



TEAM Westport Meeting Minutes
September 13, 2016, 8:00 AM
Room 201, Westport Town Hall, Westport, CT

Attendees: Catherine Onyemelukwe, Judy Hamer, Susan Ellis, Dolores Paoli, Brett Aronow, Harold Bailey (Presiding), Bernicestine McLeod, and Zoe Tarrant

Guests: Ramin Ganeshram, David Vita, and Rev. Alison Patton

The meeting was called to order at 8:05AM

Approval of Minutes: Judy moved that we approve the minutes of our July 12th meeting. Brett seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by unanimous vote and will be posted.

What's Up:

1. Brett and her husband will be honored by the ADL in November.
2. Susan brought in a recent copy of the *Smithsonian Magazine*– filled with articles about African American history and culture particularly pertinent because of the opening of the museum in Washington later this month. Judy announced that she will be going to Washington to attend a pre-opening celebration this weekend at the National Museum of African American History and Culture since her family contributed some items that are on display.
3. The Connecticut Superior Court has ruled that the way the state of CT funds schools is illegal and inequitable and has ordered the state to make changes as to how teachers are paid and evaluated and how the schools are financed (Connecticut Coalition for Justice in Education Funding v. Reli). The question will be how to solve these issues, though, since the towns and cities fund their local schools with limited funding from the state. Nevertheless, the state has to come up with a plan. We shall watch this with interest and involvement where possible.

Programming:

1. Playhouse – Invisible Hand Recap:

We were involved with the Playhouse in inviting speakers and in setting up discussion sessions during the run of this play. One of the more heavily attended was a session led by Yale professor Zareena Grewal. Several recommendations were made that will be given to the Playhouse with regard to our future programming involvement.

2. Interfaith Council: MLK celebration scheduled for Sunday, January 15 at the Playhouse is moving along. We'll keep you posted. We are working on attracting a dynamic speaker again this year.
3. Citizens Police Academy: Several members of TEAM Westport are enrolled in the 9-week course offered by our Westport Police Department. Thus far, it has been an instructive experience.

Education:

1. In preparation for our proposed discussion about 'how to talk to our children about race', Brett, Catherine Lewis, and Zoe met with the Westport Schools curriculum heads – Julie Droller (K-5) and Jennifer Allen (6-12). We gave an overview as to how to talk to teachers about race and we showed them the presentation that we developed. This was received positively. We shall follow up with Mses. Droller and Allen.



TEAM Westport Meeting Minutes
September 13, 2016, 8:00 AM
Room 201, Westport Town Hall, Westport, CT

We are still looking for an approach to reach parents as well as teachers and administrators. There are some good ideas that will fit in with the direction of the school system and its focus on guiding principles and emotional intelligence. We can plan to follow a “teach-the-teacher” model and see if this is effective in reaching teachers and administrators. Also, “Parent University” was suggested by the heads of curriculum development as being a good way to reach the parent community in the schools. We’ll pursue the Westport Library as a venue for reaching parents and the overall community via other discussion sessions.

2. Youth Engagement:

A “TEAM Westport” club at Staples for students is being formed by interested students. They are working on a name for the club and will keep us posted.

3. We discovered that African American Literature is offered in the Staples course catalog. However, upon research, no one could remember it being taught. Our objective is to have that course taught by next fall at the latest since there is student demand for it. TEAM Westport can support Staples in this effort.

4. Fairfield Country Day has informally requested information (via a Westport resident) as to how to deal with the topic of race in their school community.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35AM.

The next meeting will be at 8AM on Tuesday, October 4, 2016, in Room 201 of Westport Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Bernicestine McLeod
Secretary