened to Russell City”.

Just as you read in the Transcripts, I too, as a former resident and descendant of Russell City, can attest to the long-term pain and suffering rooted in racially discriminatory, unjust actions and policies. These decisions resulted in multi-generational financial hardship, economic inequity, psychological stress, health disparities, and social disintegration.

It is my hope that the City of Hayward will thoroughly consider and accept all 26 recommendations contained in this comprehensive Report to demonstrate its commitment to achieving reparative justice. While an ideal solution would be to return property to its rightful owners, the provision of monetary reparations appears to be the most reasonable course of action.

If you can refer to page 26 of the Report, please contemplate as a start, approving the recommendation to introduce a Guaranteed Basic Income (GBI) for former residents of Russell City. As stated in the recommendation: “This GBI Initiative, beyond financial assistance, stands as a symbol of acknowledgement and reparation, aiming to benefit all individuals affected, regardless of their current financial standing.”

I strongly encourage you, Mayor Salinas and Members of the City Council, to keep up the good work moving forward and to take the concrete steps necessary as recommended on page 35 of the Report by hiring a RCRJP Coordinator to be housed at Hayward City Hall in order to “maintain open communication and to ensure the program is consistently implemented as intended.”



As an 81-year old African American woman, my prayer is for future generations to thrive and to recognize the historical actions taken by the Mayor and Council tonight, as an attempt to rectify the Harm we endured at the hands of our local government.

Thank you

Gjmoore4@yahoo.com

**From:** [HAYWARD CONCERNED CITIZENS](#)  
**To:** [List-Mayor-Council](#)  
**Subject:** Upcoming Russell City Reparative Justice Project agenda item for 3/26/24 City Council Meeting  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 20, 2024 10:02:49 PM  
**Attachments:** [REVISITING RUSSELL CITY.pdf](#)

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**CAUTION:** This is an external email. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you know the content is safe.

Mayor Salinas and City Council,

I am writing to address this body's upcoming decision regarding the Russell City Reparative Justice Project.

As most of you are already aware, a subset group of our organization, HAYWARD CONCERNED CITIZENS, began its own research into the key aspects involved in the relocation of the Russell City descendants, resulting in the creation of a collaborative "position paper" which we submitted to both the Hayward Historical Society and City Council meeting archives (see attachment). We became involved over concerns around what impact the outcome of possible financial restitution would have on our tax-paying residents, knowing that there were also discussions of reparations at the county, state and federal level.

We are not content experts by profession but we have enough collective life experience to know that gaining accurate knowledge around any subject matter requires thorough and meticulous research, and that it must be pragmatically conducted and verified rather than drawing conclusions based on limited information. Our city leaders erroneously drew such conclusions based on recommendations from the CSC prior to doing the due diligence of verifying information, with its drafted November 16, 2021 resolution, which states:

"WHEREAS, Russell City in unincorporated Hayward was home to a large and thriving Black, Indigenous, Californio, Mexicano, Latino, and Latinx population and a vibrant music scene and, following annexation into the City of Hayward, all residents were evicted and many were

burned out of their homes and community without appropriate compensation in 1966...”

(<https://www.hayward-ca.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/RES-21-223-City-Council-Appology-Resolution.pdf>)

Clarification:

- The annexation into the City of Hayward occurred in 1968, well after Russell City residents vacated the property.
- The statement that residents were burned out of their homes is hearsay. The cause of the fires could not be determined.
- The Russell City residents were not only compensated for their properties and moving costs, but were assisted with relocation by County Redevelopment Office social worker Harold Davis.

Moreover:

- Russell City residents were a diverse group, not just Black and Hispanic.
- The experience of the Russell City residents was not race-based, but income-based.
- The eminent domain that took place in Russell City was a case of Industrialization that illustrates a period of progress, growth, and redevelopment occurring commonly in the Bay Area at that time; not collusion as one of the city research consultants inferred.

The bottom line:

Despite what Community Services Commission has conveyed to our council, the press that city staff released to news outlets across the

nation, podcasts alluding to racial discrimination, “The Apology” movie’s portrayal of this as a race and reparations issue, misinformation passed onto Hayward residents by at least one realtor, biased teachings about Russell City to some of our HUSD students and what some of the Russell City descendants have purported themselves...

**HAYWARD WAS NOT RESPONSIBLE.**

Alameda County has since made its own apology for its role in disbanding Russell City.

We encourage those who have not already done so to read our position paper, and we ask that you exercise prudence and reflection with the decisions before you while balancing the needs of our entire diverse Hayward community.

Sincerely,

TJ

**HAYWARD CONCERNED CITIZENS**

## **REVISITING RUSSELL CITY AFTER MORE THAN 50 YEARS**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

On November 17, 2021, the City of Hayward submitted a formal apology for the City's role in racial discrimination and mass displacement of Russell City residents in the 1960's. Following the apology, the City Council held a virtual meeting on January 29, 2022 for priority setting and developing a strategic road map. Among items discussed was the possible restitution to previous Russell City residents and their descendants.

In an effort to understand the issues surrounding Russell City, a committee made up of Hayward Concerned Citizens, undertook an investigation and study of the underlying factors that led up to the original destruction of Russell City, and the current reemergence of interest in revisiting its demise after nearly 60 years.

In carrying out our study, we want to emphasize that it is not our intent to denigrate or disparage anyone's feelings or memories surrounding their experiences in Russell City. We are, however, currently in a different era of social awareness, where past decisions and historical advances are being viewed through a different lens. Our world evolves, and will continue to evolve. Change is a fact and is ever present in our lives. That being said, the late 50's and early 60's was a tumultuous time of change in our country. The emphasis was on growth and development after the war. Hayward went from a population of 6,777 in 1940 to 72,700 in 1960 and had to transition from a mostly agricultural area to an industrial area to provide jobs for the community. Many of the homes here in Hayward were constructed during that period of time, and much of the acquisition of additional land through annexation also occurred during this period of time. These changes were not just being made in local governments, but it was also a period of growth for private industries, many of which relocated, opened new branches, and displaced employees by insisting that they move to the new area, or lose their jobs.

### **BACKGROUND**

The history of Russell City has been well documented in several texts: Mt. Eden, Cradle of the Salt Industry by John Sandoval (once known as our Hayward Historian); Images of America, Russell City by Maria Ochoa, and Megan Wilkerson's What Ever Happened to Russell City. We will not attempt to repeat all of that information, but want to highlight some points that have been made, as well as cite information gathered from the Hayward Daily Review and Oakland Tribune newspapers from the decade preceding the demise of Russell City. It should also be noted that much of the more recent history was gathered from interviews with a few of the former Russell City inhabitants, most of whom were children or teenagers at the time, or from oral history handed down through generations. As such, we must remain mindful of idyllic softening that may occur through time and nostalgic reminiscence. Surely, many of us who grew up in the 50's will recall the warmth of communities where neighbors knew one another and children played outside until after dark. Most did not have televisions then, and certainly not the Internet or social media. Those factors promoted communal bonds.

There are those who believe that Russell City was a part of Hayward. However, in fact, it was an unincorporated part of Alameda County. Its residents, by all accounts, were a strong and resourceful group of people with strong bonds to their community. Their population was mixed, with the majority, 47%, being of Latin origins, 34% African American and the remainder white or mixed ethnicities [Daily Review 2/24/1966]. Its diversity spoke to the affordability and nearness to local jobs in the Bay Area following the war. There was some variability in living conditions in the area, but many of the homes were run down and lacked essential services such as sewer systems and clean running water. Several of the residents endeavored to improve and create a better environment for themselves, however the Uniform Building Code went into effect in 1946 which prohibited building on land without sewer systems in place, so further development was not possible. The residents petitioned Alameda County for clean water systems and sewers. However, the County refused to intervene saying that the low assessed valuation of the land prohibited the expense of bringing it up to code. The situation did not improve during the 50's when the County was experiencing a building boom in housing. They also had pressure from multiple Grand Juries which repeatedly asked them to do something about the "blighted conditions" of Russell City. After several years, and the urging from various entities, the County made the decision to acquire the properties and to ready the land for sale. A Redevelopment Agency was formed to oversee the purchase of land from the owners, and they, along with renters, were paid to move to other available homes in several communities within the County, including Hayward, San Lorenzo, San Leandro, Newark, Fremont, Union City, Oakland and as far out as Livermore. The County then proceeded to clear the land which was then sold to a private developer, Cabot, Cabot and Forbes. Following the sale, the property was annexed to Hayward on August 6, 1968.

#### **ISSUES:**

##### **\* Separating an emotional issue from a business decision.**

The destruction of Russell City was clearly an emotional issue for some of its residents. They were a close-knit group of people who helped each other out, who fought to keep their community intact and acquire the help they needed to keep their community going. Many other small communities in the 50's also experienced the same sense of closeness, where neighbors knew neighbors and children could play safely outdoors. Those, unfortunately, are bygone eras that have left us with fond memories of better times. The Russell City families are fortunate in that they have been able to continue those close connections by meeting together yearly, an opportunity that many of us have long since lost.

In understanding history, however, we must realize that the 50's and 60's were a period that was dominated by growth and business decisions that were made for the purpose of improving communities for all of its inhabitants. The intention was not to set out to destroy low income properties, although in some cases, that happened. The intention was to improve the community for all of its citizens. Annexation was prevalent then, and in many cases, it improved the services for the residents living there. The Hayward Airport was created through eminent domain of four large properties. Several properties were displaced with the advent of BART, the building of Sunset High School, and the widening of A street. Even the failed Foothill freeway, displaced people as homes were acquired. These occurrences did not happen just in our local area. Similar occurrences were prevalent throughout the country.

### **\* The racial issue**

In this era of social justice, we tend to view issues with a different lens than that which was prevalent many years ago. That being said, the destruction of Russell City had repercussions on all races and ethnicities residing there, not merely a select few. This was an issue of poverty, but also of relatives and neighbors locating in an area together which was affordable and accessible to jobs. The residents may have had limited resources, but they viewed themselves as a cohesive group with no racial divides (a condition which would benefit all of us to adopt in today's world). In Megan Wilkinson's book, Mr. Garron said that there were no prejudices in Russell City, that everyone treated each other with respect. (p.80). Reverend Green recalled that there was no racial tension, that everyone got along well with each other. He also stated that too often the Black/Hispanic presence of Russell City is played up while the Whites get overlooked. (p.86)

In 1959, the City of Hayward passed a unanimous resolution affirming that "no person applying to buy, rent or lease quarters in any housing in Hayward constructed with public assistance, either direct or indirect ... shall be subjected to discrimination or segregation because of his race, creed, color, national origin, religious or political opinions, or affiliation. Buster Brooks, a Russell City resident, called the resolution, "a great achievement in eliminating discrimination in housing in our area." [Oakland Tribune, 6/14/1959].

### **\*The issue of the effect on Russell City residents**

At this point, we lack any real evidence that people's lives were not improved (for the most part) by being relocated to other communities. In fact, the opposite is most likely true. In this writer's experience, two former Russell City families relocated to my neighborhood. The homes were newly built in 1951 and were small, well built, 3 bedroom homes on a quiet street. Another Russell City family moved into the neighborhood in the 1950's and were my neighbors for many years.

The County oversaw the relocation and made sure that each family was placed in a safe, decent and sanitary home [Daily Review, 3/15/1961]. They were also interviewed a year later to find out how they were doing. Megan Wilkinson, in her book, What Ever Happened to Russell City, interviewed a few former residents or children of former residents in 2002. When asked the question about their feelings about the relocation, responses were mixed. Dave Bassard said he thought the change was good for a lot of people. It forced them to re-evaluate their lives and adjust. The transition's effect was dependent on how you looked at the situation, how your attitude was toward the situation. (page74). Reverend Green thought that what happened to Russell City may have been a blessing in disguise. He said no one should live the way they did in Russell City-the buildings and sanitation systems were serious problems. He said that the relocation potentially forced some people to get out of their complacency and evaluate what they could do with their lives. Many people did very well after leaving Russell City. (p.88). Mrs. Tingley said that she felt the move was good for her parents because they were getting old and the ranch was too big for them.

There were also those who felt the move was difficult, mainly for emotional reasons. Mrs. Moreno said that it was hard because she had to make new friends. She felt it was harder on older people because they didn't have a place to feel comfortable anymore, a place where everyone knew them (p.131).

The residents were dispersed to several different locations throughout the County during their relocation, and this may also be a factor in their current status and well-being. However, based on the 2020 census, at least in Hayward, the poverty rate is a mere 8.35%, below the national average. And if we break it down by race or ethnicity, the poverty rate of Blacks was at 9.72%, Whites 9.55% and Hispanics 9.24%. All of those rates are similar to one another. It was also noted that High School graduation rates were slightly higher for Blacks than Whites, and with Blacks only slightly behind Whites for Bachelor's Degrees. These statistics appear to indicate that the gaps in equality are narrowing, and that people, in general, are succeeding in their lives.

**\*The issue of compensation.**

Again, there were mixed responses to the question of whether people were fairly compensated. There were those who felt they were not properly paid for their properties; amounts stated in Megan Wilkinson's book varied widely. A Board appointed Citizen's Committee was formed with recommendations that the board carry out its avowed intention of basing the prices paid for land on a "team of independent appraisers." (Daily Review 11/23/1962) One comment made in 1964 stated that 22 properties had been purchased, all within the appraised value (Daily Review 7/29/64).

Marvin Casalina, the individual who was hired to handle the buying of Russell City properties, was interviewed in an Oakland Tribune article. He stated that "many people have a misconception of the value of their property and that is almost always on the high side." He also pointed out that with all of the public agencies he had represented, he did not recall a single one which had attempted to obtain the property for less than fair market value. He stated that the amount to be paid for the property was generally determined by the agency, usually on the basis of at least two independent appraisals where he, Casalina, was retained. (Oakland Tribune 11/7/1965)

**\*Hayward's part in the demise of Russell City**

Evidence clearly shows that Hayward **was not** the responsible party in the destruction of Russell City, although its problems were well known to Hayward. As far back as the 1940's, Russell City residents were seeking to get clean water from Hayward, but to no avail. The problem was that Hayward's water pipelines only came within 2000 feet of Russell City, and the residents of Russell City could not afford to make the necessary connections to extend the pipeline. In 1949, Hayward offered to bring water to Russell City if Alameda County would pay ½ the cost. [Daily Review 9/14/1949]. The residents of Russell City even wrote to the Governor, Earl Warren, seeking his support in urging the County to pay its share, but the County did not.

Early in 1960, Russell City was said to have posed a headache for officials of the County and an assortment of other public agencies. The Mayor of Hayward felt that Hayward had a moral obligation to take the problem on, and urged the County to do something.

Later on, in 1960, at a Hayward City Council meeting, the issue of Russell City again emerged. Mayor Dettenreider wanted to appoint a committee focused on the "interest in the welfare of these people, the welfare of the people of the city of Hayward, and the welfare of the people of the County." [Daily Review 8/23/1960].



It was not until 1961 that the County, after urging from Hayward, multiple Grand Juries, and other entities, finally approved a Federal Urban Renewal Project. The object was to “transform Russell City into a thriving industrial park and to relocate residents in homes that were decent, safe, and sanitary”. [Daily Review 3/15/1961]. Under the act, families were eligible to purchase homes costing up to \$10,000 on a 40-year-mortgage. At that time, it was noted that 212 residents were on welfare, and rents were approximately \$15 a month on substandard housing. Hayward was not working in tandem with the County on the redevelopment, because “the Urban Renewal Administration would not look with favor on a joint exercise of powers by Hayward and Alameda County as a Renewal Agency. It wants to look to one jurisdiction for responsibility. [Bangt Torsell, representative of the Federal Housing and Homes Finance Agency; Daily Review 3/15/1961]

The County hired Harold Davis to oversee the redevelopment project and Attorney Marvin Casalina handled the buying of properties from Russell City residents. Each resident received a stipend for moving expenses (up to \$200) and relocation to a suitable home within several cities within the County. Out of 186 families that were relocated, 86 went to Hayward, 38 to East Oakland, and 28 to North Oakland. The remainder was spread throughout the County, in Castro Valley, Fremont, Livermore, Newark, San Leandro, San Lorenzo and Union City.

To sum up, Russell City was unincorporated land owned by Alameda County, not Hayward. The County was the entity that purchased the properties, that relocated residents, and then sold the property to a private industrial firm, Cabot, Cabot and Forbes. It was not until August of 1968 that the area was annexed to Hayward.

**\*The issue of reparations:**

The City of Hayward offered an apology in November of 2021 for the part that they may have played in the destruction of Russell City and for “institutional racism”. In this era of social justice, it should be noted that in rereading the City’s apology, they clearly left out the White families who resided there, and it would appear to suggest that there is still a racial bias in our community. The City of Hayward has also certainly honored the people of Russell City in numerous ways over the years. There is a yearly Russell City Blues celebration funded by the City, a mural depicting Russell City stands in the downtown area, a \$15,000 plaque is being placed in Heritage Park, and there are a series of historical signs erected in a pocket park in the Industrial Area where Russell City once stood. How many of us who have lived or grown up in a treasured Hayward neighborhood have been honored in such a way? In our viewpoint, Hayward has been experiencing a tremendous amount of guilt for something that they are not guilty of. No amount of giving can undo past history. As previously stated, we live in an era of social justice, but social justice should not be a term relegated to just one race or one people. If we are to live together as a community, we must learn to consider all people as part of that community. All of us as citizens experience the repercussions of decisions made in years past. People deserve equal and fair opportunities to better their lives, but all of us will have different outcomes, many of which are beyond our control.

On the issue of Russell City, there is no evidence that Hayward is responsible for, or that it should continue its guilt plagued efforts to make it up to, Russell City residents. The citizens of Russell City were properly reimbursed for their properties, had their moving expenses paid for, and were given

additional help in locating and obtaining new and better homes. These people are and will continue to be the resilient, hard working people that they are, and will continue to embrace their old community and its connections.

**CONCLUSIONS:**

It is our belief that history is a teacher. We cannot change it, but our job is to learn from it. The demise of Russell City was clearly an issue that touched people in an emotional way. It came about during a period of growth in Alameda County, and became a project of the County's Redevelopment Agency. However, as a physical reality, the lives of many of the residents were improved as they were fully compensated for their land, offered good property purchase options and were helped to find new, safer and more sanitary homes throughout the County.

In dealing with the present issue of reparations, we hope that the City will clearly consider the statements being made here, and will not fall prey to unreasonable expectations of anyone, especially those who are not from nor have ever resided in Russell City. It has been more than 50 years since the events of Russell City took place, and now it has reemerged as a current event. Being that the City was not responsible for what happened, and that the City has gone above and beyond in honoring the Russell City community, along with the fact that Russell City citizens were already compensated by the County many years ago, we are strongly opposed to any direct financial reparations being made by the City of Hayward.

Respectfully submitted,

Hayward Concerned Citizens

**From:** [Priscilla Figueroa](#)  
**To:** [List-Mayor-Council](#)  
**Subject:** Meeting of Council Members and Russell City Reparation Justice Project Steering Committee  
**Date:** Saturday, March 16, 2024 1:59:08 AM  
**Attachments:** [Priscilla letter to city of hayward re R C reparative 3 11 24 000072.pdf](#)

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**CAUTION:** This is an external email. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you know the content is safe.

This letter is addressed to Mayor Mark Salinas and Members of the Hayward City Council. Thank You, Priscilla Figueroa

**Priscilla Figueroa**  
Notary Public - Alameda Co.  
State of California  
PH: [REDACTED]

March 11, 2024

City of Hayward  
Mayor Mark Salinas and Members of the Hayward City Council  
List-Mayor-Council@hayward-ca.gov  
777 B Street  
Hayward, CA

RE: Meeting of Council Members and Russell City Reparative Justice Project Steering Committee

Mayor Salinas and City Council members and supporting staff, I am writing this letter as a member of the Russell City Reparative Justice Project Steering Committee that was elected by the Russell City ex-residents and descendants, taking this opportunity to thank the City of Hayward for issuing an apology to the former residents and their descendants and families of Russell City.

The main purpose of this letter is to acknowledge that I support the 26 recommendations that have been identified and are contained in the comprehensive Report being submitted to the City Council for its review.

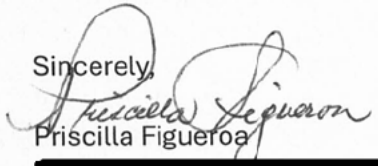

I am also writing this letter as a personal letter from the Figueroa Family, including my late husband, James R. Figueroa, our children, Laura J. Figueroa and James R. Figueroa and their children.

My name is Priscilla Figueroa who started attending Russell City Apostolic Church in August 1956 as a 13-year-old child, when my parents immigrated our family from Mexico and all of our family of 9 attended that church. I was married to my late husband James R. Figueroa, an ex-resident of Russell City. We were part of the church family, and our marriage was the last one officiated at the church before it was sold to Alameda County. All of our friends were the church family since we had no blood relatives in the area and we were very close to many residents and I truly enjoyed being part of the close-knit community, and all the places that I would have liked to share with my children are no longer there, but my memories are still vivid.

As an 81-year old woman, I have learned a lot of facts about what took place in Russell City, the injustices and consequences as a byproduct of the very defined racial discrimination, hardships, economic inequity, health disparities as to not having potable water, sewers, nor a fire department to help the citizens of Russell City even though they pay taxes and were deserving of the essentials of life that were purportedly denied to them.

I pray and encourage the City of Hayward to accept the recommendations contained in this comprehensive Report as the first step towards healing and achieving reparative justice and its intention to keep this work moving forward. Praying that it never happens again in our community and encouraging others to refuse to harm citizens to gain wealth for the city that rightfully belongs to its citizens.

Sincerely,

  
Priscilla Figueroa  


**From:** [junkintofunk](#)  
**To:** [List-Mayor-Council](#)  
**Subject:** WS 24-005  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 26, 2024 12:42:00 PM

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**CAUTION:** This is an external email. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you know the content is safe.

Good afternoon City Council,

I have read through the multitude of comments and suggestions by former residents and descendants of Russell City and I have also talked with descendants over the past few years.

One of the suggestions that strikes me as something that Hayward could easily offer is a community center, recreational space, and community art and education. Hayward owns the perfect parcel for this and this parcel is located in the same census tract as the former Russell City.

This census tract today has much the same demographic as Russell City had in 1963. This census tract is in dire need of open space, recreational opportunities, a community center, and educational opportunities.

The parcel of land I am referring to in the census tract is the former Skywest Golf Course and Clubhouse. When I go for walks in the former Skywest Golf course, I see people from all over the surrounding neighborhoods walking, riding their bicycles, and enjoying the beautiful open space that is Skywest. I talk to people when I'm out on the trail and they do indeed come from all over the Hesperian corridor and the Winton corridor.

I believe retaining Skywest as open space as part of your package of reparations for the Russell City eminent domain disaster would be appropriate.

Please do not make the same mistake that was made in 1963. Please do not let development decisions be led by the almighty dollar and heavily influenced by people who do not live here in our communities.

Thank you.  
Mimi Dean

To the members of the Hayward City Counsel

My name is Marian Johnson – I am a former resident and the daughter, granddaughter and great granddaughter of home/land owners who lived in Russell City,

I do not want a repeat of the visual performance played out in 1963 at the Redevelopment Agency Russell City Hearings that now in 2024 the city of Hayward - checks a box. This community of Russell City Residents and descendants deserve true reparative justice - to be restored repaired and repaid

Ms. Youngblood was asked why the Santucci Farm was not listed and shown on the most recent map and we were informed/lead to believe that the information was not available or they did not have access to that information something to that affect – which I was able to locate upon a quick review of the San Francisco teams documents. The undeveloped Santucci farm which received more than 500k (Market value) must be posted on the map to show the inequity between payments forced upon the property owners with developed land who received pennies on the dollar for their land.

Much like Harold Davis, the African American gentleman who said he thought we would be better off elsewhere and his willingness to help push the county agenda he was positioned comfortably to become the head of the Oakland Housing Authority. I do not appreciate what looks like smoke, mirrors and half truths

To the good citizens of Hayward - voices like yours are the voices which after dumping their garbage causing blight in our beloved Russell city your voices rose loudly to push our families out of Russell City by refusing to tell the truth of your deeds – I know where you stand when it comes to people that look like me every letter you write blatantly refusing to tell the complete story –when voices like yours were/are excited when I, my parents and grandparents are not treated equitably - we were pushed out and my grandparents were given close to nothing yet Mr. Santucci received half a million dollars for his land - our land was stolen from us in part by the City of Hayward a member of the Alameda County Board of Supervisors sitting as the Redevelopment Agency in 1963

My point is - this committee needs more time to meet with members of the Russell City community in authentic transparent partnership with the Hayward staff assigned to make true the apology delivered in 2021 before we are able to present final recommendations for this community. Thank you for your consideration.

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STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
COUNTY OF ALAMEDA

DIRECT ACKNOWLEDGMENT

AUG 20 1967

On this 27<sup>th</sup> day of November in the year 1963 before me, ROBERT FAIRWELL

a Notary Public in and for the County of ALAMEDA, State of California, personally appeared

LOUIS SANTUCCI AND <sup>RENÉE</sup> ~~BRENDA~~ SANTUCCI, his wife, and

ALBERT SANTUCCI and PAULINE SANTUCCI, his wife

known to me to be the persons whose names are subscribed to the within deed and acknowledged that they executed the same.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my official seal in the County of

ALAMEDA, the day and year in this certificate first above written.

(SEAL)

My Commission Expires 1/67

*Robert Fairwell*

Notary Public in and for said County and State  
ROBERT FAIRWELL

(continuation of description from over-side)

feet to an angle point thereon; thence along the southeastern line of said County Road No. 1009, south 56° 18' west 496.58 feet; thence south 2° 17' east 663.16 feet; thence south 87° 43' west 164.83 feet; thence south 2° 17' east 396.40 feet to a point on the northern boundary line of that certain parcel of land described in Deed to Hans Peter Hanson, dated October 16, 1869, and recorded in Book 50 of Deeds, at page 1, Alameda County Records; thence along the said last mentioned line north 87° 43' east 596.69 feet to a point on the western boundary line of the said "Map Russell City"; thence along the said last mentioned line north 2° 17' west 1318.40 feet to the actual point of commencement.

also, all Grantor's right, title and interest in any private and/or public way adjoining and appurtenant to the above-described real property.

CERTIFICATE OF ACCEPTANCE  
Government Code Section 27231

This is to certify that the interest in real property described herein is hereby accepted by the undersigned officer on behalf of the Redevelopment Agency of the County of Alameda pursuant to authority conferred by resolution of said Agency adopted on November 5, 1963, and said grantee consents to recordation thereof by its duly authorized officer.

Dated: December 3, 1963 By

*[Signature]*  
Executive Director