



TEAM Westport Meeting Minutes February 5, 2019 Westport Library, Westport, CT

Attendees: Susan Ellis, Catherine Onyemelukwe, Maggie Mudd, Catherine Lewis, Harold Bailey (Presiding), Bernicestine McLeod, Judy Hamer, Alison Patton, Ramin Ganeshram, Zoe Tarrant, Elaine Daignault, and Dolores Paoli

Guests: Rebecca Marsick (Staples High School), Bill Harmer (Executive Director, Westport Library), Ian Bruce (Library Board President), Cody Daigle-Orians (Westport Library), Lauren Francese (Westport Schools), Sam Arciola (Deputy Chief, Westport Police)

The meeting was called to order at 7:40AM

Approval of Minutes: Catherine Onyemelukwe moved that we approve the minutes with amendments. Susan seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by unanimous vote and will be posted.

Programming:

We were treated to a preview tour of the Library during its transformation in order to leverage the possibilities for future programming purposes.

Library Partnership / Coming Events:

Bill Harmer welcomed us. He stated that thus far everything regarding the transformation project is on schedule and we are looking forward to the ribbon cutting around mid-year. It's a \$20M project impacting every inch of the Library; however, no space will be added. The building was constructed in 1986. The world was different at that time and our philosophy has changed. Facilities within the building were too small to accommodate today's Westport, particularly when it comes to community space. Now we'll have a much more flexible building with learning space, program space, and space for books. We are now able to finally connect with the landscape around us including the Saugatuck River. Cody, Catherine O., Maggie, and Dolores will spearhead library programming and speakers in the new space. 'Community space' are the operable words when describing the new facility layout.

- Catherine O. is launching her book, Breaking Kola: An Inside View of African Customs, on March 7th at 7PM at the Westport Woman's Club.
- A Syrian refugee family who is locally sponsored will be speaking this Thursday at 7 at the Woman's Club during WestportREADS. (Exit West by Mohsin Hamid is the WestportREADS book.)

Essay Contest:

The Essay Contest was launched on Monday, January 28th. The deadline is Thursday, February 28th at 11:59PM. The winners will be announced on Wednesday, April 3rd at 6:30PM at the Saugatuck Congregational Church.

MLK Planning Committee: The Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration was postponed due to uncertain weather on January 20th. It has been rescheduled for Sunday, March 10th, at 3:30PM at the Westport Playhouse. The program will run as scheduled in January with our speaker, James Forman, Jr.

Anti-Racism Training: We are tentatively scheduled to have a webinar session within the next month with Dr. Ibram Kendi and his staff at the Antiracism Research and Policy Center at American University involving the people who attended the December 17th, 2018, session here in Westport. We are also in the process of scheduling the follow-on session for the heads of town departments and organizations.



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TW Book Club: The next meeting will be on March 4th at 7PM at the Westport Historical Society. The book to be discussed is White Fragility, by Robin DiAngelo. There was a suggestion that going forward the TW Book Club coordinate more closely with the Library in order to have the books available at the Library, advertise the Book Club sessions through the Library, and meet at the Library once the renovated facility is open. Team Westport can also curate a book display.

Policing: We would like to resume meetings with the Leadership Council and will contact Chief Koskinas.

Westport Historical Society: Entrance to the *Remembered: The History of African Americans in Westport* exhibit is free this month. Tickets are being sponsored by a Foundation.

Education:

We are putting together recommendations to pass along to the Westport school system leaders and administrators. Key is determining what policies are in place currently and how they are communicated to the school community and the Town – students, teachers, parents, employees, administrators, and leaders. Also, how are existing policies implemented and who is accountable? How do we educate the community and the schools about policies and their implementation?

Catherine and Zoe are continuing their parent sessions in coordination with the PTAs.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:18AM.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 5, 2019, at 8PM in Room 201, Westport Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Bernicestine McLeod
Secretary