

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

### Zoom Teleconference

**DRAFT** Minutes of Wednesday, September 22, 2021 Meeting.

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

Attending: Gwendolyn VanSant Randy Weinstein, Barbara Dean, Stephanie Wright, Thasia Giles, Tim Likarish, Sara Mugridge, Dr. Emily Williams, Ed Abrahams (Selectboard), Heather Bellow (Press)

- 1.Call to order by Ms. VanSant & reading of teleconference mandate
- 2.Recognize tabling approval of minutes from last meeting
3. Old Business

### Treasurer's Report

Mr. Likarish shared meeting notes from small group meeting in April with updates on identified grants and questions for town.

On the matter of committee funding allotted by town in the annual budget, discussed understanding that the \$5000 budgeted in prior years is not present in the 2021-22 fiscal budget.

Mr. Abrahams suggested asking [Town Manager] Mark Pruhenski to add a reminder to his calendar every year, and to speak directly to Mr. Pruhenski about any funding that may still be allotted to Legacy Committee for the current fiscal year. Noted that there is a contingency fund at discretion of Finance Committee, but it is unlikely to be available for Legacy Committee needs.

On the question of the application process for funding from Celebration budget, Mr. Abrahams indicated that this portion of the budget is at the sole discretion of Mr. Pruhenski, so inquiries should be directed to his office.

Mr. Abrahams suggested that Friends of the Library could act as fiscal agent, but he would need to consult with Attorney General about possible conflicts first.

Ms. VanSant inquired about regular updates and Mr. Likarish responded that [Town Finance Dir] Sue Carmel has not sent monthly report in some time; he will follow up to re-establish.

Ms. VanSant also confirmed that town banners for are now on Mr. Pruhenski's radar, but we need to confirm financial responsibility is now with town for this item.

Discussion of following up with Mr. Pruhenski and Ms. Carmel. Mr. Likarish will lead next steps, and all agree that determining programming to have specific budgetary asks should happen first.

Mr. Weinstein offered to reach out to Friends of the Library to follow up. Ms. VanSant reiterates the originally articulated need to have the process shared in writing with an MOU as is standard.

Mr. Likarish will update grant deadlines and processes, as Ms. VanSant notes that some have changed, and most recent guidelines will be online. Ms. Mugridge offers to support. Mr. Likarish discusses work toward building out templates and a portfolio of past programming.

### Calendar of Events

Ms. VanSant led discussion continuing from previous meetings about establishing an annual committee calendar. Confirmed major dates are Homesite Dedication October 18th and Festival which kicks off on MLK Day and runs through Black History Month, with observance/celebration of Du Bois birthday and town holiday on Feb 23. Recognized committee will also partner with organizations holding events during (but not limited to) January and February.

Committee discussed finding some way to encourage businesses downtown to put out celebratory markers (ex. Berkshares out w/deals), and prioritizing youth & school involvement.

Mr. Abrahams suggested asking Mr. Pruhenski to add a calendar reminder to add Legacy Committee announcement of festival events to Selectboard agenda in January.

Mr. Weinstein and Ms. VanSant asked if we need a program group thinking about who is holding these parts and moving forward. Ms. Dean suggested that we might use full committee. Ms. VanSant suggested allotting time to generate ideas at monthly meetings, and having “feet on the ground” work in between.

Noted Du Bois Day 2022 falls on a Wednesday. Speakers should be selected and contacted soon, and program details established. Ms. Mugridge raised possibility of being remote again (ex. For partnering w/schools around curriculum use of video, etc. as well as safety precautions with COVID.)

Ms. Wright suggests that work toward events, including grant proposals be broken down by weeks, and working from that calendar.

### *Action Items for October 18th event*

Proposed plan for both days (17th & 18th) to be accessible to more people, with framing around self-guided tours and open house-type hours, emphasis still on the 18th itself.

Ms. VanSant will speak with Ben Doren about engaging students

Mr. Likarish and Ms. Mugridge will arrange reflection board materials and shifts for welcoming visitors on the 17th & 18th

Ms. Giles asks if UMass might provide a docent and Mr. Weinstein will follow up and reach out. Ms. VanSant and Ms. Mugridge will work on publicity (release, send to town, FB event)  
Open question if an online element is needed

*Table for next meeting:* Ideas for Legacy Festival programming, and potential partners, networks  
Mr. Likarish raised concern about meeting grant deadlines; Ms. VanSant suggested using the established template (concert, lecture, celebration) to guide budget and proposal.

#### 4. New Business

##### Composition of Legacy Committee, number of members, attendance requirements, etc.

Ms. VanSant confirmed that Mr. Letman and Ms. Reed who were unable to attend this evening, are still active committee members and Ms. DeVoti has resigned. There are currently two vacancies. All in attendance agreed to promote the open seats to those in networks who may be interested, including the members of school community. Mr. Pruhenski had been announcing committee vacancies at Selectboard meetings. Ms. Giles suggested posting on the committee's Facebook page.

A question was raised about voting limitations on budgetary decisions for non-Great Barrington residents on the committee, and Mr. Abrahams suggested this would also be a matter to discuss with Sue Carmel.

Quorum is based on membership of 12. Reminder to all that leaves of absence can help with quorum issues.

Mr. Weinstein raised a question about attendance, and offered to check with the town clerk to see if there are previous applications for seats to consider.

##### Great Barrington-Accra, Sister Cities update

Ms. VanSant and Mr. Weinstein provided an update on the event in NYC celebrating signing and revitalization of Du Bois Center in Accra. Noted work in parallel with Great Barrington vision, Center to be a cultural center centering Du Bois and his role in Pan Africanism. Ms. VanSant and Mr. Weinstein and Craig Harris were in attendance. Discussion continued about the possibility of hosting a meaningful reception, and Ms. Giles wondered if we might incorporate thematically in this year's festival.

##### Statue, moving forward

No update tonight. Ms. VanSant clarified that the work that Freke Vuijst and Danny Klein did was outside scope of committee, and asked if the previous guidance provided by Mr. Abrahams and Mr. Bannon to maintain a separation between Legacy Committee and statue work should be revisited. Mr. Abrahams noted that a friend of Ms. Vuijst has continued the project, and has met with Mr. Weinstein; he will see about connecting. Ms. VanSant is also aware of other work

as well, and suggested clarifying and moving forward on the work with a sense of who is steering.

#### Legacy Award nominating process

Ms. Mugridge proposed announcing October 18th and using updated existing materials. Mr. Weinstein pointed out that the process last year was not ideal. Ms. Dean suggested more time for applicants to complete the process. Ms. Mugridge suggested that the two-part process with nominees asked for written responses to prompts may be arduous. Ms. VanSant suggested we could make this request for material more inviting. Agree to move forward with the announcement and first round of application, and review the 2nd round process.

By Sept 30th - check in on your to do item

#### 5. Announcements / Citizens Speak

#### 6. Adjournment

Motion by Ms. Dean

Seconded by Ms. Mugridge

In favor: all, opposed: none