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## Commission to Study the History of the Uprooting of Black Communities by Public Institutions of Higher Education in the Commonwealth

May 19, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.

General Assembly Building, House Committee Room C-206

<https://dls.virginia.gov/commissions/cubc.htm>

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The Commission to Study the History of the Uprooting of Black Communities by Public Institutions of Higher Education in the Commonwealth (the Commission) met in Richmond with Delegate Delores L. McQuinn, chair, presiding.<sup>1</sup> The meeting began with introductions and opening remarks followed by presentations and discussion. Materials presented at the meeting are accessible through the [Commission's meetings webpage](#).

### Overview of Consultant Selection Process

*Amigo Wade, Director, Division of Legislative Services*

Mr. Wade provided a brief overview of the actions taken on behalf of the Commission since its last meeting. At its September 18, 2025, meeting the Commission discussed revisions to a draft job description for a project manager to support the work of the Commission and appointed a Hiring Subcommittee consisting of the chair, Delegate Karen Keys-Gamarra, Delegate Jeion A. Ward, Delegate Bonita G. Anthony, and Dr. Cassandra L. Newby-Alexander. The Hiring Subcommittee finalized a specialized project manager position description and job advertisement and the position was subsequently posted on September 25, 2025. A total of 14 applicants responded to the job advertisement and completed initial telephone interviews. The Hiring Subcommittee conducted a comprehensive review of all application materials submitted by candidates, including resumes, essays, cover letters, and information from telephone interviews. On November 6, 2025, the Hiring Subcommittee met to evaluate applicants and determine which candidates would advance to the interview stage. The Hiring Subcommittee later reconvened on December 3, 2025, to interview the four highest-ranked candidates.

Following the interview process, the Hiring Subcommittee selected Dr. Cleve Tinsley as the preferred candidate. A contract including a detailed statement of work was executed. The agreement became effective on January 11, 2026, with an initial term ending June 30, 2026. The contract authorizes the consultant to recruit and supervise additional personnel necessary to support project objectives, including an administrative and engagement coordinator, a research analyst, and one or more research interns.

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<sup>1</sup> **Members Present:** Delegate Delores L. McQuinn (chair), Senator Lamont Bagby (vice-chair), Senator David W. Marsden, Delegate Bonita G. Anthony (virtual), Delegate Karen Keys-Gamarra, Delegate Anne Ferrell H. Tata, Delegate Jeion A. Ward (virtual), Peter A. Blake, Dr. Byron Cherry, A. Scott Fleming, Joni Ivey

**Members Absent:** Senator J.D. "Danny" Diggs, Senator Mamie E. Locke, Delegate Ellen H. Campbell, Carl Edmonds, Julian Maxwell Hayter, Dr. Maureen Elgersman Lee, Dr. Cassandra L. Newby-Alexander, Secretary Aimee Rogstad Guidera

## **Project Director and Research Team Briefing**

*Dr. Cleve Tinsley, Project Director, Commission to Study the Uprooting of Black Communities by Public Institutions of Higher Education in the Commonwealth*

Dr. Tinsley proceeded to provide a general overview of the research plan. He stated that the purpose of the research is to identify historically Black communities impacted by institutional expansion while reconstructing their demographic, cultural, economic, and spatial histories over time. The research would document the timelines of land acquisition and displacement and analyze the methods used by institutions, including eminent domain, urban renewal, condemnation laws, demolition policies, and other coercive practices. He further explained that the research would examine the long-term impacts of displacement on housing, business ownership, generational wealth, families, descendants, and cultural assets, while compiling community concerns and lived experiences related to institutional expansion.

Dr. Tinsley reported that the project has moved from the design and development phase into the public engagement phase and is currently supported by preliminary research findings. He distinguished between project design and research design. He noted that project design focused on establishing documentation controls, auditing procedures, accountability measures, project management systems, monthly reports, and biweekly synthesis reviews. The research design focused on developing the methodology, identifying institutions of focus, and creating a research validation framework to assess community claims through historical and institutional records. Dr. Tinsley noted that the initial phase focused on (i) project and research design, (ii) securing the project team, and (iii) development of oversight systems. He explained that the research validation framework is intended to compare community-reported experiences and claims with available institutional records and historical documentation. This validation process took approximately one month and was necessary to determine whether community claims could be substantiated through available evidence. Findings from the research will be incorporated into a final report that includes historical findings, economic impact analysis, visual and geographic mapping, and documentation of community concerns and lived experiences related to institutional expansion.

Dr. Tinsley concluded by stating that the project will continue public engagement, stakeholder outreach, and research activities to support completion of the final report. He noted that the first community listening session is scheduled for 5:00 p.m. on June 16, 2026, at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School in Richmond, Virginia.

## **Commission Discussion**

Commissioners asked questions regarding the research validation process and how historical research is being used to substantiate community claims related to institutional expansion and displacement. Discussion focused on the balance between institutional records and community-reported experiences, including how the research accounts for differences between documented actions and lived experiences. Questions were also raised regarding the role of planning systems, policies, and institutional decision-making in contributing to displacement and community impacts. Commissioners also inquired about the methods used to collect and verify information, including the use of surveys, historical records, public engagement, and other qualitative and quantitative data sources.

Additional discussion centered on ensuring that a component of the consultant's work include community participation and opportunities for descendants and affected families to provide



input. Dr. Tinsley responded that the research framework is designed to evaluate community claims through historical and institutional records while documenting community narratives and lived experiences. He noted that public engagement and stakeholder participation remain central components of the project.

### **Virtual Meeting Policy**

The Commission voted unanimously to adopt a virtual meeting policy to take effect on May 20, 2026.

### **Public Comment**

The Commission opened the meeting for public comment. There was no comment provided, and the meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

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For more information, see the [\*Commission's website\*](#) or contact the Division of Legislative Services staff:

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