

Martha Alvarez

From: Quinn Barrow
Sent: Friday, August 27, 2021 3:13 PM
To: Martha Alvarez
Cc: Bruce Moe; Liza Tamura
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Fw: Tracking issues raised for History Advisory Board & Need for Non-partisan Historical Experts



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From: roycasey [mailto:roycasey@aol.com]
Sent: Friday, August 27, 2021 2:25 PM
To: Quinn Barrow <qbarrow@manhattanbeach.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fw: Tracking issues raised for History Advisory Board & Need for Non-partisan Historical Experts

CAUTION: This Email is from an EXTERNAL source. Ensure you trust this sender before clicking on any links or attachments.

The email below that I sent to all Council Members was not made available to the public on the City's website prior to the Council meeting this past Tuesday.

I was hoping that it would be posted for public comment but I don't know the City's policy.

I have noticed that many times when I take note of a new posting of an email on the City's website, it is from many months prior, and sometimes up to 6 months.

If this is not your area of responsibility, please forward this email to the appropriate person(s).

Thanks,
Roy

[Sent from the all new AOL app for iOS](#)

Begin forwarded message:

On Monday, August 16, 2021, 5:32 PM, roycasey@aol.com wrote:

CITY COUNCIL REJECTED PLAQUE LANGUAGE BASED ON MAJOR ISSUES RAISED

On 7/20/21, the language proposed for Bruce's Beach plaques was sent back to the History Advisory Board to address 12 major issues raised by City Council (see details below). This was a surprise because the plaque language was taken from the history report that was officially adopted by City Council just 5 weeks earlier. And this rejection is even more surprising because the history report has been steadily scrutinized by Council and residents for 10 months via countless drafts and record levels of input from residents via newspaper ads, emails to Council and public comment during Council Meetings. And this highly publicized controversy drew national attention.

NEED FOR ADJUDICATION BY NON-PARTISAN HISTORY EXPERTS

All of the issues raised by Council would be totally resolved via adjudication by nonpartisan historical experts. The sections below describing each issue will explain how adjudication will resolve each open issue. As soon as the History Advisory Board reports back with revised plaque language and perhaps a revised version of the history report, City Council should use the opportunity to approve the retention of non-partisan historical experts to adjudicate the history report, proposed plaque language and Bruce's Beach video posted on the City's website.

BIG REVEAL DURING MEETING - THERE IS NO EVIDENCE OF KKK INVOLVEMENT OR INFLUENCE

A shocking reveal occurred during the 7/20/21 meeting by what can be described as an intensely scripted courtroom scene from *Law and Order* with Council Member Napolitano acting as interrogator of a witness played by Kristan Long. During this long exchange, Council Member Napolitano asked Ms. Long the same basic question 7 times in a row: Is there any evidence of KKK involvement in Bruce's Beach or KKK influence over the MB Board of Trustees to enact Eminent Domain to take away the Bruce's land and business (paraphrased)?

Ms. Long's final answer about no evidence was "In so far as the Klan's involvement, I don't know." The back-story points to the fact that Napolitano and Long should be the most informed individuals on the planet about KKK involvement. Council Member Napolitano, was co-chair of the Bruce's Beach Task Force since it was appointed in the Fall of 2020 and is now co-chair of the History Advisory Board, which is a condensed version of the history sub-committee of the Task Force. And Kristan Long has always been the lead author and editor of the history report since the Task Force was appointed and acts as head of the History Advisory Board. So why now?

DOES ADEQUATE EVIDENCE REMAIN OF RACIAL MOTIVATION FOR ACTIONS BY MB BOARD OF TRUSTEES?

KKK involvement and influence was the primary evidence to support a conclusion in the history report that Eminent Domain was racially motivated. Most of these stories about KKK involvement included in the history report came from black activists newspapers. And at the end of 10 months, out of nowhere, it was revealed during the 7/20/21 Council Meeting that there is no credible evidence for this claim. So, what evidence remains?

The history reports states that Robert Brigham's amateur level Master's Thesis from 1956 (32 years after the Eminent Domain) "served as a primary resource on the history of Bruce's Beach," which was quoted and used as an authoritative reference 21 times in the history report. And, articles and opinions from black activist newspapers were relied upon as source material 20 times in the history report.

Mr. Brigham himself issued a warning about misinformation in his Thesis: "The *misinformation* the author encountered in seeking data on the Bruce's and other individuals and incidents related to his subject is significant as it indicates the ease with which fallacy can become 'fact' in a situation of this type."

Council Member Franklin pointed out during the 7/20/21 meeting that key statements in the history report taken from Brigham's Thesis included terms like "it was speculated" or "it's understood," which means these statements are not factual evidence. It is abundantly clear that most quotes from Brigham's Thesis are pure speculation based on frequent use of phrases like: "so-and-so wrote, said, claimed, reported, indicated or relayed a story about," or, "it is understood that" or "allegedly, it has been said," or "Brigham speculated, Brigham reports, Brigham wrote," etc.

Mr. Franklin made an observation during the 7/20/21 meeting that black activist publications were heavily relied upon as sources in the history report (*The California Eagle, Venice Vanguard & Liberator*). It is well known that black activist publications expressed viewpoints and opinions to help fight segregation. To prove a point that these newspapers are not credible sources for facts, Mr. Franklin read a quote from the book, *LA City Limits African American Los Angeles from the Great Depression to the Present*, written by a renowned authority on the subject, Dr. Josh Sides: "The black press of Los Angeles played a crucial role in politicizing its readers more than simply conveying newsworthy information, the California Eagle and the Los Angeles Sentinel, the city's two most influential black newspapers, prodded their leadership to challenge racial discrimination."

The history report itself states, “These accounts [stories] were recited nearly 30 years after they were alleged to have occurred, and some were not from first-hand experience, calling into question the validity and credibility.” “These accounts” being referred to include uncorroborated stories like the ones below:

- A “story relayed” in a 1987 letter to *The Beach Reporter* by a resident that was 14 years old in 1924 about a realtor that “allegedly approached the Board of Trustees in 1921 requesting action to discourage African Americans from establishing residency in MB” and later informed the Board that condemnation could be used to “shut down the Bruce’s resort.”
- During an interview conducted by Brigham, a lawyer for 2 black property owners “said air was let out of tires in cars parked near the Bruce’s resort while owners were at the beach.”
- “A member of the 1924 Board of Trustees ‘claimed’ that one night he ‘followed a siren to Bruce’s Lodge where someone (‘supposedly’ a Klansman) had set fire to a mattress under the main building.”
- “A daughter of black property owner affected by Eminent Domain “relayed a story of a Black-owned home on 23RD Street that was partially burned in 1926, ‘allegedly’ by a White neighbor, upset that an African-American woman had purchased it.”
- Another interviewee “reported “10 Minutes Only” parking signs that were posted on Highland near the home of her mother (Mary Sanders) to make parking inconvenient for their friends and visitors.”

After the statement in the history report questioning the validity and credibility of stories included in the report, the report says “we discovered reports by a variety of sources that corroborate acts of violence against members of the Black community in MB.” The report went on to express reliance on grand jury investigations in 1928 long after the 1924 Eminent Domain action. Ms. Long admitted during the 7/20/21 meeting that the grand jury investigations did not seem to go anywhere and hoped that someone could find those documents.

As a result of heavy reliance on these types of sources, lots of opinions, op-eds, speculation and uncorroborated stories that are included in the main body of the history report and mixed-in with factual statements, which makes the report misleading because it is difficult to distinguish facts from mere stories.

Perhaps, non-partisan history experts could focus on adjudicating the only evidence remaining that the Board of Trustees enacted Eminent Domain because of “Racial Prejudice.” It is an interview with one of the three original sub-dividers of MB, Daugherty, published in the *Manhattan Beach News* in 1943, 20 years after the fact depicted on p44 of the history report. Daugherty is quoted as saying “we had to acquire these two blocks to solve the problem” because “we tried to buy “them” out but they would not sell” and “our attorney advised the members of the council to never admit the real purpose in establishing the park...”

All of these issues would be solved with adjudication by non-partisan, historical experts because their scope of work includes analysis of all source material to distinguish facts from non-facts that are then moved to the footnotes.

COURT DOCUMENTS ARE NEEDED TO GET THE FACTS ON RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Non-partisan, historical experts will locate and analyze the critically needed court documents related to the complaint filed by the Bruce’s and other black property owners that claimed the Eminent Domain was racially motivated. The history report claims having read the related court documents from the Eminent Domain Complaint filed by MB (The City of MB vs. B.H. Dyer, et al) and the “Report of Referees” related thereto, but noted that some of the pages were illegible. If the History Advisory Board has these documents, then the public needs to know what was said about the claim of racial discrimination and the fairness of amounts paid to property owners affected.

At a Council Meeting in 2021, during a discussion about whether the City should issue an apology, the MB City Attorney stated that some of the courtroom documents printed from the microfiche film were illegible. And it makes sense the City Attorney would have these documents because the City went through a year of heated discussions about renaming the park “Bruce’s Beach” in 2006 and 2007 after Rosa Parks died in 2005.

The public deserves transparency. And a large number of residents will soon be demanding transparency after learning about the shocking, last minute reveal that there never was any credible evidence of KKK involvement after the history report made that claim for 10 straight months during lots of turmoil in MB over this issue.

BELOW IS AN OPEN ITEM LISTING OF “ISSUES, CONCERNS & REQUESTS FOR CHANGES & EVIDENCE”

This recap of the other 10 issues is intended to help the Board, Council Members and residents keep track of this comprehensive list of open items raised by City Council on 7/20/21 and to help make the issues easier to understand.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR THE HISTORY REPORT TO BE FACTUALLY ACCURATE?

- The plaques will have QR codes to link the history report and video posted on the City’s website to individuals that want to learn more when reading a brief summary of history on the plaques.
- The report was already used by MBUSD to justify appointment of a “Commission on Diversity, Equity, Social Justice and Inclusion,” plus compliance audits by CLEAR. And the Bruce’s Beach Task Force previously recommended a similar commission and audits for our City Government & Police Dept.
- The report, as written now, can be used as the poster-child by the state for a recently appointed reparations committee and justification for LA County to give back land and pay heirs of the Bruce Family.

- Uncorroborated stories included in the main body of the report are treated like factual accounts, which can be used as evidence to support a lawsuit against MB already threatened by a spokesman for heirs of the Bruce Family for damages (supported by uncorroborated stories) and lost income from their business “even we get our land back.” Court documents will show the Bruce’s were already paid for their business.
- If the report is used to justify reparations, restitution and/or a successful lawsuit against MB by the Bruce’s, then the report will likely be used as evidence by heirs of other property owners affected by Eminent Domain to file lawsuits against the City related to land owned by the City that is worth about \$150mil. Adjudication of the report by non-partisan history experts is the key to prevent this from happening. It will result in independent, expert analysis of all sources used in the history report to separate stories from facts, research for other sources that will be analyzed, like the pertinent court documents, among other adjudication steps. In addition to other improvements, uncorroborated stories will be placed in the footnotes as “contested stories” where they belong and only factual accounts will remain in the main body of the history report as an “accurate history.”

NEED FOR EDITING OF HISTORY REPORT AND PLAQUE LANGUAGE

There was lots of discussion between Council Members about who was going to tackle the job of editing the revised plaque language after it comes back from the History Committee, in order to craft language that strikes a fair and balanced tone, adds more context and separates the “story” from the facts. In other words to “get it right.”

These are all primary functions of adjudication by non-partisan historical experts.

Mayor Hadley said the language needs to be “fair” and “accurate” or “we want nothing” and “there is no rush.” She went on to say “our History Advisory Board is staffed with amateurs” but the language “must be right.” The Mayor also said “every word does matter,” and that she “voted for an accurate history of Bruce’s Beach; it wasn’t the story, it was the facts” and also asked for removal of a long list of 15 words and phrases (“pioneer, racially diverse, Jim Crowe era, exclusionary, immediately, soared, invasion, drive the black community out of the city, speculated, encouraged by the Bruce’s success, the legacy, far less, demolished, compelled, and abandoned”).

Council Member Montgomery made his case for an “accurate history” no matter how long it takes, as follows: The History Committee is “charged with” providing “fair, historical, factually accurate plaques.” “We have to address the issues residents want to see,” by asking the History Committee to “re-write accurate verbiage and we’ll go from there.” And we should “take our time to do it the right way,” even “if it takes six (6) months more.”

PLIGHT OF WHITE PROPERTY OWNERS NOT REPORTED IN PLAQUE LANGUAGE

Council Member Montgomery pointed out that the plaque language only focuses on black families that had their property taken away by Eminent Domain. There were 20 property owners of the 30 lots taken by Eminent Domain, including only 6 black owners of 4 lots. Nonpartisan historical experts always focus on ensuring a fair and balanced history and will perform whatever level of research is necessary to report all the facts accurately.

NEED CREDIBLE EVIDENCE THAT FIRE WAS SET TO SLAUGHTER’S PROPERTY

Ms. Long repeated a story from the history report about the Slaughters finding gasoline under their house after it started to smoke and caught fire and a burning cross placed across the street. the time frame seems to be long after the Eminent Domain decision and there is no indication if it was supposedly perpetrated by MB residents. It is not clear if this is a corroborated, factual story, and it conflicts with MB being so welcoming to this family (see below).

Historical experts always perform thorough research to find the facts.

WAS “INVASION BY AFRICAN AMERICANS” IN THE REPORT USED IN THE 1920’s OR FABRICATED IN THE 1950’s BY ROBERT BRIGHAM, AUTHOR OF THE THESIS USED AS A SOURCE 21 TIMES?

Council Member Napolitano asked Ms. Long about inclusion of the phrase “invasion by African Americans” by asking “where did the word invasion come from?” Ms. Long replied, “So in this context, it came about in Brigham’s Thesis. And it was unclear that whether or not it was just George Lindsay who said that he feared an invasion or if Brigham was saying invasion.”

Again, the need for adjudication by historical experts is painfully obvious.

WERE THE BRUCE’S ADEQUATELY COMPENSATED?

In addition to determining if racial discrimination motivated the Board of Trustees to enact Eminent Domain, the other critical question is adequate compensation to the Bruce’s for their land, improvements and business. However, nobody seems to have a grip on this answer after 10 months of work by this amateur history committee.

Council Member Napolitano said, “although they received compensation, it was far less than they requested for their property and thriving business. So that goes to the question of whether the compensation was fair or not and who judges whether it’s fair or not?”

Kristan Long replied that it was “above market value” but it was the Bruce’s had requested \$150,000, including \$50,000 for damages. Napolitano then stated “Again the implication is though that there was something wrong about the compensation.” Ms. Long stated “I understand the implication. We don’t know what the exact value of the business was but we can only tell you what the value of the property was.”

Council Member Franklin later pointed out that the Bruce's were able to purchase a home at 1042-1044 East 20th Street in Los Angeles for about \$7,500. And in 1932 Willa and her son, Harvey Bruce, purchased two commercial properties at 724 East 33rd Street in Los Angeles and 1339 East 18th Street.

Here are some interesting facts. The present value of the \$14,500 settlement is \$60mil, which would be a huge payoff equivalent to \$24mil for 2 lots on the strand (based on \$2,911.23 paid for 1 lot adjacent to the Bruce's), leaving \$36mil paid for the business and buildings. This would be a huge payout by anyone's calculation.

Non-partisan historical experts will locate and analyze the court documents to determine if the Bruce's entered into a negotiated settlement or how the \$14,500 paid to the Bruce's was determined.

DID BRUCE'S AGREE TO A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT? WE NEED COURT DOCUMENTS.

Ms. Long stated that the Eminent Domain proceedings started in 1924 [November], the Bruce's and all "other families" [perhaps black property owners] turned over their land in 1927 even though the final judgment wasn't rendered until 1929 for reasons that are "unclear to me."

In December 1924, the Bruce's and other black families affected retained a NAACP attorney that filed a response to the Eminent Domain Complaint claiming that it was racially motivated and demanding higher payments. The Bruce's demanded \$70,000 for their property, plus \$50,000 in damages. The fact that all of these families turned over their properties 2 years before the final judgment indicates a high probability that a settlement was negotiated and agreed to by all parties or the judge made determinations based on all the evidence.

This again highlights the reason why court documents from the Eminent Domain proceedings must be located and analyzed by non-partisan history experts before this history report can be considered substantially complete and certainly before any plaques are erected by the City.

HISTORY SHOWS MB WAS INCLUSIVE & WELCOMING, BUT NOT SHOWN IN PLAQUE LANGUAGE

Council Member Stern stated that there were 3 other properties in MB owned by black families on the south side of 26th Street that were not taken by Eminent Domain proceedings (McCastill, Urban and Slaughter). These properties were located directly across from the 30 lots now known as Bruce's Beach and would have been easy to include the Eminent Domain if the intent of the Board of Trustees was to take land from black property owners.

Kristan Long stated that the Slaughters were a prominent black family in MB that was a "part of the community," their 7 children attended MB schools, and they owned and operated a 10 room beach, boarding house for black patrons at 120 26th St adjacent to the properties taken by Eminent Domain. Ms. Drew further stated that one daughter was a member of the Glee Club in a MB school and was featured on the front page of the Manhattan Beach news. Ms. Long also stated that the Slaughters were allowed to open a beach-boarding house in 1927 that operated until 1930 when the back took it over.

But the history report failed to highlight the fact that this was after the City passed ordinances on 6/19/24 that "prohibited new or additional development of bath houses" per the history report.

Council Member Napolitano pointed out that the history report says 4 out of 5 black families affected by Eminent Domain bought replacement property in MB. Then he asked Ms. Long why there was no mention of this on the plaques. Ms. Long replied, "I think it was just for condense, for you know, being succinct" and "as a writer, everyone knows no one likes to read."

Even though it was commonplace during this era of legal segregation, MB did not restrict ownership of land by people of color in any way and permitted connection to city services and utilities for structures but this fact is not highlighted in the report or included in the proposed plaque language.

Mrs. Bruce agreed the MB was welcoming and inclusive per a quote from her in the LA Times, "Wherever we have tried to buy land for a beach resort [in other cities] we have been refused."

All these stories conflict with misleading statements in the history report that will be read via QR codes that the Board of Trustees of MB passed "ordinances aimed to thwart the Bruce's business and drive the black community out of the city" and the "city pursued more aggressive measures."

The standard scope of work for nonpartisan historical experts includes fair and balanced treatment of all facts.

NEED COURT DOCUMENTS RE BLACK LADY THAT SUED MB POLICE FOR DAMAGES

Ms. Long repeated another story from the history report that is based on newspaper articles from a black activist newspaper (*California Eagle*). Ms. Long said that a black friend of one of the Slaughter girls named Elizabeth Catley was "the young lady who was arrested and not allowed to get her clothes before she went into the jail in Redondo, because she defied the order of the local [MB] policeman who said she was not allowed to go into the water here [MB]." The history report states that Ms. Catley "was arrested for swimming and 'trespassing' on the private beach" and filed suit for damages against the arresting officer and the MB Board of Trustees."

Council Member Napolitano asked Ms. Long, "since when is it racist to put a no trespassing sign on private property." Ms. Long replied, "Well it's not racist to put a no trespassing sign on private property except for the fact that the only people who were told they could not cross over this land to get to the water were the black visitors to the beach." Ms. Catley lost her lawsuit in City Court and appeal filed in LA Superior Court.

Expert historians will do the research needed to locate and analyze the court documents to determine if the source used in the history report, the *California Eagle*, got the story right.

THE MAJORITY OF SOURCES FOR HISTORY REPORT WERE LEFT LEANING

Council Member Franklin made another valid point that the authors of the history report should have used a broader spectrum of sources. Franklin made the same point during the 6/15/21 Council meeting when he proposed adjudication by non-partisan history experts, but his idea was shut down. See discussion of heavy dependence on black activist newspapers and an amateur level Thesis under the subject line above that questions the credibility of evidence remaining that the Board of Trustees acted out of racial motives.

NEED FOR ADDITIONAL SOURCES AND CONTEXT TO BE FAIR AND BALANCED

Council Member Franklin read other excerpts from the book written by Dr. Josh Sides, an award winning professor of CA history at Cal State Northridge and Director of the Center for Southern California Studies as referred to above (*LA City Limits*). The history report had only 1 casual reference to this book. Dr. Sides was also recommended to City Council by Dr. Ariel Gross, professor of law and history at USC, to be part of a balanced team of historical experts. Here is a quote in his book from Jefferson Elman, editor of the black LA newspaper the *Liberator* in 1902: "California is the greatest state for the negro." And in 1911, Elman elaborated "only a few years ago the bulk of your present-colored population came here from the south without any money in search of better things and we are not disappointed. The hospitable white people received them kindly, employed at good wages, treated them as men and women, furnished their children with the best educational advantages everywhere, feeling perfectly safe, the colored population planted themselves."

The standard scope of work for adjudication by non-partisan historical experts includes searching for additional resources to obtain a fair and balanced representation of viewpoints and context.

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