

City of Keene
New Hampshire

MARTIN LUTHER KING Jr. / JONATHAN DANIELS COMMITTEE
MEETING AGENDA

Wednesday, December 5, 2018

5:00 PM

Room 12, Keene Parks and Rec

Members:

Bill Hay, Chair
Melanie Everard, Vice Chair
Dottie Morris
Janis Manwaring

Staff:

Andy Bohannon

Others:

Members not present:

Nancy Salwen

1. Call Meeting to Order Roll Call

Chair Hay called meeting to order at 5:17 pm.

2. Approval of September 5, 2018 Minutes-

Ms. Manwaring moved to approve the September 5 minutes, Ms. Morris seconded and motion was passed unanimously.

3. Finance Report

Mr. Bohannon stated that the committee finances have not changed; the \$5,000 expense of the Walldogs has been moved over and is coming along. He had a meeting there Monday night and the committee was recognized on the donor platform with a new logo. He said the Jonathan Daniels mural might be placed on the City Hall building but that has not been confirmed.

4. Committee Direction

- a. City-College Commission Report- Mr. Bohannon stated that the committee needs to create new direction which will accelerate movement. He said July and August were cancelled, then they completed the SWOT but the Mayor is interested in hearing back from him with some direction of committee. Mr. Bohannon stated that he shared the City-College Commission report that Ms. Morris and a team had put together. He said he hopes everyone has had a chance to review the report and the SWOT wrap-up. He said he included the purpose of the committee to tie it together.

- b. SWOT Wrap Up- Mr. Bohannon stated that workforce diversity in the City of Keene is a very important topic. He said he attended the Governor's Council on Inclusion which Ms. Morris sits on and the meeting generated a lot of good conversation. He suggested that they begin to think about how to make Keene a more inclusive City, as there are unfortunate incidents taking place downtown and on the Keene State College campus which are rooted in ignorance. Mr. Bohannon stated that it is important for the committee to step forward, take action and promote multiculturalism, equality and social equity. Mr. Bohannon stated that if they need to change the committee's purpose—now is the time. He said that the Hospital, the College, Markem and Timken are aiming to hire the best individual for the job and asked what that will look like. He said the Hospital is having a hard time recruiting and he wants people in the community to feel welcomed. Mr. Bohannon shared an example of a group of young men of Indian-descent that he encountered at Jonathan Daniels School who were playing cricket and remarked how great it is to have cricket being played in Keene. He said he thought to himself how best to approach them to ensure they had everything they need for recreational opportunities. He said he put some feelers out there but has not heard anything back yet.

Mr. Bohannon stated when he thinks about the re-creation of Patricia T. Russell Park, the former Carpenter Fields, he envisions a space where everyone has a place to play. He said he shared this thought at the Governor's Council, that when he thinks in terms of Parks and Recreation he sees it is as an all-inclusive place where everyone is welcome. He emphasized that they need to make sure that everyone that is part of the conversation is well-represented. Mr. Bohannon suggested that the MLK-JD committee change their purpose just a little bit so they can demonstrate that inclusiveness and simultaneously participate in some educational outreach as well to achieve those goals. He said these are the topics that they discussed in SWOT.

Chair Hay stated that there is a growing community of people from India that have joined the community for IT jobs. Mr. Bohannon said that he is personally acquainted with a Project Manager at Markem and he says that it is a very diverse work place. Chair Hay said there are a lot of tennis players in the Indian community. Ms. Morris suggested they add social engagement and recreational engagement, as their mission does not capture that component of public, social and recreational engagements. She said they should promote the principal of their mission through social engagement and public and social events.

- c. Mission and Vision- Ms. Manwaring said she attended a presentation Mr. Bohannon delivered about improving the Parks and Recreation center and a participant approached her after the event and pointed out the lack of attention on transgender bathrooms. She said there is a whole population that is underserved. Ms. Morris agreed that transgender inclusion is a strong component of promoting multiculturalism. She stated that they have not done enough to promote important elements of their purpose. She said they need

some sort of project to promote the committee. Ms. Manwaring shared that Keene used to put on an International Fair in which the public were invited to explore the cultures of different countries. She said it was a wonderful family event. Mr. Bohannon stated that the event is now called “International Day” and is held at Jonathan Daniels School and has grown considerably since last year. He suggested the committee begin to “connect the dots” and perhaps connect with the planners of that event. He stated that many things are happening but they are not collaborating.

Ms. Morris asked Mr. Bohannon if they are going to have the morning breakfast they have typically held on Martin Luther King Day. Mr. Bohannon replied that he has not heard anything about the event and does not believe it will happen as the man in charge of the event has retired. Chair Hay said it was an event hosted by the Interfaith group. Ms. Morris said that the breakfast event was well-aligned with the committee’s purpose. Mr. Bohannon said he thinks they will come around in January as they sent the message loud and clear last year as he had conversations with various people who wanted to promote collaboration. Mr. Bohannon suggested that Chair Hay discuss options with Reverend Michael Hall, and he will speak to the Rabbi Amy Loewenthal and Reverend Elsa Worth to have that conversation.

Ms. Morris added that she will throw out some ideas for educational pieces at Keene State College. She said they are already in the process of planning three MLK events on campus: one event will be centered on a discussion of immigration and refugee rights, as those issues fall under civil rights and people are aching to talk about those topics. She said she believes that Martin Luther King and Jonathan Daniels would both be in support of discussion around these issues. Ms. Morris said she also contacted an immigration lawyer who has some stories to tell that are painfully beautiful and she invited him to participate in the event and create discussion around those narratives. Chair Hay said they could also get some information from the Keene Immigration and Refugee Partnership (KIRP) as well so as not to create redundancy with their activities.

Ms. Morris agreed that they can actively coordinate with other groups to make it a City, College and Community event. She said additionally she would like to read the letter from the Birmingham jail and have a discussion centered on that. She said others planning the event alternatively want to focus on the “I Have a Dream” speech so they will choose one event or the other. She said she is supervising the person planning the third event and she can approach her and suggest making all three events a collective City/College/Community event. Ms. Morris stated that one event can be held in the City (led by the MLK-JD committee) and perhaps the other two can take place on Campus. Ms. Morris emphasized that this collaboration is one way to reach the committee’s educational objectives as well as create awareness about the committee’s name and mission out and jumpstart membership interest and process.

Mr. Bohannon replied that is a fantastic idea. He suggested using the newly constructed library space once it is completed. However, he said any event taking place at that venue would have to be planned for April or after. He also suggested the Blastos Room because of parking availability and audio visual access, projector access and tables set up from other community groups. He said the Maple Brown room at the College is a good option as well. Mr. Bohannon stated that the Redfern Art Center or the Thorn Gallery would perhaps be interested in connecting with the committee to do an art or portrait exhibit. Ms. Morris agreed that the gallery may even have a permanent collection that they store away and can pull out for the event. Mr. Bohannon stated that he and Mr. Tom White had a few conversations regarding the Holocaust Center and ways to connect the committee to that Center. He said Mr. White was formerly a member of the committee. Mr. Bohannon would love to hold a joint event with the Holocaust Center at some point.

5. New Business

- Committee Action- Ms. Morris announced that there will be a screening of the movie *Brother, Outsider* which is centered on one of the activists during the King era who was invisible at the time because he was homosexual. She said Mr. Bayard Rustin was an architect of the work back then and it is easy to see him in the background of old photos with Mr. King. Ms. Morris said Mr. Rustin was openly gay and that is why he was not allowed in King's "inner circle" which was composed of only 8-9 people. However, Mr. King insisted that Mr. Rustin be allowed into the "inner circle." Nevertheless, Mr. Rustin was erased from the history of the movement until this film came out. Mr. Bohannon asked if the film screening would happen in February 2019. Ms. Morris replied they are aiming for the immigration event to take place on January 29 and the other event she is not sure of the date. She said they have a couple of events planned for February; one event is focused on critical race theory with an Australian speaker Ms. Alana Lentin, who will discuss international views of racism, specifically in countries where there has been a strong British influence. The other event will be with author Ms. Jennifer Harvey who wrote a book about raising white children to be anti-racist and she was invited to do outreach in the schools. Ms. Morris stated that it would be great if the committee co-sponsors either event as events are free, open to the public and costs are already covered.

Mr. Bohannon added that if the committee wants to focus on adding social events, maybe they could help promote discussion at these events. He encouraged the committee to begin to put things on the calendar shared between Keene State College and the City as it goes a long way for the City-College commission as it meets the committee purpose of community action as well. He said they can promote this within the Historical Society, two of the major employers, and the HR Team. Ms. Morris agreed that would be another avenue to get more people on the committee and engaged.

Chair Hay asked when Ms. Morris would need to know about committee sponsorship for these events. Ms. Morris replied that they have not done any publicity yet so all the committee would have to do is send an email and provide a copy of the City seal. Mr. Bohannon stated that the committee could make some action now. He said they have some funding and if they wanted to provide some funding for the events. They could provide some funding for a social event after the screening and provide cookies and punch. Ms. Morris stated that they have not secured a venue yet but they are looking at the Putnam or a room in Parker Hall. She said maybe they could have members of the committee other than herself on the panel to provide representation from each group.

Mr. Bohannon said perhaps next fall he can talk to Mr. John Perry about putting together an event at the high school. Ms. Morris stated that author Ms. Harvey will be outreaching to parents of K-12 students to participate in an informal discussion during her two-day visit. Ms. Morris said she brought in a female professional basketball player to the high school once and they were very excited about it so they should think about bringing someone in that they are enthusiastic about. Mr. Bohannon said it is going to take time to change the culture of the high school with the new principal there who has already made some great progress. Ms. Morris stated that the integration with the students from Winchester created some socioeconomic hostility and divisiveness. Mr. Bohannon said that Mr. Perry was a former member of the committee and his father was best friends with Jonathan Daniels.

Mr. Bohannon asked Ms. Morris to let committee know about the dates for the college events so the City can promote those. Mr. Bohannon said he will contact the Interfaith Group and Mr. Tom White. Chair Hay asked if they should make a motion to make it official.

Ms. Manwaring moved that MLK-JD committee become involved and support Keene State College MLK initiatives, Ms. Morris seconded and motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Bohannon asked if Ms. Manwaring could find out more about the International Festival. He said he has an idea for them to use the Keene Recreation Center space out front if they do not have enough space. He said the Keen Recreation Center is putting together an event in June which will include food trucks, bands, games and entertainment and he said the International Festival could also use the space for music, speakers, and plenty of grass space if they want it. Ms. Manwaring agreed to that task and said she has a classmate that speaks seven languages and is very involved with the Greek Orthodox Church.

Ms. Morris asked if they are holding the International Film Festival this year and members replied that they are. Mr. Bohannon stated he will reach out to Ms. Pam White for possible membership as he has her email address. He asked if there is anyone else that

members have in mind for possible new membership. Mr. Bohannon said that Derek Scalia did say he will come again and asked if members want to keep the same time slot for the New Year. Chair Hay said they can adjust the time if they get a bigger committee and the time no longer works for everyone.

6. **Adjourn- Next meeting January 2, 2018**

Chair Hay adjourned the meeting at 6:11 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Ayshah Kassamali-Fox, Minute-Taker