



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

**Wednesday March 24, 2021**

The meeting began at 5:05 p.m. via Zoom call. Attendees shared introductions. There are two new commissioners, Jess Davis and Malik McCluskey (welcome to both!). We now have a full Commission!

**Commission Members:** Jess Davis, Gloria Howell, Lily Kleinlein, Treon McClendon, Malik McCluskey, James Sanders, Dianne Shewmaker

**Associates and Guests:** Nate Denberg, Dan Enslow, Debra Vance

**Staff:** Michael Shermis

**Approval of Minutes:** Jess moved to approve the February minutes as written, Dianne seconded. All approved.

**Staff Liaison Report:** Michael is creating the next e-newsletter and collected bios and pics from the new commissioners to include. Malik is serving on the Traffic Commission, which overlaps with the day/time of the MLK Commission. He asked if we would consider changing our meeting to make easier to attend both. Michael noted that we currently meet 4th Wednesday and there is no meeting set for the 4th Tuesday of the month at 5:00. James asked Michael to send a list of days/times to choose between over email and we will decide next month.

**Old Business:**

**A. Service Projects Wrap-up:** Michael noted that it has been unusually challenging to report on the projects this year, and for the \$2,500 we distributed it is a disproportionate amount of work. Unfortunately the recipients did not follow through on the reporting, with issues ranging from not reading the requirements, to incomplete reporting, to late submissions, to incorrect receipt tracking. This has led to multiple re-works of the final reports and missed deadlines. Ultimately Michael recommends we reconsider applying for this source of funding next year. We discussed the challenges of this specific funding source with others in the past. Michael's experience is that there is much more work with the current funding source than when the funding was 15x more in the past.

**New Business:**

**A. Black History 101 Mobile Museum/Khalid el-Hakim:** Michael said that as of today the signed contract is in. Dr. el-Hakim is confirmed to be coming to Bloomington and the schedule is as follows:

- Fly in Wednesday Sept. 8
- Thursday Feb. 9 and Friday Feb. 10, hosting small group tours from 10-3.
- Saturday Feb. 11, open to the general public from 9-1. Commissioners would be invited on this day.

Groups are to be 20 participants or less with 4 groups per day. The Commission will choose the groups that will come through, focusing most likely on college, high school, or young adult audience. The museum will be set up within City Council Chambers with plenty of space for physical distancing. In addition to time spent with the museum, Dr. el-Hakim is willing to go to one dinner and one lunch with groups that the commission chooses. Michael noted that it may be best to plan a dinner with commission members, but it is not within the budget to pay for a group meal so attendees would purchase their own food.

**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](http://www.bloomington.in.gov/mlk)

Hrs: 8am-5pm MON-FRI · ph. 812-349-3471 · fax 812-349-3483 · [mlk@bloomington.in.gov](mailto:mlk@bloomington.in.gov)



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Regarding funding, Michael shared that he received a \$500 donation from Bloomington Montessori School. Gloria is working on the budget at Neal Marshall Center right now and does hope to include support for this program. James is going to the next Blacks in Government meeting to ask about partnering. In all, Michael said we need to raise about \$2,000 more to cover the event expenses.

**B. Next Year's Speaker:** Michael shared a list of potential speakers via email and asked everyone to submit their top 3 choices within the next month so he has a better idea of which speakers to pursue. In order to help narrow down the list, Jess asked for a better sense of who attends our event, or if there is a target audience or underserved group we want to grow in attendance. Michael said we normally have 350-600 attendees, and while we don't track demographics he would guess it is about 35% people of color, mostly community members, very few students (IU or youth) outside of the performers, and generally a crowd with an average age in the 50s up. James said it is really a Bloomington community celebration, and while we make efforts to advertise at IU and with specific audiences based on the speaker we choose, it is usually a dedicated group that attends every year as their way to celebrate Dr. King.

James was interested in Dr. Eddie Cole; even though he is not as well-known he does know a lot of people in the Bloomington community. Treon seconded the interest in Dr. Cole. Lily shared that in the past there have been discussions about how to get a "big name speaker" to draw the crowd, but she felt like at least half of the attendees come every year and that no matter who we have the audience is pretty reliable. We build the remaining audience with our theme and outreach. Debra asked if we have a budget for the speaker, and whether the event will be planned as virtual or in-person. Michael said that our speaker budget tends to be \$2500-5000 and he hopes it will be in-person or hybrid. James tasked the commissioners with reviewing the list of potential speakers and sending their top choice(s) to Michael before April 14 so that we can select at the April meeting.

**Public Comments (non-MLK Commissioners):** Dan suggested we link up with Noah's Ark group on one of their future events regarding the recent increase in hate crimes. They have a planning meeting this Saturday.

**NAACP Update:** Dianne noted that there is an executive committee meeting at the end of the month, and unless they change the date, the next NAACP meeting is set for Tuesday April 6. She may be contacted for details and a zoom link.

**Commission on the Status of Black Males Update:** James said that they moved the Black Male Youth Summit to April 29 and he is chair of the planning committee. They are down to 4 or 5 Commissioners at this time.

**Announcements:** Jess noted that she is hoping to help create a curriculum piece and volunteer system for the 40 Days of Peace presentations in schools, to make it easier for someone to volunteer and also to make a more consistent message for best outcomes. What would our goals be as a take-away for these presentations to an elementary school audience? What do we want them to specifically learn about diversity and acceptance? In other words, more clearly define what we would hope a child could come away with. James thanked her for the great idea and asked her to pose these questions through an email so that people can think it over.

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**Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 5:49 pm.

**Upcoming Meetings:**

April 28, 5:00-6:00 p.m. (Zoom)

May 26, 5:00-6:00 p.m. (Zoom)

June 23, 5:00-6:00 p.m. (Zoom)

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