

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

Zoom Teleconference

DRAFT Minutes of Wednesday, October 20, 2021 Meeting.

6:00pm - Open Meeting; All votes are roll call

Attending: Gwendolyn VanSant Randy Weinstein, Sloan T Letman IV, Stephanie Wright, Thasia Giles, Tim Likarish, Sara Mugridge, Dr. Emily Williams, Ed Abrahams, Leah Reed

I. Call to order by Ms. VanSant & reading of teleconference mandate at 6:07 pm

II. Review of minutes & motion to approve by Mr. Likarish, Seconded by Mr. Weinstein and approved by all present

III. Updates

Treasurer's Update

Mr. Likarish shared recap of ongoing work discussed last month. Mr. Weinstein shared update from Mr. Abrahams that he will need more time and has not yet met with Sue.

Mr. Weinstein posed a question about needing to get an idea from Mr. Pruhenski about spending available, and Mr. Likarish suggested having a budget ask in advance of meeting with town per last meeting's discussion.

Mr. Likarish updated committee members on grants submitted (to BTF and MCC) and MCC grant recommended during the process, MCC Festival grant, with Nov. 3 deadline. Upcoming grant processes may include applying to NAACP by April, to be discussed with Ms. Reed.

Ms. VanSant asked to add social equity funding available from town cannabis pool to list of grant proposals & budget requests.

Dr. Williams asked what, if any, upper limits there may be to identified grants.

Mr. Likarish shared the proposed budget for review. Ms. VanSant confirmed that there were fees associated with working with the Mahaiwe last year, and asked to clarify that the marketing budget line includes all advertising and printing. Ms. VanSant discussed recording, possibly reaching out to CTSB. Dr. Williams raised the issue that travel and accommodation proposed budget lines seemed too low, especially considering current rates and accounting for last year's BRIDGE volunteer hosts. Committee members reviewed stipends. Ms. VanSant pointed out potential for partnerships with hotels, markets/restaurants etc. that may be supported with in-kind donations. Rev. Letman suggested combining videography with marketing.

In response to Mr. Likarish's question, Ms. VanSant suggested marking grants as pending. Dr. Williams asked about reaching out to colleges and universities to engage student and faculty

speakers as well as bringing in audiences. Committee would need to decide what level of participation to invite. Ms. Mugridge pointed out that livestreaming would be helpful, as would being mindful of timing for ticketing in working within any campus policies around COVID. Mr. Likarish added that livestreaming for access should be a priority in any case. Ms. VanSant suggests being mindful of town policies as well, and Mr. Abrahams updated that town requires masking. Mr. Likarish asked if we should reach out to the Health Dept. and Mr. Abrahams provided contact information.

Dr. Williams suggested that projections need to be included to balance the proposed budget for any granting foundations. Expenses look good, but projected income should be worked on offline.

Update to annual calendar of events

Ms. Mugridge suggested adding deadlines and action items to our calendar during the discussion of Festival programming.

IV. Old Business

Great Barrington-Accra. Sister Cities update

Mr. Weinstein updated on conversation with Craig Harris, and spoke in support of Ms. Giles's previous suggestion to incorporate partnership and celebration of Du Bois Center, Accra in annual theme.

V. New Business

Process for accessing the Friends of the Mason Library

Mr. Abrahams updated on discussion with Sue who advised that working with Friends of the Library would be off-mission. Mr. Abrahams is waiting to hear back and will follow up on questions about Legacy Committee raising funds through donations without nonprofit status.

New members. number of members. attendance requirements. etc.

Mr. Weinstein reviewed last month's notes regarding outreach to fill vacancies.

Mr. Likarish and Ms. Wright spoke about outreach to visitors to Homesite and interest from members of Mumbet Freedom Farm. Ms. Giles asked about public notice. Ms. VanSant reminded all that we discussed getting town to highlight, using Facebook page. Mr. Abrahams pointed to tab on the town website and agreed that promoting on Facebook is a good idea, but suggested that contacting him and/or Mr. Pruhenski to have the town publicize more widely.

Debrief of 52nd Anniversary of Du Bois Homesite Dedication

Ms. Wright shared that there were a number of engaged visitors on Sunday, and that Mr. Doren, families, and students participated in tour of interpretive trail, followed by sharing reflections. BRIDGE contributed cider and donuts, and several BRIDGE families attended. Noted that Mr. Doren drove several students (6-8) and engaged students of color.

Ms. VanSant shared that the Bookloft staff often field questions about Du Bois and proposed setting up a Du Bois shelf. Suggested we might work with bookstores during festival. Ms.

VanSant recalled that Mr. Doren expressed an interest bringing more students to Homesite and UMass archives.

Du Bois festival and Feb 23, 2022, birthday celebration

Ms. VanSant and Mr. Weinstein returned to bringing in element of connecting with Du Bois Center in Accra.

Discussed involving high school and middle school. Dr. Williams brought up connecting *The World in Africa* and BLM movement and addressing students as well as wider audiences.

Mr. Weinstein asked if we are talking about in-person events; Ms. VanSant responded that we are discussing both/and in-person and remote participation.

Ms. Mugridge asked if committee might select a theme, possibly around connection with Accra. Rev. Letman suggested that working with Jubilee Singers is still a possibility and we have the time to coordinate, though should be prepared to negotiate Ms. VanSant noted that partnering with Mahaiwe to make that ask.

Discussed incorporating “shared connections” into theme. Ms. VanSant shared the theme from Jubilee Singers website: *Sacred journeys*. Mr. Likarish notes that discussion has been around different places - Homesite, Fiske, Accra. Rev. Letman agrees that we would be bringing folks from places on the “sacred journey” of Du Bois’s life. Dr. Williams mentioned this would also include Clark-Atlanta U. Rev. Letman also proposed keeping churches involved and reaching out to regional clergy of color. Ms. VanSant emphasized local partners and recalled the town hall meeting in lead-up to the first festival. On Zoom, we could make the invitation to such a meeting to partners outside the area as well.

Dr. Williams suggested outreach sooner, given timeline.

Outreach commitments:

Southern New England conference - Rev. Letman

Mahaiwe, NAACP- Ms. VanSant

Clinton church, town re: health & safety guidelines, Housatonic Heritage Trail - Ms. Giles

Accra - Mr. Weinstein

Jubilee Singers - Dr. Williams? Work with Mahaiwe

Ms. VanSant asked if an event (ex. Jubilee Singers) should be on a weekend or on the 23rd. Ms. Wright reminded all that the weekend is a holiday, which may make travel easier. Mr. Likarish noted that last year having the weekend/Sunday music event and speaker and award announcement on the day of. Discussion of reaching out to local businesses, and question of whether or not the request letter had been created or sent. Ms. Wright has the original sponsorship letter to update with programming.

Ms. VanSant asked about program working group and who will volunteer. Proposed time to meet: 10/23 @ 10:00.

Dr. Williams suggested reframing some of the coordination with Jubilee, CAU, as an invitation to partner. Rev. Letman agrees and pointed to the appropriateness of funding requests. Ms. VanSant suggests that in addition to updating the sponsorship letter, drafting a partnership letter to organizations would be a good step.

VI. Announcements / Citizens Speak / Adjourn