

**TEAM Westport Meeting Minutes**  
**May 6, 2014, 7:30 AM**  
**Room 201, Westport Town Hall, Westport, CT**

**Attendees:** Susan Ellis, Judy Hamer, Harold Bailey (Presiding), Bernicestine McLeod, Maggie Mudd, Steve Daniels, Catherine Onyemelukwe, and Dolores Paoli

**Guest:** Zoe Tarrant

The meeting was called to order at 7:34AM.

Catherine moved that we approve the minutes from our April 1, 2014, meeting. Susan seconded. The minutes were approved.

**New Business:**

**What's Up?**

1. We discussed the "Yik Yak" app and an article about it in *New York Magazine* written by a Staples student entitled: "A Gossip App Brought My High School to a Halt".
2. A short letter appeared in the Westport News after the essay contest stating that Westport does not need to be more diverse; it's fine the way it is.
3. Cliven Bundy and Donald Sterling have been topics of recent discussion in national news.
4. Harold will look into moving our regular meeting time from 7:30 AM to 8:00 AM.
5. The Westport Historical Society has a space available for discussions. They have said that they are interested in hosting something in their space— possibly related to *Intimate Apparel* and any relevant hidden stories in Westport. However there are none known. We may be able to use the space to engage in a conversation about African Americans who lived here and fought in the Civil War.
6. *The House that Will Not Stand* is a play by an African American playwright at Yale until May 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Old Business:**

**Programming Strategy and Gameplan**

1. Amistad: The Committee met and a new date has been set – August 23<sup>rd</sup>/24<sup>th</sup>. We are working with the city of Norwalk. We met with the heads of Norwalk's Human Rights Committee and Department and with a representative from the Amistad (by phone). The main point is to see if we can dock in Norwalk. The plan is to do tours of the ship. The ship does not have a big space; 3 guided tours plus 2 self-guided stations can occur at one time. We can do an event on the dock, as well, and are planning a program based on the information we gather.
2. "12 Years a Slave" – the book discussion is scheduled for May 17<sup>th</sup> @ 2PM at the Library. The movie will be shown at the Library on May 31<sup>st</sup> at 1:30PM with a discussion afterward.
3. Westport Country Playhouse – "Intimate Apparel" – David Kennedy should be back really soon to resume our planning activities. Another key position at the Playhouse is open – Educational Coordinator. Does anyone know anyone who might be interested in assuming this role?
4. Harold talked about the "I too am Harvard" movement by students of color at Harvard that may now be spreading to other universities. The movement speaks out against subtle racism and privilege originally consisting of video clips and placards as shown on *buzzfeed.com*. The students are also working on a dramatic production to tell their stories.

**Education Committee:**

1. 'Kids of Color' – In reaction to a recent article in the New York Times, we discussed the fact that there is a paltry number of books printed annually containing children of color; hence, the supply is limited. The books that are on the market deal a lot with slavery or civil rights leaders and not about children of color doing normal things as do white children. Even the books and

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children's films available in our library and school libraries here in town and read during story time do not, for the most part, reflect children of color.

How should we approach this?

- a. How do we raise general awareness about the lack of books showing diversity since having books that do so is good for every family?
- b. How can parents with children of color come together to discuss issues? It is very difficult to do so within Westport.
- c. How do we get more children's books in Westport (public library and school libraries) that have children of color? These are the books that children are seeing at a critical age when they are learning to read. Sample comments from children of color when they see only white children in stories include: it looks fantastic to have white skin; I wish I had white skin.
- d. How do we help change the messaging for children of color especially in terms of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning? We have been more successful as a society changing the messaging with regard to women and girls although we have more work to do.

We intend to have a further discussion about the above and will do the following as a start:

- a. Invite the Westport Library director to come speak with us.
  - b. Invite the head of curriculum for the Westport schools to come in.
  - c. Speak with the clergy.
  - d. Talk to counselors within the school system and outside of the school system.
  - e. Determine how best to encourage families to connect and to meet around issues that concern children of color within this community.
  - f. Determine ways to garner monetary support for donating books. The National Council of Teachers of English probably has a good bibliography. Judy will check. We did get money to donate books to school libraries a few years ago and did so.
2. Diversity Essay Contest – we need to debrief the contest process and results and findings. However, the committee will meet first.

Marketing Committee:

1. Reading Recommendations: A Tale of two Schools is good to put on our website or FaceBook.
2. Catherine has been attending the 'Celebrate Westport' meetings where all of the non-profit organizations in town come together on a monthly basis.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:01 AM.

The next meeting will be held at 7:30 or 8 AM (depending upon discussion with the town) on Tuesday, June 3, 2014, in Room 201 of Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Bernicestine McLeod  
Secretary