

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

Great Barrington Fire Station, 37 State Road, Great Barrington, MA 01230

FINAL Minutes of the Wednesday, February 13, 2019 Meeting

Attending: Emily DeVoti, Julie Fagan, David Magadini, Leah Reed, Gwendolyn VanSant, Freke Vuijst, Randy Weinstein, Stephanie Wright.

Absent: Barbara Dean, Wray Gunn, Justin F. Jackson, Reginald Leonard

Also attending: Select Board liaison Ed Abrahams; Berkshire country residents and dedicated Du Bois volunteers Tim Likarish, James Manning, and Sara Mugridge. Also: Mill River sculptor Michel Richard. Also: Great Barrington resident Fionn DeVoti Roland.

1. Call to Order

Chair Randy Weinstein called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. Approval of the minutes.

The minutes for the meeting of January 2019 were reviewed by the committee.

Sara Mugridge proposed a change: "A volunteer potluck (organized by Sara Mugridge)" to "A volunteer potluck (organized by a collective of BRIDGE volunteers)." Change accepted.

Freke Vuijst made a motion to approve; Leah Reed seconded. Vote: approved. (David Magadini and Julie Fagan abstained as they were not present at the last meeting).

3. Sister Cities proposal

Mr. Manning returned to present his proposal for Great Barrington to become a Sister City with Accra, Ghana, via the official channels of Sister Cities International. Such a relationship would require an annual fee of \$350 and a drafted document mutually agreed upon and signed by a senior official of Accra and an official of Great Barrington.

Ed Abrahams said that the sister cities relationship between Great Barrington and both Burkina Faso and Fada N'Gourma are not active. Mr. Manning said that in any case, these sister city relationships were not formally part of Sister Cities International.

Mr. Abrams said that to pursue the Sister City International relationship with Accra, Ghana, the committee need only present it to the Select board as a proclamation.

Mr. Weinstein said that among other possibilities he could envision pen pal relationships between children in the two towns – or maybe Skype communications.

Mr. Magadini questioned if the same relationship between Great Barrington and Accra and its children might be achieved without an official Sister City International contract and asked Mr. Manning what the benefits of this would be.

Sara Mugridge asked what benefits the sister cities would gain from the \$350 annual fee charged by Sister Cities International.

Mr. Weinstein said that the Du Bois Center at UMass has a relationship with Ghana (the Du Bois Center in Accra) and that maybe they could help us.

Mr. Manning will bring more details and answers to these questions to the next meeting.

4. Budget

Town manager Jennifer Tabakin proposed \$5,000 for the Du Bois Legacy Committee 2019-2020 Budget. The Select Board and Finance Committee agreed to include this amount in the town budget that will be voted on at the annual Town Meeting.

Ms. VanSant announced that the committee is short \$2,500 to meet the expenses of this year's Legacy Festival.

Mr. Abrahams said that the Town has an annual Celebration Budget of \$10,000. He can ask Ms. Tabakin if \$2,500 can be used towards the Legacy Festival.

Motion: Ms. Reed made a motion to ask the Town Manager for \$2500 from the Celebration Budget. Ms. Fagan seconded. **Vote:** all in favor, unanimous.

Ethics Committee: Mr. Weinstein spoke with the Massachusetts Ethics Committee and confirmed that the Legacy Committee can accept donations on behalf of the town.

Donations made to the Legacy Committee via the town will not be tax deductible.

Donations made to the Legacy Committee via BRIDGE or the Du Bois Center (non profits) will be tax deductible.

5. Sculptor Michel Richard

Mr. Richard, a sociologist and sculptor, presented pictures of the clay bust he has created of Dr. Du Bois. He is planning to have it cast in bronze. Several members of the committee expressed their admiration for the work as they passed the photos among themselves.

Mr. Richard had thought the town was planning to purchase a full sized sculpture of Du Bois and that they might be interested in this bust instead. Mr. Weinstein explained that neither the Legacy Committee nor the town are involved in sculpture acquisition.

Ms. Vuijst explained that a private group of citizens, of which she is a part, is involved in commissioning a full sized statue which they would then like to donate to the town.

Mr. Richard explained that he plans to sell the bust privately. But after he does so, he will consider creating and donating a duplicate of the bust to a local institution – perhaps the library, or a local school. The Legacy Committee said that they would be happy to help him make contacts for this purpose.

6. Du Bois Legacy Festival Review

Ms. DeVoti handed out an Event Debrief document for *Beyond the Veil*, the Legacy Festival event at the Mahaiwe on January 25th. The form contains basic facts about the event including sponsors, publicity and attendance, capturing the experience for records and to help planning next year.

Ms. Wright shared an Event Debrief for the MLK, Jr. event at the First Congregational Church on January 21st.

The committee briefly discussed the events.

Jim Manning said the bar was set high with the performance of *Beyond the Veil* and also the 2018 play about Du Bois. Committee members agreed a play reading (or production) is an effective part of the annual Legacy Festival. Mr. Weinstein informed the committee that Wesley Brown from Simon's Rock sent his play *Boogie Woogie and Booker T* to be considered for the 2020 Festival. Calvin Ramsey has also emailed Mr. Weinstein about his plays. Ms. DeVoti suggested that after we finish presenting plays about Du Bois, we present a series of 4 plays over 4 years, each of which explores Du Bois's four principles of civil rights, progressive education, economic justice, and racial equality.

David Magadini expressed his wish that what Du Bois stood for be more part of the festival (as opposed to just honoring him). Towards this end, he renewed his wish that the Legacy Committee honor Homeless Week (the last week of February, by official state proclamation). Mr. Magadini mentioned this idea at meetings in 2018, but he did not attend the meeting designated to discuss it, so Mr. Weinstein said we can revisit it next year when there is more planning time.

7. Du Bois Legacy Festival: Birthday Celebration: Feb. 23, 2019

11am: Legacy Walk.

1 to 4pm: birthday celebration at the First Congregational Church.

Ed Abrahams will speak as the Select Board representative.

A sponsor from lead sponsor Greylock Federal Credit Union will speak.

Jeff Peck, Du Bois's great grandson, will speak.

There will be a concert arranged by Barbara Dean, some words by David Levering Lewis as he accepts his W.E.B. Du Bois Legacy Award.

A cake will be made by Angela at Big Y.

After the celebration: there will be a dinner at Pleasant and Main in Housatonic. It will be open to anyone who wants to come. (Sign up and pay in advance).

Press release: Mr. Weinstein will ask Ellen Lahr in Housatonic if she can draft one (she does the press material for the town of Great Barrington).

The Committee has Jeff Peck's ticket (he will stay 1 week); Ms. VanSant is finding him a host.

Ideas:

Ask Ms. Dean to have someone sing the Black National Anthem! (written by James Weldon Johnson, right here in Great Barrington).

Ms. VanSant proposed that maybe speakers could read some of Lewis's text, in tribute to him.

Ask Carol at UMass if they can provide student guides for the Legacy Walk again (as they did for the 150th).

Additional event: February 24th at the Macedonia Baptist Church: Jeff Peck, Tasha Alston, and Harold Ramsey (retired judge) will speak on Civil Rights and Du Bois today.

Presentation:

Ms. VanSant presented the committee with amazing W.E.B. Du Bois Legacy Tee shirts that she designed and gifted to the Committee!!! The first ever Du Bois Legacy committee swag. Ms. VanSant can order more; the committee can sell them at the Festival.

Ms. VanSant has created Du Bois Legacy Committee note cards with a picture of DuBois and his wife and son on the cover and the names of the Legacy Committee members on the back. But the Committee doesn't yet have funds to order them. When it does, these will be the committee's thank you notes.

8. Upcoming Events to share

Ms. Fagan announced that the Great Barrington Historical Society will present a lecture on Elizabeth Freeman on May 11th. It will discuss Elizabeth Freeman's case for freedom and the impact the end of slavery had on the lives of African Americans in the Berkshires. It will be part of a series entitled "Alternative His and Her Stories".

9. Citizens Speak

It was noted that Ms. VanSant, her image and her oral history, are on display at the Berkshire Museum!

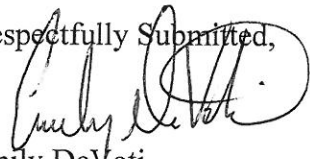
10. Next Meeting – Adjournment

The next meeting date was set for Wednesday, March 20th from 5:30 – 7:00pm. Amended, after the February meeting: **the next meeting date is rescheduled to Wednesday, March 13th from 5:30 – 7:00pm, at the Firehouse.**

It was decided that 5:15 is too early, so future meetings will be at 5:30pm.

Ms. DeVoti made a motion that the meeting be adjourned. Ms. Vuijst seconded. Meeting adjourned at 7:03pm

Respectfully Submitted,


Emily DeVoti
Recording Secretary

2/13 - 2 sides

Event Debrief

Date Feb 3 - and Feb 13th

A. Logistics

Name of Event: Stage adaptation of a play, *Beyond The Veil*, by Emily DeVoti, directed by Regge Life, performed by Shakespeare & Co.

Date of Event: January 25, 7-10pm, Friday: Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center

Lead Organizer(s): Emily DeVoti (playwright and Legacy Committee Secretary), Multicultural BRIDGE, Town of Great Barrington Legacy Committee, DuBois Center

Sponsors: Greylock Federal Credit Union, Multicultural BRIDGE, Berkshire Bank

Partnering Organizations: Shakespeare and Company, Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center, Multicultural BRIDGE, Berkshire Community College OLLI, The DuBois Center, The NAACP Berkshire Chapter. For the historical slideshow on the screen preceding the play: UMass Libraries (digital images of Du Bois and his family), The Great Barrington Historical Society (digital images of historical downtown Great Barrington, and enlarged prints in the lobby), The Mount, Edith Wharton's Home (digital pictures of Wharton)

Participants in the talk-back/play response/audience Q&A: Frances Jones Sneed (MCLA), Dennis Powell (NAACP Berkshire Chapter), Jennie Kassanoff (Barnard College, on behalf of the Mount, Edith Wharton's Home), Emily DeVoti (playwright), Regge Life (director), Gwendolyn VanSant (Executive director, BRIDGE, and Assistant Chair of the Legacy Committee), Charls Hall (actor, played Du Bois), Tamara Hickey (actor, played Wharton).

Target audience: general public

Places advertised: The Berkshire Record (preview feature article), Shoppers Guide (free event listing), Berkshire Edge (free event listing), Mahaiwe (e-blast and on their website), The Mount (e-blast), Interview WAMC (courtesy of BRIDGE), WAMC Community Events page (free), Great Barrington WSBS, NAACP Facebook, BRIDGE blast and press list-serve.

Budget: \$3000.

How long did we plan? 6 months/Shakespeare & Co.; 2 months/Mahaiwe.

Press Release: Emily DeVoti. **Press contacts:** Emily DeVoti, Gwendolyn VanSant/BRIDGE, Randy Weinstock/Du Bois Center

B. Event Experience

The event was successful, drawing over 400 members of our community to the play. The expert responders and moderated audience talk-back session seemed to be useful to help people to process the play and encourage discussions after the event, with Du Bois at their center.

Event Debrief Template for Social Events & Fundraising Activities | Gwendolyn VanSant | gwendolynvansant@gmail.com

Consider having less responders, with more focus on the audience experience of the play-- one expert and one moderator to help answer the audience questions and fill in historical details/ context for the play.

What went right? What went wrong? What was missing? What was confusing?

C. What Happened?

How many attended? 415

Actual Cost? \$3,238. (\$1500 Mahaiwe rental, \$1,000 (9) actors/ (1) director, \$100 speaker fees (\$50 each) for Powell and Sneed, \$638 programs at Staples. Was there a cost for dinner?

Money Raised? None. The event was ticketed, general admission, but free; there was NOT a donation basket in the lobby (it was still unclear if the committee could accept donations on behalf of the town; also there was no volunteer to helm the basket).

Press Coverage: none of the actual event; all was preview press.

Themes/Issues/Currents:

D. Follow-Up

What connections were made? Who came forward expressing continued interest?

Next Steps:

This could be a repeat event. It is the second time in a row that a play at the Mahaiwe opened the Du Bois festival. This could become an annual festival trend – a different play each year.

Lesson Learned for Next Time:

Need at least 6 months earlier in planning

Is this a repeat event? If so, when do we start planning next time? Yes, different play Shakespeare & Co could be a good repeat partner, although they do not have a diverse core group of actors. If they are collaborated with again, discuss casting needs well in advance. This could add a NYC/Boston travel budget.

Identify any new partners or budget items to pursue.

If the event is free, put collection baskets in the lobby, helmed by volunteers.

Identify volunteer need in advance, commit volunteers to tasks a month prior to the event.

Next time, consider having the event program be a fundraising opportunity with paid ad spots.

The programs should be created more than a week in advance, to take advantage of special printing discount from BRIDGE-related printer.

E. ASSIGN TASKS

Who will generate this official report? Stephanie Wright

Who will monitor follow-up? Assign follow-ups at debrief meeting?

Who will follow up on any outstanding questions?

Who will write thank you notes Emily, Freke

2/13 - 2 sides

Event Debrief

Date Feb 3

A. Logistics

Name of Event: MLK Day

Date of Event: January 21, 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM

Lead Organizers: Interfaith, Multicultural BRIDGE, Town of Great Barrington DuBois Legacy Committee, Volunteers Smith Interns, Woven Roots

Sponsors: Greylock Federal Credit Union, Multicultural BRIDGE, Berkshire Bank

Partnering Organizations: Interfaith Community

Target audience: General Public

Places advertised: WAMC, Flyers, Facebook, Internet, WSBS

Budget:.

How long did we plan? Less than 3 months

Press Release: Press contacts:

B. Event Experience

What went right? TRJ volunteers signed up before the event. People signed up to service destinations before the event. We were able to get out to the public what service destinations were not going to be happening due to inclement weather. People came to the church and then were dispersed to the various service places. The card creation and book reading was well attended. Over 50 cards went to Afghanistan and 50 cards to the Detention Center for women went to Chicopee. Food was available throughout the event.

What went wrong?

What was missing?

What was confusing?

C What Happened? Volunteers went to various service destinations. Many others stayed at First Congregational Church to create Valentine's Cards and Thank You Cards. Clean-up at 11:30. MLK Jr. and Civil Rights Struggles Past, Present, and Future talk with speakers Dr. Francis Jones Sneed, Dr. Wesley Brown, moderated by Dr. Justin Jackson. Dance performance by Olga Dunn Dance Company, Song led by Barbara and Graham Dean, Song by Pete Wilson and accompanist. Community sharing and conversation: Dreaming up Justice

Event Debrief Template for Social Events & Fundraising Activities | Gwendolyn VanSant | gwendolynvansant@gmail.com

How many attended? 130 to 150 people

Actual Cost?

Money Raised?

Press Coverage:

Themes/Issues/Currents: Want more service destinations next year.

D. Follow-Up

What connections were made?

Who came forward expressing continued interest?

Next Steps:

E. ASSIGN TASKS

Who will generate this official report? Stephanie Wright

Who will monitor follow-up? Assign follow-ups at debrief meeting?

Who will follow up on any outstanding questions?

Who will write thank you notes:

MLK DAY REPORT

ATTENDANCE-----130 TO 150 People ~> 200 at peak

COLLECTION

TOTAL-----\$830.00

EXPENSES:

Guests panelists -----\$200.00 (2)

CCR-----\$330.00 (all checks)

Macedonia Church----- \$100.00 ~> 811e

Olga Dunn School-----\$200.00

Stipend was offered to the pianist and to Peter and his band, but they declined any money.

Wray Gunn

1/27/2019