



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

**Wednesday September 27, 2017**

The meeting began at 4:32 pm

**Commission Members:** Marcus Debro, Reggie Johnson, Lily Kleinlein, James Sanders

**Associates, Staff, Guests:** Michael Shermis, Dan Enslow

**Approval of Minutes:** James made a motion to approve the August minutes, Reggie seconded, all approved.

**Staff Liaison Report:**

**A: Service Project Funding:** Michael shared an update about funding for MLK Day service projects. He determined that the latest date we could receive funding without major changes in the program structure would have been September 21, but we had not received any updates from potential partners by that deadline. Since we have to raise nearly \$10,000 to cover celebration costs, the suggestion is that we focus further fundraising activities there. At this point in the year Michael is usually working on preparing packets and RFPs for service projects, but now it is likely that any funding we would receive would have few to no distribution or reporting requirements which makes the process much easier. Michael is drafting a letter to past service project partners suggesting that they still plan large events for MLK Day and to do so through the Bloomington Volunteer Network so that they are all located in one location. Reggie asked how the funding issue affects the projects. Michael clarified that the funding was to be used for supplies and volunteer day costs, but ultimately does not diminish the ability to host volunteers. Lily noted that improvement projects like painting might be diminished, but community building and civic engagement projects should not be affected. We will not be able to provide funding for supplies but there were many years when this was the case and agencies still formed meaningful projects to engage the community in their work. Marcus suggested he be as transparent as possible about the reason funding is not likely to be available, and Michael responded that he has not had success in getting the answer to this question. We set tentative meeting dates for November 15 and December 20 to avoid the holidays.

**Old Business:**

**A: 2018 Celebration Planning:** Planning tasks for the celebration are beginning to pick up pace. Michael is on schedule with the Legacy Award process (beginning in October) and other tasks. The contract from Rev. Middlebrook has been mailed and we are awaiting its return. Nicole was reading his bio and shared with Michael a few topics that might be of interest for our MLK Day celebration.

- 1) He was a youth minister at one point- we could ask local ministers and youth groups to meet with him on Monday afternoon and perhaps one of the churches would host the event. Marcus was certain that Second Baptist would be open to hosting. Dan said that a bigger space might be needed. Bloomington North, Bethel AME, and Banneker were all other options mentioned as a location for this type of event.
- 2) Since he was actively involved in the nonviolent protests alongside Dr. King, we could let him know that we are starting a collaborative nonviolent civic engagement initiative here. Marcus suggested we ask him to do a PSA for us on the topic.
- 3) He went to a historically Black College, so perhaps he could discuss his experiences in greater detail.

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**B: Children Involvement:** Last year we partnered with Stages, and it turns out they are not going to be able to put together a performance for the event this year. Michael said that a local group is working to create a dance performance with primarily young black artists, and he thought that this might be a nice addition to our program and a large audience for them to debut their piece. Marcus liked the idea but said we should review the piece first to make sure it is a good fit. If not, we could ask one of the local children's choirs to perform.

New Business:

**A. MLK Principles of Nonviolence (Rafi Hasan):**

Lily and Michael shared updates from the first planning meeting regarding an initiative for nonviolent civic engagement. The goal is not to create an event, but to begin an initiative that may lead to many formats (events, discussions, resource materials, etc...). Rafi is drafting a letter to send to potential community partners (churches, businesses, organizations) asking what type of programming or projects they would like to see related to the topic of nonviolent civic engagement and Dr. King's 6 Steps of Non-Violence. The library is going to be a great partner for this initiative because they look forward to taking the feedback from the community and creating the events and programs that will make the biggest impact. We hope to connect people to the library and other resources that already exist in the community. This will be a collaboration between MCPL, MLK Commission, and Bloomington United. The next planning meeting will be set for late October or November with a goal of having some projects in the works before MLK Day 2018.

Liaison Reports:

**A. Commission on the Status of Black Males:** James shared that the commission was recognized by MCCSC for the Million Father March they held earlier in the school year to welcome Fairview students back from the summer. James is chairing a financial literacy program through the commission. Other initiatives include colorectal cancer screening, Real Men Read program, and a media bias work group.

**B. Monroe Country Branch of NAACP:** No updates.

**Announcements:** Dan Enslow mentioned a special theater production about two valiant Iranian Tahirih and Mona to Bloomington. It will take place at the Waldron Arts Center on Saturday 7 October at 7:30pm. "Her Eternal Crown" was written by Caity Quinn, a playwright/actor/ director from West Lafayette, specifically as a contribution to lead up to the celebration of the 200th anniversary of the Birth of Baha'u'llah, the prophet-founder of the Baha'i Faith. Her Eternal Crown is a 40-minute exploration of the lives of two real-life Iranian women, Tahirih and Mona, who withstood persecution and oppression to fight for women's rights and religious freedom in Iran in the 19th and 20th centuries. Targeted because of their belief in a new religion, the Baha'i Faith, both Tahirih in the 1840's and Mona in the 1980s were eventually executed. Intertwining live theatre and dance, Her Eternal Crown, is a moving portrait of two women who risked it all for freedom, justice and the advancement of women.

**Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 5:07 pm.

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**Upcoming Meetings:**

October 25, 4:30-5:30, McCloskey Room, #135

November 15, 4:30, Bub's Burgers

December 20, 4:30-5:30, Kelly Room, #155

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