



Wayne County
Commission
Chair

7th District Update Alisha Bell

Guardian Building
500 Griswold, 7th Floor
Detroit, Michigan 48226
Phone: (313) 224-0936 • Fax: (313) 967-1233
Email: abell3@waynecounty.com



June 2021

America's deadliest racial massacre to be commemorated

(Note: Below is an op-ed piece written by Commission Chair Alisha Bell that recently appeared in The Detroit Free Press and Michigan Chronicle. Chairwoman Bell was in Tulsa to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Tulsa Race Massacre.)

On May 31 and June 1, the City of Tulsa will observe the 100th anniversary of one of the most destructive and deadliest racial events our nation has ever experienced.

Known as the Tulsa Race Massacre, or the Greenwood Massacre, the two-day conflict destroyed a vibrant African American business district, which the legendary Booker T. Washington had dubbed the "Negro Wall Street."

Tulsa was an extremely segregated city. Its Greenwood neighborhood was the envy of other sections of the city with its great Black-generated prosperity. The success of so many Black businessmen contributed to the racial tension.

While racial turmoil was boiling, the tipping point was when a Black teen shoeshiner was accused on May 30, 1921, of allegedly assaulting a young White woman elevator operator. Large mobs of Blacks and Whites descended upon the jail the next day when word spread that a lynching was about to take place.

Gun violence, looting and arson ensued through June 1. The Greenwood neighborhood was set afire by White rioters while White vigilantes – many of whom were just deputized by the Sheriff – detained 6,000 Black residents at the State Fair Grounds. The National Guard was called in, the Governor declared martial law and order eventually was restored.

The number of deaths ranged from 150-300, the majority of whom were Black, with more than 800 injuries and more than \$200 million in property damage in today's dollars.

The City of Tulsa and State of Oklahoma and others succeeded in covering up the Massacre throughout the 20th century.

It wasn't until the Oklahoma City Bombing in 1995 when the Massacre drew the attention of out-of-state reporters who had converged on Oklahoma and began telling the story of this American tragedy.

In recent years, a public and private partnership has brought new-found awareness and interest about the Massacre and the history of what is now called the Black Wall Street.

The 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre Centennial Commission has scheduled several special events and symposiums and has designated June 1 as Economic Empowerment Day.

On behalf of the National Association of Counties (NACo), I will be representing Detroit and Wayne County in Tulsa and will take part in Economic Empowerment Day activities.

The virtual event will include a national conversation with renowned speakers and celebrities about the racial wealth gap and the inequality in access to capital. Visit Tulsa2021.org for more details on how you can participate.

Why are such commemorations so important? Because we must never forget our history, lest we repeat it.

I am hopeful that the 100th anniversary of the Massacre will result in positive action that will prevent such senseless violence and destruction from ever happening again.

Wayne County to honor Juneteenth Day



Wayne County offices will be closed this year on Friday, June 18, as the county observes the Juneteenth holiday.

Juneteenth commemorates the June 19, 1865, announcement that slavery had been abolished in Texas, the last of the former Confederate states where such an announcement was made. As such, it is considered the date on which slavery finally ended in the United States. (This year, June 19 falls on a Saturday.)

Juneteenth, also known as Emancipation Day, has been celebrated since 1866 and has gained increased recognition in recent years, with 47 U.S. states now officially observing the holiday.

"Juneteenth remains an important day in our nation's history, not just as an historic date on the calendar, but as a reminder of our need to continue moving forward to achieve freedom and social justice for all," Commission Chair Alisha Bell said.

Michigan was among the first states to hold Emancipation Day celebrations, with Frederick Douglass appearing at an 1884 event that marked the 50th anniversary of abolition of slavery in the West Indies.

Juneteenth has been an official state holiday in Michigan since 2005 under legislation put forth by current Wayne County Commissioner Martha G. Scott.

WAYNE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

SALUTE TO COVID VICTIMS & FRONTLINE WORKERS

TRIBUTE & REMEMBRANCE CONCERT



TRIBUTE CO-CHAIR
HON. CHAIR ALISHA BELL



TRIBUTE CHAIR
HON. MONIQUE BAKER MCCORMICK



TRIBUTE CO-CHAIR
HON. JONATHAN KINLOCH

FREE MUSIC CONCERT

TICKET REQUIRED

WED. JULY 14TH 2021
BELLE ISLE - SUNSET POINT

4:30 PM - 8:00 PM

FEATURING:

GWEN FOX TRIO & NOTORIOUS

& LOCAL KARAOKE KINGS & QUEENS

VICKIE THOMAS, MASTER OF CEREMONIES



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RECREATIONAL PASSPORT OR \$12 REQUIRED @ ENTRY

#NEVERFORGETTHEM

Youth Council honored at year-end celebration

The Wayne County Commission Youth Council concluded its first year of operation by drafting a resolution on student mental health care that was adopted by the commission itself.

The resolution was unanimously adopted by the Wayne County Commission and distributed to state leaders and local school districts.

"These young people are the leaders of tomorrow and we are all extremely proud of them," Commission Chair Alisha Bell said. "I strongly believe other counties should create a youth commission, if they haven't already done so."

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, youth council members conducted their monthly meetings via Zoom during the recent school year. Many of them met face-to-face for the first time during an end-of-the-year celebration luncheon May 22 on the Detroit riverfront.

The commission is made up of high school students from across Wayne County with each commissioner appointing a member from their district. Its goal is to bring together a diverse group of students from many backgrounds to work toward finding common ground on issues relevant to people their age.

The resolution youth council members drafted notes that mental health disorders are linked to dropout rates and that anxiety, depression and thoughts of suicide increased for many young people during the pandemic. It also notes that many students lack access to mental health care or face barriers in obtaining it. The resolution also requests that educational institutions throughout the county provide increased mental health resources including group therapy and peer counseling sessions and to dedicate specific days to educate the community about mental health issues and strategic methods to manage them.

Meetings this coming year are expected to be held in person.

Applications will be available in August. For more information, contact Chair Bell's office at (313) 224-0936.



Commission Chair Alisha Bell (right) and commissioners Monique Baker McCormick (left) and Terry Marecki (right center) are pictured with Wayne County Commission Youth Council President Gabrielle Langston during the recent year-end celebration.

Grant approved for Riverfront Conservancy

A \$750,000 grant that will allow the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy to construct a new river walk section connecting with the riverfront with the planned Ralph C. Wilson Centennial Park was approved by the Wayne County Commission.

The expanded 65-foot river walk section is designed for use by pedestrians and bicyclists will align with the Joe Louis Greenway and Iron Belle Trail, further transforming the once-blighted riverfront area into a useable public recreation area.

"This is another major step forward for the river walk, which has become a go-to destination for so many people in Detroit and Wayne County," Commission Chair Alisha Bell said.

"Transforming the riverfront is part of Detroit's ongoing rebirth as a world class city and I am pleased we are able to play a role in that process."

As proposed, the grant includes money for the river walk and a riverfront plaza with seating as well as for handrails, landscaping and signs. Lights, utilities, trash receptacles and security system with closed-circuit cameras and call boxes are also included.

The project is expected to be completed by the end of this year.

The Ralph C. Wilson Centennial Park is being developed on W. Jefferson Avenue and is named for the Grosse Pointe insurance agency executive who was founding owner of the National Football League's Buffalo Bills.

Commissioners to hold tri-county summit

Wayne County Commissioners affirmed their participation in a revived tri-county summit this year with leaders from Oakland and Macomb counties.

This year's summit is scheduled for Nov. 12 and will involve leaders from all three counties as well as other regional organizations.

"There are numerous issues that reach across county lines and a summit like this provides an excellent opportunity for our three counties to

work together to seek constructive solutions," Commission Chair Alisha Bell said. "This is something that had been done in the past and it's time to do it again."

Topics are expected to include roads, energy, water and infrastructure with representatives from the Biden Administration expected to be invited to participate.

It will be the first such summit in roughly a decade, following an initial event held in 1998 and continued throughout the

early 2000s.

"It is going to be exciting and I look forward to all commissioners participating," Chair Bell said.

Wayne, Oakland and Macomb are Michigan's three most populous counties, including roughly 3,875,000 residents and accounting for nearly 40 percent of the state's overall population.

A copy of the resolution has been sent to the Oakland and Macomb county commissions.

Commissioners stand up for voting rights

Led by Commission Chair Alisha Bell, Wayne County commissioners have urged Congress to pass the For the People Act, H.R. 1, a bill that would allow same-day voter registration and prohibit restrictions on mail-in ballots.

Restrictions on voter registration and absentee ballots have been approved this year by Legislatures in several U.S. states and are under consideration in Michigan.

"As representatives of the largest county in Michigan and one of the largest in the United States, it is important for us to make our voices heard on such an important issue," Chair Bell said in sponsoring the resolution.

In expressing support for H.R. 1, the resolution noted that voting "is not a privilege, but also one of the single most fundamental rights."

Commissioners noted that efforts to restrict voter registration and absentee ballots were based on unproven allegations of voter fraud in the 2020 federal election.

Commissioners also noted that H.R. 1 would also limit use of special interest money in elections and strengthen disclosure requirements for political donors.

H.R. 1 passed the U.S. House of Representatives in March but has yet to be voted upon in the U.S. Senate.

Vaccines are readily available throughout Wayne County

With vaccines continuing to be more available, it's important for everyone to become vaccinated to stop the spread of COVID-19 and return to normal life in our communities.

Residents of Detroit can schedule an appointment through the Detroit Health Department by calling 313-230-0505.

Wayne County is also providing in-home COVID-19 vaccinations for homebound individuals. The homebound program is the county's ongoing effort to increase vaccine access to residents who want to receive the vaccination but are unable to travel to one of the COVID vaccine clinics.

Locally, residents can call 313-943-2412 to schedule a vaccination.



Food Truck Fridays

Food Truck Fridays is back! Grandmont No.1 Improvement Association is pleased to welcome the following food trucks to our community this month!

June 18 - Heavenly Chicken & Waffles

June 25 - Authentic Jamaican

NEW LOCATION:

RosemontAcacia (Flintstone) Park, 14310 Rosemont
4:30-7:30 p.m.



FEMA to Help Pay Funeral Costs for COVID-19-related Deaths

In early April, FEMA will begin providing financial assistance for funeral expenses incurred after Jan. 20, 2020 for deaths related to coronavirus (COVID-19) to help ease some of the financial stress and burden caused by the pandemic. The policy was finalized today, and FEMA is now moving rapidly to implement this funeral assistance program nationwide.

To be eligible for COVID-19 funeral assistance, [the policy states](#):

- The applicant must be a U.S. citizen, non-citizen national, or qualified alien who incurred funeral expenses after Jan. 20, 2020 for a death attributed to COVID-19.
- If multiple individuals contributed toward funeral expenses, they should apply under a single application as applicant and co-applicant. FEMA will also consider documentation from other individuals not listed as the applicant and co-applicant who may have incurred funeral expenses as part of the registration for the deceased individual.
- An applicant may apply for multiple deceased individuals.
- The COVID-19-related death must have occurred in the United States, including the U.S. territories and the District of Columbia.
- This assistance is limited to a maximum financial amount of \$9,000 per funeral and a maximum of \$35,500 per application.
- Funeral assistance is intended to assist with expenses for funeral services and interment or cremation.

In the coming weeks, a dedicated 800 number will be established to help individuals who apply. In the meantime, potential applicants are encouraged to start gathering the following documentation:

- **An official death certificate** that attributes the death to COVID-19 and shows that the death occurred in the U. S. The death certificate must indicate the death “may have been caused by” or “was likely the result of” COVID-19 or COVID-19 like symptoms. Similar phrases that indicate a high likelihood of COVID-19 are considered sufficient attribution.
- **Funeral expense documents** (receipts, funeral home contract, etc.) that include the applicant’s name, the deceased individual’s name, the amount of funeral expenses, and the dates the funeral expenses were incurred.



FEMA