

Truth Committee — Special Meeting Minutes

Meeting Type: Special Meeting

Purpose: Discuss and refine a letter to local news media leaders regarding social media monitoring and comment section issues

Attendees: Amber, Caroline, Sophia, Kat, Kenisha (left early)

Note: *The meeting ended early due to loss of quorum when Kenisha dropped off.*

1. Community Media Letter Development

- Amber presented 10 draft recommendations for the letter to local media leaders, drawing on examples from other Maryland communities and the Eastern Shore Caucus of African American Leaders.
- The committee discussed drawing on members' own experiences in shaping the recommendations, including the historical context of local media's role in the lynching of Matthew Williams.
- The group planned to review the document further and determine a distribution method later in the meeting.

2. Media Engagement Committee Recommendations

- Discussion focused on how to increase media representation on the Truth Committee.
- The group agreed media has a role in truth and reconciliation work, but raised concerns about **Recommendation #9** (designating media representatives), which Kat noted could place an undue burden on already stretched-thin media agencies.
- Alternative approaches discussed: quarterly press releases to engage media outlets, and narrowing initial focus to social media rather than broader reporting practices.

3. Social Media Monitoring Strategy

- Kat and Sophia agreed that focusing on social media monitoring first would help build relationships with media groups and address how information is published on social platforms.
- **Recommendation 4** modified: changed "avoid framing stories" to "avoid framing headlines."
- **Recommendations 5–7** removed from the letter, but retained in a separate document for potential future use.
- Amber proposed a local Eastern Shore media panel discussion as a next step, using the removed recommendations as discussion topics.

4. Social Media Moderation Recommendations

- Sophia raised concerns about **Recommendation 8** — specifically how to implement a transparent process for reporting problematic comments.
- Amber suggested media organizations track the local impact of social media comments, including consequences such as job losses.
- Recommendations reorganized: **1–4** immediate actions; **8–10** longer-term initiatives.
- **Recommendation 9** removed — determined this could be handled by the Truth Committee itself.
- **Recommendation 10** retained, to encourage media organizations to take on additional responsibility (will require the committee to provide participation opportunities).

5. Letter Approval

- The committee reviewed and approved a revised, streamlined **5-point letter**.
- Sophia expressed satisfaction with the streamlined format.
- Amber explained the letter's connection to previous police accountability discussions.
- **Distribution decision:** Send via hard copy mail (not email) to general managers, news directors, and social media specialists, to ensure better attention and engagement.

6. Media Contact List Planning

- The committee agreed to build a media contact list for press releases and future communications, including quarterly press releases.
- Target contacts: general managers, news directors, and social media coordinators/specialists at local media organizations.
- Distribution will use both mail and email.

7. Committee Attendance Policy

- Confirmed: members may miss up to **three meetings per calendar year** without a pre-arranged excuse before facing a potential recommendation for removal.
- The committee discussed the process for recommending removal of a member who exceeds this threshold.

Action Items

Owner	Action
Amber	Search her network to help populate the media contact list spreadsheet
Amber	Raise the need for a media contact list at the committee chair meetings
Amber	Discuss the committee member appointment process at the upcoming roundtable with other committee chairs
Amber	Schedule the committee chair meeting, coordinating with administration's request to be present
Caroline	Send a follow-up regarding the removal of the last member recommended for removal
Caroline	Check with the mayor's office about the letter of intent from Kelly (Delmarva Free School) and follow up on the application process
Sophia	Start an Excel spreadsheet for the media contact list and begin populating it with names/addresses of general managers, news directors, and social media specialists
Sophia	Start a template for a quarterly Truth Committee newsletter
All	Continue editing the letter to local media in the shared document using suggestion mode

Meeting adjourned early due to loss of quorum.