

City of Keene
New Hampshire

MARTIN LUTHER KING, Jr. /JONATHAN DANIELS COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, March 2, 2016

5:00 PM

Trustee's Room, Library

Members Present:

Derek Scalia, Chair
Bill Hay, Vice-Chair
Mandi Slate
Ella MacDonald
Dottie Morris
Rev. Michael Hall
Yves Gakunde (Late)
Melanie Everard (Late)

Staff Present:

Meghan Spaulding, Recreation Programmer

Members Not Present:

1) Call to Order and Roll Call -

Chair Scalia called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM. Roll call was conducted.

2) Approval of Minutes – February 3, 2016

Ms. Slate made a motion to adopt the minutes of February 3, 2016 as submitted. Rev. Hall seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

3) Finance Report – (Page 6 of 6 in the packet)

Ms. Spaulding reported the current balance is \$8,263.06. She noted the St. James Thrift Shop donation of \$750.00 and the Keene Sentinel ad expense of \$190.00.

Ms. Slate made a motion to accept the Finance Report as presented. Ms. Morris seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

4) Welcome New Members –

Chair Scalia welcomed Rev. Michael Hall as a new member of the Committee.

5) Our Kids – The American Dream in Crisis Update-

Chair Scalia reported he did reach out to Rudy Fedrizzi and heard nothing back. Chair Scalia noted the event will be taking place on March 25, 2016. Pointing out the event will be taking place very soon Chair Scalia indicated he doesn't feel the Committee will be asked to formally

participate. He commented the events at KSC are open to the public and encouraged Committee members to attend. Chair Scalia provided a brief overview of this book by Robert Putnam noting its relativity to one of the Committee's priorities this year (income and equality). Chair Scalia asked how the Committee continues the dialog on income and equality in Keene after attending this event; or where do we want to go as a Committee. No additional Committee comments were offered.

6) Voter Turnout-

Chair Scalia reported the Sentinel ad was published the weekend before the primary. He noted the voter turnout for City Council was at approximately 6% and at 52% for the presidential primary. Chair Scalia feels there could be an increase in voter turnout if the Committee decides to continue with this initiative and gets other community organizations to commit. Chair Scalia asked for Committee ideas moving forward adding he would like to keep the sub-committee going. He asked if anyone else was interested in this sub-committee. Mr. Hay volunteered to join the existing members. Chair Scalia will send out an email with a meeting time.

7) Informational Memo- (Page 4 of 6 in the packet)

Ms. Spaulding reported the memo was sent to the Mayor and will go before Committee next week. Discussion ensued with Committee members agreeing the memo sets a nice tone and is a beginning step in engaging with City Council on future issues. Ms. Morris commented if she were sitting on City Council and read the memo she would want more information, and hopes the memo motivates City Council to ask why this memo is being sent now. Chair Scalia encouraged Committee members to follow up with their City Councilors.

8) DC Trip Update- Mr. Bohannon will provide an update at the April meeting.

9) Where do we go from here- Brainstorming

Chair Scalia asked the following questions: 1) what are our priorities, 2) what do we want to refine our focus on, and 3) are we missing anything in our meetings. He commented the Committee is dabbling in income and equality, the voter initiative, and the book project; asking is there anything else we should be prioritizing.

Committee responses:

1. Mr. Gakunde suggested finding a common project and ways to work with other groups.

2. Enhancing voter turnout: Ms. MacDonald suggested the High School as another group to work with by means of informing teenagers how and where to vote. Ms. Everard suggested this could be mixed with the income and equality issue pointing 75% of her students are at or below the poverty level. Ms. Everard noted there is a huge correlation between those people and voters. She continued many people don't know what the platforms are. Ms. Everard suggested this could be something the Committee could think about.

Chair Scalia suggested collaborating with the City Clerk's office perhaps for a voter registration drive. Discussion ensued with regards to voter information; Ms. Spaulding reported the City website provides all the information on local elections. Ms. Everard pointed out this is unavailable to those without Internet/computers. Continuing the discussion Committee members made the

following suggestions/comments.

- Civics has been whittled away in the classrooms.
- Approach the Sentinel to compile a pamphlet for local elections.
- Have someone answering questions/registering new voters in school cafeterias.
- Partner with the Keene Housing Authority and Community Kitchen to increase voter awareness.
- Engage with the American Democracy Project at KSC to help educate teenagers.
- Answer definitively the question, are 17 year olds allowed to vote if they turn 18 by the election date. It was noted there was some inconsistency with this in Keene's last election.
- To reach young people go on KNE with a show that is basically little civics lessons.
- Start voting education at the elementary school ages.
- Are there ways to reach those parents who already feel disenfranchised?

Chair Scalia recommended adding this to the next agenda: How do we enhance our presence with voting. Chair Scalia will contact the City Clerk's office to ascertain where they would be in this effort and report back. Ms. Morris will contact the American Democracy Project at KSC and report back.

10) NewBusiness-

1. Blood Brother is scheduled to come out in September. Chair Scalia will reach out to the authors to see what they have planned and the potential for a partnership.
2. Ms. Morris reported on the upcoming events at KSC.
 - Fania Davis on Restorative Justice, April 5, 2016
 - Robert Putnam, April 25, 2016 MBR
 - Free concert Fatoumata Diawara April 30, 2016
3. Mr. Hay reported on the Sentinel article regarding the Monadnock Film Festival. He noted they have a new Director, Dianna Costello. Mr. Hay distributed handouts and reported on the Jonathan Daniels Award that will be presented. Mr. Hay indicated the group is continuing its fundraising efforts and still needs to raise \$30,000.

11) Adjourn-

There being no further business Chair Scalia adjourned the meeting at 5:53 PM.

Next meeting: April 6, 2016

Respectfully submitted by,
Mary Lou Sheats-Hall, Minute Taker
March 3, 2016

Respectfully edited by,
Meghan Spaulding, Staff Liaison
March 29, 2016