



TEAM Westport Meeting Minutes
March 1, 2016, 8:00 AM
Room 201, Westport Town Hall, Westport, CT

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

Guests: Ramin Ganeshram, David Vita, Jim Marpe, Rev. Alison Patton, and Kelle Ruden

The meeting was called to order at 8:09 AM.

Approval of Minutes

The correct version of our February minutes will be distributed for review and approval at our April meeting. The wrong version was circulated.

New Business

What's Up

1. First Selectman Jim Marpe joined us at the beginning of our meeting and thanked TEAM Westport for our involvement. He will be announcing Westport's new police chief (Foti Koskinas) in the next few minutes in light of Chief Dale Call's retirement.
2. Harold and Bernicestine went to see author/musician James McBride (The Miracle at St. Anna, our latest WestportREADS book) at the Greenwich Library on Sunday, February 28th. He and a combo of musicians presented an excellent arrangement of gospel to accompany another of his works, The Good Lord Bird.
3. Kelle Ruden announced that she will be leaving the Westport Library in June. Harold commended her as having been the "ultimate partner" for TEAM Westport during her time at the Library.

Old Business

Programming

1. Westport READS 2016: The author of Forgotten appeared at the Westport Library on February 9th in the last program in the series of activities offered. This book is about African American soldiers at D-Day who were never highlighted in history.
2. Essay Contest: As a result of recommendations from faculty, administrators and students we have extended the contest for a month with a March 31st deadline for submission instead of February 26. Awards will be presented on Monday, May 16th at the Library. We have a new judge this time who will serve along with two former judges.

Action:

- a. Another press release with the new date is needed, so we'll be in touch with the Library. New posters have already been put up at Staples with the help of two students.
- b. The website needs to be changed, too.
- c. We are in discussions with additional sponsors who have not sponsored before.
3. James Baldwin: We are on target for a "talk back" on March 12th with Herb Boyd, a scholar who teaches at City College, wrote Baldwin's Harlem, and has written books about the Black Panthers. We are scheduled to show the shorter version of the documentary on James Baldwin – *the Price of the Ticket* – (60 minutes or so versus 90 minutes).
4. 'Westport Kids Need More Diverse Books': We discussed the movie "Race" – the story of Jesse Owens.



Together Effectively Achieving Multiculturalism

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The group engaged in a discussion of the argument currently raging in the children's book publishing world about who has the right to write books about children of color and who should judge the authenticity of what is written from an 'of color' perspective. This area is a very important one which currently has a number of unresolved issues with unexplored consequences.

Action: This area has great potential as subject matter for a future public conversation.

5. Youth Engagement: Harold and Bernicestine met with Rabbi Michael Friedman who is actively involved with CONECT (Congregations Organized for a New Connecticut) in Fairfield and New Haven Counties. TEAM Westport and CONECT may have synergy to put something together to involve youth.

Specifically, Brett, Harold, and Bernicestine met at Staples with two students who are interested in establishing a youth component of TEAM Westport. The students expressed a strong interest in wanting to talk to students in other cities and towns. Another student at Staples is currently working on an Honors history project about "racial relations" in Westport and might be a potential member of this group. Students who participate in the essay contest may be interested as well. We talked about possible activities that might engage youth across communities and potential ways to reach students and get them together such as Robotics teams. To move forward, we would need an adult administrator and programming. Skype might be a vehicle to be used to connect with other communities as well as face-to-face.

Action: We should invite James D'Amico (head of Curriculum for the Westport Schools) to a future meeting to discuss overall programming.

6. Events:
 - a. Tarek Osman will be at the Library on April 21st. He is from the UK and explores the conflicts that are going on. His book is Islamism: What It Means for the Middle East and the World.
 - b. Ayad Akbar was at the Greene Space at WNYC in NY yesterday.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 AM.

Our next meeting will be held at 8:00 AM on Tuesday, April 5, 2016 in Room 201 of Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,
Bernicestine McLeod
Secretary