Call to Order/Declaration of a Quorum
The meeting was called to order at 9:20 a.m. by Alderman Robin Rue Simmons. Committee members Aldermen Ann Rainey and Peter Braithwaite were present. Staff members Kimberly Richardson, Nicholas Cummings, and Tasheik Kerr were also present.

Approval of Minutes
It was moved by Alderman Braithwaite, seconded by Alderman Simmons, to approve the minutes of the June 12, 2020 meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion
Alderman Simmons noted that based on the community’s feedback collected last summer pertaining to remedy strategies, housing arose as a priority for the community. The Committee has developed the first housing initiative called the Home Buyer Assistance Benefit Program.

Nicholas Cummings provided a summary of the Home Buyer Assistance Benefit Program. Alderman Braithwaite inquired whether an individual would be made to return the funds if the property were to appreciate and the individual sells the property. Nicholas replied that is a decision Council would need to make, but ideally the remaining funds should be returned to the Reparations Fund. Kimberly Richardson added that staff is looking for similar input from the Committee to strengthen the program.

Alderman Simmons recommended adding one to four-unit buildings under General Terms and Conditions of the Home Buyer Assistance Benefit Program.

Alderman Rainey mentioned that the $10,000 in down payment assistance might not be helpful given the cost of housing. Alderman Rainey recommended allocating $20,000 to $25,000 in down payment assistance. Alderman Simmons responded that she hoped the Committee would move forward with the Home Buyer Assistance Benefit Program and the Home Preservation Benefit Program. She added that $250,000 was budgeted
for the program. Alderman Rainey responded that the projection of $250,000 was too low. Alderman Rainey noted that based on other communities’ receipts and the projected receipt of the Evanston dispensary; she believes the City would receive around $400,000 for the first quarter.

Alderman Braithwaite suggested offering up to $25,000 in down payment assistance in order to provide applicants with flexibility.

Alderman Simmons noted she would like the Committee to discuss whether the applicant should be made to return the full or partial amount if they decided to sell their home. Nicholas explained why the program is structured as a loan instead of a grant.

Kimberly added that staff could look at the median housing price in Evanston and the Committee could set a percentage or an amount based on that price. Alderman Simmons noted that she is in favor of a set amount.

The Committee agreed that the down payment assistance would be a set amount of up to $25,000. Nicholas added that staff would need the Committee’s assistance in determining the eligibility for the range. Alderman Simmons noted that the Committee would work with financial partners regarding the eligibility.

It was moved by Alderman Simmons, seconded by Alderman Braithwaite, to increase the housing program budget to $400,000. Motion carried unanimously.

Alderman Simmons noted the $400,000 housing program budget included the Home Preservation Benefit credit. Aldermen Braithwaite and Rainey agreed.

Regarding the eligibility criteria, Alderman Simmons noted the Committee has to deliver the program in a way that can be defended based on documented historical policies, practices, and actions of the City. Nicholas added that staff set the criteria for a Black resident who suffered discrimination between 1919 and 1969 based on the historical information staff and Evanston’s history keepers were able to gather. Staff continues to collect more information. Nicholas mentioned that if a resident was subjected to discrimination after 1969 as a result of City ordinance, policy or practice the resident should bring those incidents to staff’s attention to rectify past wrongs.

Alderman Simmons concluded that staff would bring back an updated policy to the Committee. Alderman Simmons also directed staff to bring back the Home Preservation Benefit Program. Alderman Rainey also noted that the Committee would come back with a report from financial advisors regarding the program design.

Communication
Alderman Simmons noted the City Council would pass a resolution recognizing African-American cultural sites on June 22. Dino Robinson, of Shorefront Legacy Center, noted that the program sites would be city-wide.
Alderman Simmons mentioned the recommendation brought to the Committee by Judge Lionel Jean-Baptiste.

Public Comment
Ndona Muboyayi inquired about the banks the City would be working with. She suggested individuals have the opportunity to choose their financial institutions under the Home Buyer Assistance Program.

Alderman Rainey responded that the Committee would be seeking advice from a bank on how to design the program. The Committee will bring back a report.

John T Jr. noted the Home Buyer Assistance Benefit Program is similar to other cities’ housing programs instead of reparations. John also noted that $400,000 is not a lot of money for this program. He suggested the Committee give the money to residents and not demand what they can do with the money.

Adjournment
It was moved by Alderman Simmons to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 10:32 a.m.