



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

Wednesday August 23, 2017

The meeting began at 4:33pm

Commission Members: Marcus Debro, Nicole Griffin, David Hummons, Lily Kleinlein, James Sanders, Mary Stephenson
Associates/Guests: Debra Vance, Nicole Bolden, Rafi Hasan, Elizabeth Gray (MCPL) **Staff:** Michael Shermis

Approval of Minutes: Nicole made a motion to approve the July minutes, Mary seconded, all approved.

Staff Liaison Report:

A: Service Project Funding: Michael shared that he is continuing to reach out regionally for funding of service projects. There is a potential partner in the \$10,000+ range but the local organization is unable to commit to that funding level so they are working with the regional CRA (Community Reinvestment Act) division of that company. The next opportunity could be to reach out to Cook and Marcus suggested D.G. Elmore as well. If none of these options pan out, we have reason for concern because without a large funding partner it will be difficult to support many service projects.

B. Community Suggestion: Michael played a song ("Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me Around") that a community member suggested we use instead of "We Shall Overcome." Most agreed that the song's timely message is important in light of today's struggles. After discussion we decided to play the suggested song and accompanying video in the 5-10 minutes before the program begins. We will raise the volume, both as an indication that the program is ready to begin and to set the tone for the event.

Old Business:

A: 2018 Celebration Planning: Michael said that the contract is just about ready to go out to Rev. Middlebrook. He has confirmed with Rogers' Kids, African American Choral Ensemble, BCT (deposit waived and fee to come from CFRD's general account!), and he is working on commitments from the high schools to create the videos. Marcus was going to check in with Haley Sinn from North.

B: MLK Principles of Nonviolence (Rafi Hasan): Rafi presented on Dr. King's 6 Steps of Non Violent Protest. In the June meeting we agreed to support the Safe and Civil City program regarding this initiative. He is asking that a couple members of the Commission would meet with him and the MCPL and possibly the Black Graduate Student Association to create an initiative that we can put out into the community. He shared a PowerPoint presentation, highlights below:

Why? At the time, emerging groups of activists are promoting methods that lead to escalation and extremism, both locally and nationally. This is resulting in young people wishing to make social change but not knowing effective peaceful methods that lead to long-term change.

What? An initiative designed to engage, educate, and empower through safe and civil dialogue (programs, literature)

How? 6 Steps of Nonviolent Protest:

- 1) Gathering Information (individual responsibility, researched based, community engagement)
- 2) Educate Others (community service, organizing, and solutions)

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

City Hall · 401 N. Morton St., Suite 260, Bloomington, IN 47404 · www.bloomington.in.gov/mlk

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- 3) Remain Committed (dealing with adversity, upliftment)
- 4) Peacefully Negotiate (civil discourse)
- 5) Take Action Peacefully (diverse tactics)
- 6) Reconciliation (peaceful negotiations)

Elizabeth Gray, Adult Strategist for MCPL, spoke about the library's goal to build bridges with the African American community. They would like to offer programming geared toward social justice, nonviolent protest, and activism. They reached out to the City to discuss ways that the library could engage in the process and impact the community in a positive way. Elizabeth said that the Library is happy to help with research and resources, and as a meeting place.

Mary suggested Rafi reach out to DEMA and other large groups at IU because they are talking about campus climate and how to work on these type of projects with the IU students. Rafi said that he hopes the program will begin at the grassroots level so that potential protesters feel comfortable using the resources offered. Debra said she would be interested in helping with this initiative. Others should reach out to Michael to express interest.

New Business:

A: 25 Years of Commission and Community Memories: Michael asked for feedback on the materials to collect community and commission memories. Marcus noted that many early civil rights activists have passed away but we could look through their written histories. David said that all community groups are formed out of some sort of community need, and we should research what the needs were at the time of the commission's founding. Nicole suggested we check with City Council members from the time that the commission began. Mary suggested that we offer the ability to take oral histories in case someone prefers that. The commission members approved the letter and Michael said that the format of the project will depend on how many people respond.

Liaison Reports:

A. Commission on the Status of Black Males: James said that the Commission led a walk on the first day of Fairview School and are partnering with other back-to-school initiatives. They are working on an initiative for prevention and early diagnosis of colorectal and prostate cancer.

B. Monroe Country Branch of NAACP: No updates.

Announcements:

Debra announced that Ivy Tech is having a Diversity Celebration on September 7 from 4-7.

Nicole announced that Jim Sims is the newest City Council Member and there is a reception honoring him today.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 5:27pm.

Upcoming Meetings:

- September 27, 4:30-5:30
- October 25, 4:30-5:30

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