

## NEWS

# High Point will explore citywide reparations with new committee

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High Point this week became the most recent North Carolina city to explore reparations for its black and minority populations.

High Point's city council approved the measure, spearheaded by the city's local NAACP, during a Sept. 20 meeting. The decision places High Point among Charlotte, Asheville, and other North Carolina communities exploring reparations for black residents.

NAACP of High Point Branch President James Adams, along with several other NAACP branch members, attended the meeting and took part in the lengthy discussion about the measure.

"Two plus years we've dedicated to this ... as one of the most exciting opportunities in our community," Adams said, alluding to the work the NAACP has done in preparation for the measure.

Members of the NAACP's High Point branch wrote much of the resolution. The resolution, among other things, called for the creation of a reparations committee to address systemic and historic inequities within the town.

"The City of High Point is positioned for a call to action to join other municipalities around the state and country which have taken on the charge of seeking remedies for the long-suffering of black people," reads an excerpt from the NAACP's resolution.

Although the NAACP's resolution was largely approved by High Point's Prosperity and Livability Commission, some council members expressed misgivings.

"I would be absolutely ready tonight to vote in favor of the committee but I do ... (think) a few of the items need to be tightened up," Councilmember Monica Peters said, later adding that she felt rehashing certain things, like slavery, isn't conducive to moving forward.

Others suggested that residents would find the word "reparations" antagonistic, while others wanted the resolution to more clearly specify if the proposed committee would be permanent.

Peters along with High Point Mayor Jay Wagner said that despite their willingness to support the creation of a reparations committee, they would prefer the chance to alter the language within the

resolution. Councilmember Wesley Hudson pushed back, saying he felt doing so would "kick the can down the road" and undermine the NAACP's work.

NAACP members agreed.

"If you all are going to cherry-pick what portions of it you want to support, that's not fair to the work [of the NAACP]," NAACP member and former High Point Mayor Bernita Sims said.

In an effort to reconcile concerns from both sides, Councilmember Cyril Jefferson motioned for the council to go ahead and approve the creation of the reparations committee while leaving room for city and NAACP officials to hash out details. The motion was seconded by Peters and unanimously approved by the council.

Sims, while glad the committee has been formed, expressed some concern.

"I hoped they would have it in their hearts to approve [the resolution] the way it was presented," Sims said. "I figured it wouldn't happen that way. So I'm satisfied with where we are right now.

"We have half of the cake, we just need to get the rest of it."

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