



Cambridge Peace Commission

City of Cambridge, Massachusetts

Cambridge Peace Commission Notes

Tuesday, September 21, 2008, 6:00-8:30

51 Inman St. – Conference Room B, second floor

Notes

Attending: Gail Epstein, Grove Harris, Ilse Heyman, Mushtaque Mirza, Pat O'Brien, Nancy Seymour, Rachel Wyon, Brian Corr

Guests: Frank Connelly

Regrets: Moacir Barbosa, Linda Brion-Meisels, Betty Burkes, Louise Dunlap, Martin Federman, Ardeene Goodridge, Thomas Massaro, Nancy Murray, Radhika Rao, Abha Sur,

Absent: Cecilia Duran, Ayanna Parris, Larry Ward

Previous Notes and Note-taker

- As the group was small and neither co-chair was present, the group facilitated itself. It was also noted that due to a copy-and-pasting error, the last set of notes mistakenly indicated that both Nancy Murray and Nancy Seymour would be stepping down for the commission after nine years of service. Nancy Seymour is still in her first term on the commission as is not planning to step down, and the statement only referred to Nancy Murray.
- Note-taker – Grove Harris
- Cambridge resident Frank Connelly, attending his second meeting as a guest, was welcomed to the meeting

Upcoming Meetings and Events:

Regular Commission meetings:

- Tuesday, October 21, 2008, 5:45 p.m. at 51 Inman St., Cambridge
- Wednesday, November 12, 2008, 5:45 p.m. at 51 Inman St., Cambridge

2008 Peace & Justice Awards Dinner:

- Sunday, November 16, 2008, 4:00 to 7:00 p.m., Dante Alighieri Cultural Center, 41 Hampshire St., East Cambridge

Updates/Reports

Changes in Commission Membership

- Gail Epstein and Ilse Heyman both indicated that they would be stepping down from the commission at the end of their terms in November. People went around the circle and recognized their contributions to the work of the commission, their many gifts, and the honored the work that they have done – and have yet to do.

- There was a strong desire to find a time to honor the work of all of the individuals stepping down from the commission this year, and that while that might or might not be appropriate at the Peace and Justice Awards, it is important to do.
- People agreed that as the commission looks for new members, it is important to bring in new people with a range of skill sets and networks, and to include native Cantabridgians and people born in other nations. Exit interviews were also recommended as a good way to get valuable feedback from those stepping down.
- People also discussed the need to preserve institutional memory and find ways for former commissioners to stay connected and engaged, while making sure that it was clear to everyone who was a member of the commission and who was not, even if they are (or had been) deeply connected and engaged. This was raised as the current practice of including both sets of people on most email communications has led to confusion for some commissioners.

Planning for a Retreat

- Because the planned retreat has been postponed, a committee needs to be formed to plan it
- The idea of active subcommittees of the commission was raised as a way to increase engagement and lessen the need for the director to be the “hub” or initiator of the majority of meetings and activities, and could be addressed as well.

Planning for 2008 Peace and Justice Awards: Sunday, November 16, 4-7 pm

Awardees

Out of more than 50 nominations received this year, the Peace Commission selected ten individuals and four groups representing the breadth and depth of efforts for peace and justice in Cambridge. Nancy, Marty, Ardeene, and Brian had met to look over the candidates and provide some guidance to the rest of the members of the commission to ensure that the final awardees represented the entire community, and a few names were added to develop the list below.

Individual Awards:

- * Janet Gillespie: Community Change, Inc.
- * Richard Harding: Cambridge Public Health Department/Men of Color Health Initiative and Port Action
- * Robin Harris: Fletcher/Maynard Academy
- * Sheila Hoffman: Community Art Center and Cambridge Public Schools
- * Charles Knight: Project on Defense Alternatives and Women's Theological Center
- * Mary Leno: Cambridge Women's Commission and Cambridge Community Television
- * Maria Elena Letona: Centro Presente and the Interaction Institute for Social Change
- * Bet MacArthur: Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities and St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church
- * Officer Nicole Pacheco: Cambridge Police Department
- * Jada D. Simmons: Fitzgerald Neighborhood Council and Community School

Group Awards:

- * Tarek El Jahmi and Zander Sebenius: Buckingham Browne & Nichols and NoSweat
- * Boston Area Rape Crisis Center

- * Quaker Prison Fellowship of Friends Meeting at Cambridge (Thomas Patrick Ash, Michael Carey, Lynn Lazar, Mehmet Rona, and Gatewood West)
- * Student Mediation Team, Cambridge Rindge and Latin School

The suggested donation for adults is \$10 and \$5 for children. The recognition event will take place on Sunday, November 16 from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the Dante Alighieri Cultural Center at 41 Hampshire St., Cambridge.

Program

The event includes an informal dinner, an address by activist and academic Rev. Edward Rodman of the Episcopal Divinity School, and the presentations to the recipients, and live music. Brian contacted Nneena Freelon's husband and her manager, who indicated that she was not available as she already had a performance. A number of suggestions for music were made with the hope that young people would be well represented, including the Cambridge Community Chorus, the School of Groove, Bobby Tynes, Stan Strickland, a group of drummers who played at the Area 4 Pride Day, and The Foundation. The importance of the awardees getting to meet each other and talk together was also raised.

Miscellaneous details

Set-up on the day of the event will probably be from 1 to 4 pm, with the event running from 4 to 7 pm and half an hour for cleanup. Brian and a few members of the commission will visit the center to check out the facility and identify what needs to be done.

The next regular meeting will be Tuesday, October 21 at 5:45 at 51 Inman St.