



CITY OF BLOOMINGTON
DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION COMMISSION

Wednesday November 20, 2024

The meeting began at 5:02 pm

Commission Members (in-person unless noted): Aniah Fountain, Gloria Howell (zoom), Lily Kleinlein, Julie Roberts (zoom), James Sanders, Latonya Wilson **Staff:** Michelle Moss **Associates and Guests:** Debra Vance (zoom)

Introductions:

Approval of Minutes: October minutes were reviewed. James moved to accept as written. Julie seconded. All approved.

Staff Liaison Report: Michelle updated that the sponsorships are starting to come in, about \$6,000 so far (not counting CFRD). This will cover everything we need and will leave just a little left over after event costs. All of the performers have been vetted through the approved vender list with the city and will receive contracts in the coming weeks. James and Shayla George (Outstanding Leader of Tomorrow) will present on behalf of CSBM and share info about Black History Month. Dr. Githiri will be emcee and Dr. Lawrence will introduce the keynote. Lasandra Shivers from Lighthouse will share closing remarks. We previously approved funding for the musical performers, and commissioners agreed that Michelle will send each the approved \$200 and they can split that with any accompaniment needed.

Old Business:

- A. **Social Media/Newsletter Features:** Send anything shareable to Michelle.
- B. **Legacy Award:** Despite many attempts to get the word out, we still only have 2 nominations with just a couple of weeks left to submit (November 30). The form will have been open almost 2 months at that point. We discussed how to promote a few more nominations and target a couple of potential winners. James will reach out to Jim Sims to ask about nominating, or Debra will get the Yaya's to nominate someone. If we were to receive a few more nominations and decide to choose more than one, we discussed potentially having special award as appropriate. Conversation will be continued on December 11 when nominations are reviewed and voted on.
- C. **Vote on Poverty Simulation Partnership:** Last month Jocelyn Graves (BTCC) spoke to the commission about partnering to host a poverty simulation on January 18. Gloria said that Jocelyn may have also attended the NAACP meeting. At the last meeting, some commissioners were hesitant based on concerns that it may not have the intended long term benefits and that it doesn't directly align with MLK's Poor People Campaign in the way initially suggested. Michelle suggested that the event collaborate with the BVN so that anyone participating can be automatically connected to service agencies that they might learn more about in this simulation and it would then be more than simply an hour of learning the hardships of poverty. James made a motion that the MLK Commission not participate/sponsor the Poverty Simulation, Julie seconded. All approved.

New Business:

- A. **2025 Meeting Days/Times:** Michelle suggested that at the December meeting we determine the best day and time for the 2025 calendar, and that it may be beneficial to consider a slightly later (5:30) start time. Additionally, the January meeting is set for just 2 days after MLK Celebration, so we will need to decide if this meeting date should be changed to another week. This will all be finalized in December.

City of Bloomington Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday Celebration Commission

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- B. **Council MLK Language Updates:** The City Council sent Michelle an email saying they would like us to update language on the MLK webpage and mission statement (see email from Councilmember Piedmont Smith). They would like to strike a portion of the mission and replace it with new language, erasing the word “diversity” from the mission of the commission. They would also like to add written language about reporting to the city council and mayor annually. CFRD suggested that we change the language as requested but Commission members were not comfortable with the suggested change and especially not with the way it was presented. We had a lengthy discussion about the problematic way that this was brought to the commission and that an in-person request with rationale, input from the commission, and two way communication would have been a starting point. Commissioner opinions on the suggested changes varied but in general there was consensus that the timing, method of request, and erasure of specific inclusion of words like “diversity, equity, inclusion” without an agreed upon replacement was condescending or problematic. Aniah and Latonya both expressed that the timing of making this change right on the cusp of a new political administration is almost the opposite of what the MLK Legacy would have us do, which would be to stand from a place of justice and resist being quieted. Next steps, Michelle is going to forward the email to the group and we will have the opportunity to respond to the City Council that way.
- C. **Commission Reporting/Annual Report Prep:** Michelle said that an annual report must be given in-person to the city council. They expect a presentation from the Commission Chair and any written remarks from other Commissioners may also be included. Michelle has a list of what they are asking for, including commissioner headshots, key achievements, accomplishments, stories, event pictures, challenges, resolutions, goals, plans. Michelle will reach out to Michael to find out if there are templates from the past that we could use for the presentation again in 2025.
- D. **Order of Program Updates:** (see above in liaison report) The display case is reserved for our group in January, but the date it will be filled (December 30, 9-5) Michelle is out of town and can not fill the case. Julie volunteered and James said he will likely be able to help as well. It will include posters, reading/movie lists, community resources.

Public Comments (non-MLK Commissioners): None

NAACP Update: No report.

Commission on the Status of Black Males Update: James shared that CSBM is planning a Banneker Center Winter Wonderland on 12/14 from 12-4pm. The MLK Commission has volunteered in the past and are encouraged to do so again. Bloomington Parks and Rec and CSBM host this holiday event with Pictures with Santa, 10-15 fun activity stations, and gifts for children in the community. Families with pre-school through middle school aged children attend and last year almost 200 people participated. Julie said she’s looking forward to volunteering.

Announcements:

- The MLK Day event is also the date of the Inauguration and this year our event will have police presence.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 6:06 pm.

Upcoming Meetings:

December 11, 5:00-6:00pm, Kelly Conference Room

January 2025, TBD

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