Great Barrington W.E.B. Du Bois Legacy Committee

Great Barrington Police Station, 465 Main Street, Great Barrington, MA 01230

**DRAFT Minutes of the Wednesday, January 15, 2020 Meeting**

Attending: Emily DeVoti, Leah Reed, Gwendolyn VanSant, Randy Weinstein, Stephanie Wright.

Absent active members: Barbara Dean

Berkshire country residents attending: Thasia Giles, Rev. Sloan Letman, Tim Likarish, Sara Mugridge, Sam VanSant, Dr. Emily Williams, Vanessa Le Grande, and Fionn DeVoti Roland.

1. **Call to Order**
   Chair Randy Weinstein called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

2. **Approval of Minutes**
   Leah Reed made a motion to approve the December 2019 Legacy Committee minutes. Gwendolyn VanSant seconded. In favor: all. None opposed. The motion passed.

3. **New and Ongoing Business**

   **W.E.B. Du Bois Legacy Award**

   Legacy Award Nominations. There are three nominations via the Town of GB website: Dr. Frances Jones-Sneed, educator
   Jen Salinetti, community leader and activist
   Reggie Harris, folk singer

   Process: a discussion ensued among the group about a fair and equitable way to review candidates.

   **Motion:** Ms. Reed made a motion that the Legacy Committee create a process for reviewing and awarding the annual W.E.B. Du Bois Legacy Award. This process will entail asking each applicant to: 1. write an essay, in 500 words or less, talking about how their work embodies one of Du Bois’s four pillars: racial equality, economic justice, progressive education, or civil rights. 2. Name the three of their most meaningful achievements and these are important to them. The committee will then gather these replies and submit them to the Selectboard for their vote.

   **Second:** Ms. Wright

   **In favor:** All. None opposed. The motion passed.
Next steps: The committee will send notes to the nominees on January 21. The nominees will be requested to return their answers to the committee by Jan. 31. The Selectboard will announce their selection on February 10.

The awardee will get a plaque. Mr. Weinstein will look into this. Ms. VanSant will look into the process of getting a Proclamation from Rep. Smitty Pignatelli.

The 152nd Du Bois Legacy Festival

Lecture portion:
Dr. Emily Williams gave an update on speakers

There has been an additional speakers added to the birthday program.
The line-up is now:
Dr. Danille Taylor (Clark Atlanta University)
Dr. Deidra Foreman (Ramapo College)
Dr. Ayokunle Odeleye (Clark Atlanta University)
Dr. Karl Johnson (Ramapo College)
Dr. Chenzira Davis-Kahina (University of the Virgin Islands)

Each speaker will get 15-20 minutes, leaving room for questions from the audience. The total program length will be 1:45 – 2 hours.

Birthday morning breakfast:
A small group including sculptor Ayokunle Odeleye (Clark Atlanta University) and the head Chesterwood to discuss the process of creating a public sculpture.

Funding for the breakfast:
Ms. VanSant said that there are $35 in gift cards for food from last year.
Bridge has BerkShares to donate.
The committee will also approach: The GB Bagel Store, who often donates.

Dance Performance by Joanna Haigood on Feb 22 at Simon’s Rock

Thasia Giles, of Jacob’s Pillow, explained that Joanna will be arriving in the Berkshires on February 14th and will lead a number of community events: “Such is My Soul,” a movement workshop open to everyone, at the Boys and Girls Club in Pittsfield on Saturday, 2/15, from 4-6pm. Also will meet with students at Simon’s Rock and MCLA
over the week, and possibly with other community partners. The rest of her dancers will
arrive on Feb. 19th, then go into rehearsal for the Sat. 2/22 performance at Simon’s Rock,
which will start at 7pm, and be open to a new audience in half hour increments until
8:30pm.

Ms. Haigood would like to have a pre-show panel at 6pm about Du Bois, his work, and his
history in Great Barrington. She is asking the committee to help populate the panel.

**Next step:** phone meeting with Joanna Haigood.

**Music & Reading Group:**

Barbara Dean, absent from this meeting while recovering from knee surgery, had proposed
including Bob Paynter and Donna Gouger in this year’s festival, with trumpet renditions of
the Sorrow Songs.

The committee decided this could be paired with the book club event – where the
community will be invited to gather and discuss *The Souls of Black Folk*.

In preparation for this, BRIDGE volunteers will hand out the 250 copies of *Souls* that were
donated by Penguin Books and attained by the joint effort of Dr. Frances Jones Sneed,
BRIDGE, and the Legacy Committee (with fundraising done by Legacy Committee and
folks attending 150th events.)

The books will be distributed around the community, for people to pick up for free.
Emily DeVoti volunteered to make bookmarks announcing the discussion group event.

**The in-progress program for the 2020 Legacy Festival:**

**Feb. 22, 2020**

1-4pm, The Souls of Black Folk: Musical Tribute and Book Study
The First Congregational Church

6pm, panel discussion at Simon’s Rock
7pm – 9pm Joanna Haigood and Zaccho Dance Co., Simon’s Rock
“Between me and the Other World”
Feb. 23, 2020

8:30am breakfast gathering at the Mason Library
A small group including sculptor Ayokunle Odeleye (Clark Atlanta University) and the head of sculpture at Chesterwood to discuss the process of creating a public sculpture.

10:30am to 12pm, First Congregational
The weekly sermon will join with the Du Bois Festival.
Reverend Sloan will join Reverend Tara to integrate Du Bois into the service.
There will be a reception afterwards in the Fellowship Hall.

1-4pm, First Congregational Church, Lecture
Town welcome
Randy Weinstein, introduce the committee
Emily Williams, keynote and moderate the academic panel
Joanna Haiwood, dancer, to reflect on community dance piece of the night prior

Evening: communal dinner at Pleasant & Main restaurant in Housatonic.

Budget

Updated budget for lecture segment: $5,175.80 for lecturers: travel, accommodations, and honorariums

Other costs:
Banners. The town (who owns the banners) has assumed responsibility, but will they pay or will it come from the committee’s funds?
The committee has requested $5 K from Greylock, unsure if they will contribute.
Can the committee request funds from the Town’s Celebration Budget?

4. Committee Announcements/Comments

The process of paying vendors from the Committee’s account with the town is very unclear. The committee cannot get a clear answer on how to pay its vendors.

Motion: Leah Reed made a motion that the committee reach out to the selectboard, writing a letter requesting a current statement of the Legacy Committee’s budget as well as a monthly statement delivered prior to each monthly meeting of the committee.
Second: Ms. DeVoti
All in favor, none opposed. The motion passed.
Motion: Emily DeVoti made a motion that the committee ask the town to outline and clarify the process by which the Committee can reimburse or pay fees to vendors. Second: Ms. Wright. In favor: all. None opposed. Motion passed.

Meanwhile, Mr. Weinstein will go to town hall and try to get an account statement of the Legacy Committee’s current expenses and funds.

5. Citizens Speak

Those present in the room who wished to help with the Legacy Festival spoke out on their commitments.

Responsibilities:

Sam VanSant: working on banners (the town is adopting them and getting a certificate of insurance). He will also bartend at Pleasant&Main for dinner on 2/23.

Emily Williams: will orchestrate arrival of speakers (2 people driving, 3 people flying) She may need help with pick-up/drop-off.

Vanessa Le Grande: will help Emily Williams.

Stephanie Wright: will support book club.

Emily DeVoti: will create bookmarks to promote bookclub (for MLK book distribution).

Reverend Sloan: will work with First Congregational.

Tim Likarish: will help Sloan.

Sara Mugridge: will work on press release.

Randy Weinstein: will get account of current Legacy committee budget, status of account.

Thasia Giles will set up call with Joanna Haigood, with Randy and Gwendolyn, to discuss the role of community partners and what she envisions for a panel discussion.
6. Next Meeting - Adjournment

Next meeting set for: February 19, 2020 at 6:30pm

Ms. VanSant made a motion that the meeting be adjourned. Ms. Reed seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Emily DeVoti
Recording Secretary