

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

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

### **FINAL Minutes of the Wednesday, December 18, 2019 Meeting**

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

Also attending: Selectboard liaison Ed Abrahams

Absent: Wray Gunn, Reginald Leonard, David Magadini, Freke Vuijst.

Berkshire country residents attending: 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 6:38 p.m.

#### **2. Updates.**

Selectboard liaison Ed Abrahams updated the committee regarding the town's attendance policy for committee members, as the board has not been able to meet in an official capacity for several months due to the lack of a quorum.

Abrahams said that if committee members do not attend three meetings in a row and do not respond to emails, they should be removed from the committee and the position can be filled.

He also said that the committee can at any time attend a Selectboard meeting and ask for the committee size to be either reduced or expanded.

Regarding attendance by phone: IF there is a quorum in the meeting room, a physically absent committee member can still call in and still vote.

#### **3. Du Bois Festival/ Birthday Celebration.**

##### 2020 Du Bois Legacy Festival

The festival will take place for one weekend this year: February 22 – 23, 2020

On February 22, 2020, dancer and storyteller Joanna Haigood, sponsored by Jacob's Pillow, would like to perform her performance piece, *Between me and the other world*, at Simon's Rock. Her dance involves audience involvement, and she works with 100 people at a time, so there will be a few sessions.

On February 23, 2020 there will be an event at the First Congregational Church in Great Barrington. Dr. Emily Williams to present a proposed lecture series at current meeting.

Festival Costs:

Festival Banners:

In the Committee Budget, there is \$1600 set aside for installing and removing the town-owned banners

The Committee needs to submit their annual proposal to the town of GB.

Mr. VanSant will talk with the town.

Ms. VanSant will talk with National Grid and the insurance company.

The budget for Ms. Haigood's performance piece is \$30,000. The full amount has already been pledged, with the following break-down:

Jacob's Pillow: \$20,000

Simon's Rock: \$ 5,000

MCLA: \$ 2,000

Berkshires Bank: \$3,000

**Motion:** Ms. DeVoti motioned that the committee have Ms. Haigood's performance at Simon's Rock on February 22, 2020.

**Second:** Randy Weinstein

**In favor:** all

February 23 Birthday Celebration:

Dr. Emily Williams, newly of BRIDGE, presented her proposal for speakers on February 23<sup>rd</sup>. It is an evening of lecturers, including:

Dr. Danille Taylor (Clark Atlanta University) on "The Atlanta University Years";

Dr. Deidre Foreman (Ramapo College) on "W.E.B. Du Bois's Quest to Challenge Scientific Racism";

Sculptor and professor of art Dr. Ayokunle Odeleye on creating a statue of Du Bois at Clark Atlanta University.

Moderator: Dr. Karl Johnson (Ramapo College)

Lecture Budget:

Speaker fees (four x \$300)	\$1,200
Hotel (two nights for four people)	\$1,591
Travel for all 4 speakers:	\$1,700
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$4,491</b>

The event would take place roughly from 1pm – 5pm, followed by a dinner in Housatonic

**Motion:** Ms. Dean made a motion to accept Dr. Williams’s proposed program for February 23, 2020.

**Second:** Ms. DeVoti

**In favor:** All

Fundraising:

The committee needs more active fundraising. BRIDGE is still supporting and leading the committee’s fundraising efforts.

Ms. VanSant informed the committee that the Barr Foundation has appointed the Berkshire Taconic Foundation as administrator for major grant funding. The committee should track deadlines for funding for next year’s festival.

Also the Massachusetts Humanities and Cultural Councils have deadlines in March 2020.

This week, Dr. Williams will submit grant proposal to Berkshire Bank for the \$3,000 for Ms. Haigood’s dance sponsorship.

#### **4. New and Ongoing Business**

New Member Applications to the Legacy Committee

For this segment of the discussion, the committee respectfully asked Mr. Likarish, Ms. Mugridge, and Dr. Williams to step out of the room.

In the past year, two of the 12 committee members (Julie Fagan, Justin Jackson) have formally resigned, bringing the current committee number down to 10.

Three current committee members have missed over three meetings in a row with no communication: Wray Gunn, Reginald Leonard, David Magadini.

New applications received:

Tim Likarish, Great Barrington resident, regular Committee meeting attendee and volunteer  
Stan Brown, lawyer  
Thasia Giles, Director of Community Engagement at Jacob's Pillow  
Valerie George, of Blanford, MA

Mr. Weinstein and Ms. VanSant have already interviewed Mr. Likarish and Ms. George.  
Sara Mudgridge and Dr. Emily Williams have expressed their intent to apply.  
Ms. Reed nominated Reverent Sloan, who is interested.

The committee unanimously voted on adding to the committee the following members:  
Tim Likarish, Thasia Giles, Valerie George.

**Motion:** Ms. DeVoti made the motion that as the W.E.B Du Bois committee has received notice from the Selectboard Chair that if a committee member has three consecutive meeting absences with no communication, that said committee member should be removed from the committee so that the committee can have a quorum and be able to conduct business, that we therefore should remove the following committee members: Wray Gunn, Reginald Leonard, David Magadini.

In addition, with the approval from the town, we nominate the following new members be appointed to the Du Bois Legacy Committee: Valerie George, Thasia Giles, Tim Likarish

**Second:** Ms. Wright

**In favor:** All.

**Motion:** Ms. Wright made a motion to nominate the following individuals to apply to the committee: Sara Mugridge, Reverend Sloan, Dr. Emily Williams, and to request that they apply within one week with a cover letter and c.v. to Mr. Weinstein, Ms. VanSant, and Helen Kuziembo at Town Hall.

**Second:** Ms. Dean

**In favor:** All.

#### Legacy Award

There are still no nominations from the ad listed on the the Town of GB website. Members need to reach out to local organizations for a nominee or two each.

Deadline for nomination: January 13<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Reed will change town award website image. The Committee should not use images of the murals, as they are the property of Railroad Street Youth Project.

Legacy Award Reach out:

Barbara Dean will reach out to the Du Bois Educational Series

Vanessa Le Grande will reach out to Macedonia Church & First Congregational Church

Stephanie Wright will reach out to African Heritage Trail

Emily Williams will reach out to Reverend Sheila

Tim Likarish will reach out to Will Conklin, Greenagers

Emily DeVoti will reach out to Bob Kroll

Sara Mugridge will reach out to Susan Witt, Montessori School, Simon's Rock, Social Justice groups at Bridge

Leah Reed will reach out to the NAACP, Price Memorial, Clinton Church Restoration

Gwendolyn VanSant will reach out to Grace Church

**5. Committee Announcements / Comments / Citizen's Speak**

Ms. Dean requested that the committee review etiquette and policy for changing meeting from regularly scheduled meeting times.

Mr. Weinstein explained that the last meeting had to be changed because he couldn't be there, and neither could Ms. VanSant. For a meeting to occur, the chair needs to be present, and if he can't be, then the vice-chair needs to run the meeting. If neither can be there, the meeting must be re-scheduled. The regular meeting time is the third Wednesday of the month. The alternate meeting time is the fourth meeting Wednesday of the month.

Ms. DeVoti requested another day to meet besides Wednesdays, but other members are not available.

It was agreed among the group that 6:30 will be a better time for committee members than 6:00 pm, so the time has been changed to 6:30 pm, and remains third Wednesday of the month.

Other tasks:

Mr. Likarish has written up thank you notes for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Homestead Dedication event. All present members signed at meeting. He will send them out.

He will also check in with Sam VanSant about banners.

Ms. Dean will reach out to Bob Painter, who leads a music group of trombones playing the Sorrow Songs, for possible inclusion in this year's festival or another event during the year.

Mr. Weinstein will ask Ellen Lahr to fix date on Legacy Award nomination. He will also get the Committee on the next Town Meeting agenda of Jan 13 to submit request for committee membership change.

Ms. Reed will send a link to everyone in the committee for the Legacy Award announcement on the town website, so it can be shared.

Meeting adjourned: 8:23pm

Next meeting: January 15, 2020 at 6:30pm

Ms. DeVoti made a motion that the meeting be adjourned. Mr. Weinstein seconded.  
Meeting adjourned at 1:55pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Emily DeVoti  
Recording Secretary