



CITY OF BLOOMINGTON

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION COMMISSION

Wednesday April 27, 2021

The meeting began at 5:02 p.m. via Zoom call, with Commissioner introductions.

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

Associates: Dan Enslow

Staff: Michael Shermis

Approval of Minutes: Dianne moved to approve the March minutes as written, Malik seconded. All approved.

Staff Liaison Report: Michael asked Malik to send a bio/photo for the newsletter. All other updates are below.

Old Business:

A. Black History 101 Mobile Museum/Khalid el-Hakim: Michael noted that we are awaiting confirmation from Gloria about a sponsorship from Neal Marshall Black Culture Center. He said that originally the request was for \$2,000 but it would be okay if it were a bit less. Gloria said she can guarantee they will sponsor at the \$1,000 level but they are still awaiting budget approval for anything more. She is also thinking of other partners (departments at IU) that she may be able to coordinate with to increase the total amount by at least \$500. She will follow up with the potential partners and get back with Michael over email. Michael said we need to decide who specifically we will invite to the group tours on Th/Fri, and who will be invited to the group dinner, aside from the Commissioners and their chosen guest. He shared that it takes away from the intimate setting if the group gets much larger than 15. Normally the speaker dinner is so late at night, the number of interested attendees is quite small. He expects that an earlier event would have a lot larger interest pool. We discussed how to choose who would come. It was determined that Michael will come up with a suggested group size and we can see how many additional seats/invites there are.

B. Next Year's Speaker: Eddie Cole received the most votes, so Michael followed up with him. After a few confusions through the agency about what we were asking, the cost was higher than our budget could handle. After clarifying and negotiating, Michael was able to get the total to \$4,000 speaking engagement + \$1,000 for travel engagements. He made it clear that if we can meet this funding, Eddie really wants to come back to IU/Bloomington to work with us. The timing is good, because he is in the process of writing a book and he is looking to leap into community speaking engagements rather than solely academic settings. James called for questions, and there were none. Jess made a motion to invite Eddie Cole to present as our 2022 speaker at the fees outlined above, Dianne seconded. All approved. James and Michael noted that this is the fastest we've come to an agreement on speaker in many years.

New Business: James asked Jess to speak on the 40 Days of Peace curriculum. Since the last meeting, she sent an outline of topics and curriculum, as well as how each topic aligns with the associated grade level and educational standards. Jess thanked Gloria for sending additional resources and has adjusted the living document. She said that next steps include collecting resources and creating lesson plans, which could take several months. Jess reiterated that the topics/ lessons are not meant to be limiting but are a way to be more comprehensive and inviting to a variety of volunteer presenters. If a presenter has a specific area of expertise they would like to share, those can be included, but she does think that having a standards-based curriculum could be an asset in many ways, including more interest from

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the schools and making it more consistent and easy for volunteer presenters. James and Gloria both noted that they appreciated the range and depth of the topics she included and felt that they are spot on for our community. James asked what next steps would be. Jess said that she welcomes resources and assistance with creating specific lessons, but that she also thinks Commissioners should be thinking of potential presenters/volunteers. She suggested creating a Google survey for potential volunteers on a variety of questions, such as how comfortable they are speaking to children of various ages and how comfortable they are speaking about race. This could help with matching the right volunteer with the best fit presentation/age group. This led to a short discussion about the benefits of creating a “train the trainer” event or series to make sure that all volunteers are well prepared and confident in their area of discussion. Dianne expressed interest in this type of training. James said that he would like to see this project (curriculum, training volunteers, and presenting in schools) become a real focus area of the commission. Jess suggested we reach out to schools with an interest call-out. This would let us gauge whether there is any interest at all (she expects there would be, particularly with the included standards), how many volunteers we might need, whether we would even be able to meet the capacity, and more.

As a connected issue, Gloria said she’s working with IU on how to better program around Juneteenth. She noted the difficulty in awareness and education since the holiday falls outside of traditional school calendars. She posed the question of whether the commission may be willing to do something similar to the 40 Days of Peace presentations, but about Juneteenth and how it fits with the ideals of MLK, Jr. Malik said he liked this idea because it spreads our work and community engagement throughout the year. Ideas included: partnering with the library and other organizations, where each organization hosts a booth/activity (Jess), creating a program/curriculum for Banneker or MCPL (Michael), or partnering with NAACP for a Juneteenth picnic (Dianne). While all agreed that this would be more appropriate for next year when we have more time to plan, Gloria welcomes ideas that she could use this year in her work with IU.

Public Comments (non-MLK Commissioners): Dan shared several articles via the chat about the history of the KKK in this area. He shared a few stories about early attempts to integrate locally and the challenges involved.

NAACP Update: Dianne said the next meeting will be May 4 at 6:30. Right now they are planning to have a holiday party in December. Gloria said that tonight they are hosting a “listen in” session via zoom at 6:30 as a way to explore black organization coalition building. They want to amplify the needs of black and brown communities in particular.

Commission on the Status of Black Males Update: James announced that April 29 is the Black Male Youth Summit and they are expecting 50-70 young men. They have 3 speakers planned and are very excited about the event.

Announcements: None

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 5:39 pm.

Upcoming Meetings:

May 25, 5:00-6:00 p.m. (Zoom)

June 22, 5:00-6:00 p.m. (Zoom)

July 27, 5:00-6:00 p.m. (Zoom)

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