

**SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL  
MEETING**

**JANUARY 29, 2022**

**DOCUMENTS RECEIVED  
AFTER PUBLISHED  
AGENDA**

# **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

## **Workplan IV #9 Restitution for the Survivors and Descendants of Russell City 94545**

**From:** Velda Goe

**Sent:** Thursday, January 27, 2022 4:31 PM

**To:** Miriam Lens <[Miriam.Lens@hayward-ca.gov](mailto:Miriam.Lens@hayward-ca.gov)>; Monica Davis <[Monica.Davis@hayward-ca.gov](mailto:Monica.Davis@hayward-ca.gov)>; Mary Thomas <[Mary.Thomas@hayward-ca.gov](mailto:Mary.Thomas@hayward-ca.gov)>; List-Mayor-Council <[List-Mayor-Council@hayward-ca.gov](mailto:List-Mayor-Council@hayward-ca.gov)>

**Subject:** Public Comment for Jan. 29 Work Session Meeting - Item 9 Workplan IV Restitution for the Survivors and Descendants of Russell City 94545

Greetings all:

Below are a few background articles about what happened to the Residents of Russell City in the 60s and 70s.

Hopefully, you will review them as 'food for thought' for our Work Session discussion on January 29 - Attachment Workplan IV - Item #9 -categorized as an 'unfunded' project.

<https://thepioneeronline.com/35548/metro/35548/>

<https://www.kqed.org/news/11897843/decades-after-cultural-genocide-residents-of-a-bulldozed-community-get-apology-from-hayward>

<https://youtu.be/svus7tc8mTc>

Thank you; we Russell City Survivors and Descendants of the Wynn - Brooks - Goe families and current residents of Hayward, appreciate your vote of support and do look forward to meeting with you soon.

But at the same time, please consider that while the City of Hayward issued an appreciated apology for forcibly and inhumanely driving out the largely Black population of Russell City; paid them a pittance for their businesses and homes and redlined them afterwards - forcing them to again live in the least desirable sections of town in the 60s and 70s; to this day, the now industrial-commercial area within the Hayward Shoreline vicinity, formerly known as Russell City; *still* provides a profitable stream of revenue for the City of Hayward, from the Russell City 'stolen lands'.

Continually. and with no recompense to Russell City Survivors and Descendants from its collection of funds from leases, sales, resales, developer fees, permit fees, business taxes, real estate taxes, assessment fees and so on.

Yet there is 'no revenue' to initiate restitution actions?

Seems logical that profits from occupied lands ill-gotten should be shared with those who were transgressed against and their lineage if they are deceased.

Sincerely,

Velda Goe

Descendant of Margaret Goe Wynn (my Mother); Russell City residents: Evetta Wynn-Brooks, my Great Aunt, George and Marybell Wynn - my cousins

**From:** Velda Goe

**Sent:** Friday, January 28, 2022 1:43 PM

**To:** Monica Davis <[Monica.Davis@hayward-ca.gov](mailto:Monica.Davis@hayward-ca.gov)>

**Cc:** List-Mayor-Council <[List-Mayor-Council@hayward-ca.gov](mailto:List-Mayor-Council@hayward-ca.gov)>; Miriam Lens <[Miriam.Lens@hayward-ca.gov](mailto:Miriam.Lens@hayward-ca.gov)>; Mary Thomas <[Mary.Thomas@hayward-ca.gov](mailto:Mary.Thomas@hayward-ca.gov)>; Kelly McAdoo <[Kelly.McAdoo@hayward-ca.gov](mailto:Kelly.McAdoo@hayward-ca.gov)>; Jennifer Ott <[Jennifer.Ott@hayward-ca.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Ott@hayward-ca.gov)>

**Subject:** PUBLIC COMMENT FOR Jan. 29, 2021 City Council Meeting as Concerns Russell City -

Attachment: Work Plan IV - Item #9

Greetings All:

I, Velda Goe, a Descendant of the Brooks/Wynn families who resided in Russell City, am providing Public Comment for the Jan. 29, 2021 Work Session Meeting as a follow up to the 12/14/21 Meeting held with Monica Davis (CSC) and the City Council.

Russell City Proposal in Response to Nov. 17th City Apology:

Firstly, thank you, City of Hayward, for issuing the Public Apology on Nov. 17, 2021 and supporting our Dec. 14, 2021 Proposal referencing Work Plan IV: Item #9 to embark on the Road to Recovery and Atonement for the Russell City Travesty.

Wherein Russell City descendants in my family had to drink/use contaminated water; use car batteries for electricity; lived without the benefit of basic municipal services; paid taxes to Hayward until they were evicted off *their* Land and traumatically experienced the City bulldozing their Town, which they had previously thrived in, despite it all.

Afterwhich, their Land was resold; with no profit or benefit to the Russell City residents, to Commercial entities, who would, and continue to, occupy their formerly owned parcels.

AND NOW,

HAYWARD IS STILL COLLECTING TAXES ON THE PARCELS, WITHOUT COMPENSATION, TO DATE, TO THE EXISTING RUSSELL CITY DESCENDANTS OR FORMER RESIDENTS.

I propose the following, to lay a pathway for atonement; in conjunction, as is feasible, with some aspects of the Work Plan IV:

- set aside \$3M in the 2022 budget to fund the efforts described herein

As the New Project listed towards the Restitution planning in Work Plan IV is shown as unfunded, it is herein proposed that an agreed upon portion of all the monies that the COH/Alameda County still currently collects from the ill-gotten properties in Russell City, be deposited into the Russell City Community Committee 501c3 fund to begin the steps towards Restitution.

- send a Press Release SEARCHING FOR ALL RUSSELL CITY RESIDENTS/ DESCENDANTS
- conduct meetings with Russell City descendants and residents to work alongside the assigned GOVERNMENT BODY to:

- form the appropriate Russell City Community Committee (RCCC) 501c3

-locate, obtain and fully transfer an appropriate commercial building in Russell City to house the RCCC and its activities as a 501c3. RCCC Bldg characteristics:

offices

restrooms

kitchen area

open assembly area

with a 500 person capacity

tax and mortgage free

- apportion a percentage of the taxes collected from everyone inhabiting land ill-gotten from Russell City residents; to be transferred, via agreement, to the RCCC for building/site maintenance

work with RCCC to develop policies that disallow a repetition of the Russell City Travesty by the governance and jointly, as desired, to foster programs to inform, enlighten and further the resilience and artistic accomplishments that were realized in Russell City, prior to its destruction.

As it is both fitting and appropriate that the City of Hayward engage in more than symbolic gestures to address the very tangible losses that were experienced by the Russell City residents and its descendants, by their loss of the benefit of familial transfer of wealth from their formerly owned Russell City holdings; and, in relation to the Work Plan III, my proposal is to proffer tangible reconciliatory actions stemming from your Work Plan III and to be included for discussion during the Community Services Commission (CSC) Dec. 15th Work Session and the January 29th City Council Work Session.

#### **Item 9.**

In addition to the 1st Time Homebuyer proposal as an appropriate restitution for Russell City residents and descendants, a grant amount of \$50,000 should be earmarked for the housing needs of non-homeowners and for homeowners needing repairs and/or upgrades to their homes

Basis:

As Russell City residents had their most valuable asset, their homes, taken from them, a fair solution would be to distribute monies to that same end, which, although in today's market, \$50k would not even scratch the surface for Bay Area housing, it is a tangible value that can be used towards that end by each identified Russell City Descendant or former Resident

#### **Item 10.**

To address the eviction of residents and multi-generational wealth transfer losses to the descendants of Russell City, and the tangible razing of their homes and the town businesses which the residents built in Russell City, a tangible solution would be the ownership transfer to Russell City survivors and descendants, via the Russell City Community Committee, of a fully equipped commercial building of sound structure and in good repair; with kitchen, office, an assembly area and bathroom facilities for an approximately 500 person capacity; to be used by Russell City residents and descendants, at no cost, and by others, for a fee collected in a Russell City Community Committee maintenance fund; controlled by the owners, the Russell City Community Committee (RCCC), a 501c3.

This structure should be transferred for \$1, tax-free, in perpetuity, and located within the boundaries of Russell City. Its water usage from the City of Hayward should also be free, as well as PGE, WMA and all other Municipal services.

Basis: The residents of Russell City, despite the City of Hayward withholding basic municipal services a Citizenship would need to thrive, nonetheless, developed and built a thriving town for its' residents.

All that they developed and built was stripped from them and they had to start all over again; with little more than a one-time meager stipend to do it with, in an openly hostile City.

So it is fitting, that the 'industrial zone' that was once home to the close-knit Russell City Community, should once again, be the 'home' for the Russell City Community - clear and free - with no strings attached.

Thank you City Council Members, Mayor Halliday, City Manager Kelly McAdoo and Assistant Manager Jennifer Ott for being conscientious enough to be committed to a real reconciliatory plan for the Russell City Residents and the Descendants of the families who lived in Russell City.

Thanking you again for taking this very important 1st step and praying that since many original Russell City residents and their descendants are alive and well and still living in Hayward AND PAYING TAXES, that you will not perpetrate the injustice of 'wiping Russell City off the map', while simultaneously trying to 'claim the fame' on the backs of the hard working residents who PUT RUSSELL CITY ON THE MAP.

Sincerely,

Velda Goe

Russell City Descendant of the Wynn/Brooks Families

**From:** Velda Goe

**Sent:** Saturday, January 29, 2022 8:28 PM

**To:** List-Mayor-Council <List-Mayor-Council@hayward-ca.gov>; Mary Thomas <Mary.Thomas@hayward-ca.gov>; Monica Davis <Monica.Davis@hayward-ca.gov>; Kelly McAdoo <Kelly.McAdoo@hayward-ca.gov>; Jennifer Ott <Jennifer.Ott@hayward-ca.gov>; GILBERT BROOKS; Rudy Brooks; Yvonne Bassard-10/27 BD Allen Brooks; vena Ratliff; Orion Seth Goe- BD 8-30-80; Cindy

**Subject:** Russell City Q25 Project Needs to be Funded in the Hayward 2022 Budget

[http://explore.museumca.org/LHP/bernardo\\_russell2.htm](http://explore.museumca.org/LHP/bernardo_russell2.htm)

Greetings All:

Due to another committment today, I had to leave before today's Jan. 29 Work Session ended.

Therefore I was unable to hear whether the tide had changed from the discussion I heard that assigned the Russell City Q25 Restitution Project as a top priority for the City of Hayward within the 2022 Strategic Roadmap, but for which 'no funding' would be allocated.

I simultaneously heard that an 'expert' strategic consultant, Civic Makers; has, and will be retained, to 'study' the Russell City Restitution Project, as well as bring on *another* 'expert' consultant firm, to aid in structuring surveys, talks, meetings and perhaps, even in years hence, an actual restitution plan to be implemented; at some point, for Russell City Residents and Descendants.

And there *is* funding for that.

To which, as communicated in my comments this morning, a Russell City descendant on my late Mother's side and Marian and Michael Johnson; Russell City Residents - find troubling.

It would seem that the Priority Q25 Russell City Restitution Project, as reflected in the 2022 Strategic Roadmap, should have a funding component in the 2022 Budget because:

- 1) multiple streams of income are generated from the lands owned and stolen from Russell City Residents
- 2) Russell City Residents are still residing in Hayward
- 3) the remaining Russell City Residents are the *actual* 'experts' on what happened in Russell City and what would be fair Restitution for them and their descendants
- 4) the Russell City Residents can be identified and relied on to document the true and complete history *firsthand*
- 5) the Q25 Russell City Project, therefore, should not be delayed, nor unfunded; if it is truly 'deemed' a priority, since:

- the Budget is being developed now;

- there are income streams being generated from entities squatting on the lands illegally gotten from Russell City Residents;
- there are a sufficient number of Russell City Residents *still living* in Hayward, who should not be dragged thru multiple years of traumatic data collections, surveys, charts and graphs by 'experts', trying to *reconstruct* the tremendous emotional toll they suffered for *decades*; trying to put an 'formulaic' price tag on it.
- The money needs to be in the 2022 Budget.

**The Russell City Residents are Here.**

**In Hayward.**

**Now.**

**They have suffered enough.**

Talk about Emotional IQ.

Their tremendous resilience; ability to thrive and sustain; amid intentional actions to *destroy* them, should be *heralded; documented* and *recompensed* NOW.

In their Golden Years. They *know* what they want.

And they don't need to be dragged, *again*, for years; recounting painful memories in charts, meetings and graphs - during the time in their lives when they should be *esteemed and rewarded*; ensuring they and their descendants are made whole by receiving Justice - NOW.

Not in Memoriam.

Let's be real, Hayward.

Let's be sincere, Hayward.

If you *really* want to right it - do so *now*.

The Russell City Residents were intelligent enough to survive and thrive on their own; despite the insensitive atrocities designed to destroy them.

Don't repeat History and do it again.

That would be most unkind action and pull back the curtain on the perpetration of a very ugly truth.

Again, Hayward you have the opportunity to make History - the 'Right' way.

Sincerely,



Velda Goe

Daughter of deceased Margoree Wynn

Descendant of Russell City Residents (my Great Grandfather) George and Marybell Wynn; who raised my Mother

Russell City Resident, Evetta Wynn-Brooks (my Great Aunt) and Buster Brooks

**From:** Velda Goe

**Sent:** Saturday, January 29, 2022 10:31 AM

**To:** List-Mayor-Council <List-Mayor-Council@hayward-ca.gov>; Monica Davis <Monica.Davis@hayward-ca.gov>; Kelly McAdoo <Kelly.McAdoo@hayward-ca.gov>; Jennifer Ott <Jennifer.Ott@hayward-ca.gov>; Mary Thomas <Mary.Thomas@hayward-ca.gov>; Miriam Lens <Miriam.Lens@hayward-ca.gov>

**Subject:** Reference Articles re: Racial Equity from State of Calif and other Cities

<https://lasentinel.net/santa-monica-offers-housing-to-families-displaced-by-highway.html>

<https://lasentinel.net/watch-ca-gov-gavin-newsom-speaks-on-signing-bruces-beach-bill-returning-land-back-to-black-family.html>

Thank you Council Members, Kelly and Jennifer for your comments!

I have to attend another meeting and cannot continue to listen in, but here are my comments:

1) definitely noted the 'emotional IQ' wisdom and apologize for my lack of it in past interactions with you. I am noting to 'turn down the temperature' moving forward, so the message will not be lost by the delivery - so thank you for that tip!

2) Please *definitely* include UCNA as an interested party in all things relating to:

- a) Housing Element
- b) illegal dumping

and afford us the directed opportunity to also participate in the surveys, neighborhood meetings and other meetings we may miss in your mass mailings

3) please include our Russell City (RC) family distribution list on CSC emails for any and all related communications regarding RC.

4) attached are 2 articles for your review that the State and another City has done regarding the racial equity lens and reparations

5) can I pick up a printed copy of today's powerpoint presentation - I have no CPU or printer?

6) for the other consultant that will be hired for the racial equity/RC work can you strongly consider an AA firm - seems like Civic Makers, while extremely accomplished I am sure, may only have a lens through data - which is very different than one through real life experience

7) sincerely thank you all for your very insightful comments made today - looking forward to working together to make and retain the beautiful City of Hayward as a progressive, equitable and environmentally kind to these lands that we and our wildlife neighbors have the privilege to call 'home'.

Many blessings,

Velda Goe