



Cambridge Peace Commission

City of Cambridge, Massachusetts

Cambridge Peace Commission Meeting

Tuesday, July 29, 2008, 6:00-8:30

51 Inman St. – Conference Room B, second floor

Minutes

Attending: Gail Epstein, Martin Federman, Ardeene Goodridge, Thomas Massaro, Nancy Murray, Nancy Seymour, Rachel Wyon, Brian Corr

Guests: Frank Connelly, Luzon Pahl

Regrets: Moacir Barbosa, Linda Brion-Meisels, Betty Burkes, Louise Dunlap, Grove Harris, Ilse Heyman, Mushtaque Mirza, Radhika Rao, Abha Sur,

Absent: Cecilia Duran, Pat O'Brien, Ayanna Parris, Larry Ward

Opening

- Nancy read a poem from a book entitled *Poems from Guantánamo*

Check-in

- Minute-takers – Luzon Pahl and Brian Corr

Upcoming Meetings and Events:

Regular Commission meetings:

- Tuesday, September 23, 2008, 5:45 p.m. at 51 Inman St., Cambridge
- 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

Annual Commission Retreat:

- Sunday, September 21, 2008, 12:00 to 7:00 p.m. at Lesley University, Alumni Hall, Room 1010, 29 Everett 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

June 24th Reception for the New Director

On June 24, the Peace Commission welcomed its new Executive Director, Brian Corr. Tom and Brian both extended warm thank yous to the reception organizers and volunteers. Feedback was generally positive. Some people noted that they wished there had been more diversity among the people who attended the reception. Brian offered this as a goal for the Commission in terms of deliberately seeking ways to reach a broader audience within the

city of Cambridge for all of the Commission's events (e.g., How to make Commission events more accessible? How to attract a more diverse group to the Commission and to events coordinated by the Commission? etc.). The reception did achieve the goal of bringing together people who are interested in and supportive of the Commission and introducing them to Brian.

Hiroshima exhibit at Lesley University, July 1, 2008

This event was the opening reception for "Voices for Peace: The Legacy of Hiroshima & Nagasaki" photo exhibition. The evening began with a small gathering of people at Tom's house before moving to the exhibition space at Lesley University. After gathering at the exhibit and giving guests time to view the photographs of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the audience was welcomed into an auditorium. Brian Corr gave a brief introduction to the event before representatives from the government of Japan and Hiroshima spoke. The keynote speaker and survivor of Hiroshima, Mrs. Natsumi Nagao, gave her testimony of her experience the day the atomic bomb was dropped on her city and the healing she has undergone ever since. The event was sponsored by the Cambridge Peace Commission, Lesley University, the Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation, and the City of Hiroshima, Japan. An article on the reception was printed in Lesley's newspaper, and can be read at <http://www.lesley.edu/lesleytoday/content/20080725/b.html>

The suggestion was made that the Commission could support the *Cities Are Not Targets (CANT)* petition drive that Mayors for Peace is conducting (Cambridge is a member of Mayor's for Peace). More information at:

<http://www.mayorsforpeace.org/english/topic/list/36.htm>

Endorsement of Mass. Peace Action film screening in memory of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and request for a facilitator from the Commission, Thursday, August 7th

All agreed that it seemed like a good idea for the director to cosponsor the event and said they would reach out to other commissioners not present at the meeting to see if anyone is available to help facilitate the event. Brian also said that he would send an email with details of the event to the commissioners asking them to attend.

Friends of Alewife Reservation

Ardeene explained that the *Friends of Alewife Reservation (FAR)* is reaching out to local organization and community groups to try to form connections and partnerships. Many projects the organization is heading are projects concerning conservation of the land on the reservation. *FAR* is looking for an individual from the Commission to serve on their board. Ardeene has agreed to look into and consider serving in this role.

Changes in Commission Membership

- Tom Massaro requested a leave of absence until January 2009, while he serves as a visiting professor at St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia. He also expects that sometime in the summer of 2009, his residence will change from Cambridge to Brighton, so as of September 2009 he will need to resign from the Commission, because he will no longer be a Cambridge resident. He looks forward to being involved the first few months of 2009, and then expects to spend fall semester of 2009 in New York City on a special assignment in the field of communications for the Jesuits, so this makes it

all the more impossible to be an active participant in the work of the Commission beyond September 1, 2009.

- This raised the issue of the need for a new co-chair for the Commission. Ardeene said that she would be willing to serve as co-chair, once Tom has started his sabbatical.
- Nancy Seymour calculated that she has served on the Commission for nine years and that it is nearing time for her to step down.
- Nancy Murray also announced that she has served on the Commission for over nine years and also is nearing time for her to step down as well.
- It was noted that it could be difficult for the Commission to lose so many members at the same time. Commissioners with concerns about their length of service on the Commission said they would have private conversations with Brian to best determine a time frame for them to step down from their positions.
- With the upcoming changes in Commission membership, Brian pointed out that this is the time for the Commission to think about which communities are currently represented on the Commission, which links to various communities will be lost with various resignations, and to which communities the Commission would like to reach out to in order to fill the new vacancies.

El Salvador Sister City Project Update

Rachel Wyon gave an overview of the upcoming elections in El Salvador in March 2009. She noted that this is the first time in many years that the ruling ARENA party may not win the presidential election. US-El Salvador solidarity groups may bring one of the presidential candidates, Mauricio Funes, to the Boston area in the fall.

Peace Commission Retreat, Sunday, September 21

Brian asked the commissioners present what are some of the activities that they hope are included in the retreat agenda. Some of the activities commissioners suggested included:

- Community building activities
 - Ice breakers to help commissioners get to know one another better
- Discussion regarding the direction and goals of the Commission
- Discussion regarding targeted outreach to various communities in the city
- Discussion regarding priorities in the recruiting of new members to the Commission
- Time for the planning of upcoming events
- The creation of committees, sub-committees, etc. to increase the options for participation of non-Commission members
 - Consider new ways to approach organizations in the city—maybe create smaller committees and ask representatives from various orgs to sit on Commission committees as members
- Brainstorming activities to find new forms of outreach, taking into account other media sources, organizations, and community events in which the Commission can participate, especially those not directly coordinated or sponsored by the Commission
- General approaches to increasing visibility

One commissioner suggested that the overall goal of the retreat should be to further deepen the sense of ownership amongst Commission members towards the work they do for the Commission (i.e. increase comfort level → increase involvement of Commission members → greater sense of responsibility → etc.)

The question of whether or not to bring an outside person to help facilitate the retreat was discussed at some length. On one hand, commissioners saw the value in having an outside person help to facilitate and focus the group with an outside perspective and an outside attention to time. In addition, with an outside facilitator, all commissioners can participate fully without one person having to facilitate. On the other hand, commissioners questioned the effectiveness of an outsider in facilitating such a retreat if the individual does not have an intimate understanding of the organization, its culture and norms, its values, and the way it operates as a group.

A number of potential facilitators were suggested, including: Susan Loucks, Meck Groot, and Kristen Handricken. Betty Burkes was also suggested as a good person from whom to get recommendations. The question was also raised as to whether or not the retreat would be a closed meeting. Brian explained that in accordance with the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law it cannot be a closed meeting (see <http://www.middlesexda.com/?cat=33>).

Peace Commission web page

A commissioner asked about the Commission's web page and the possibility of updating it with up-to-date calendar information. The commissioner suggested that it is a great way to increase visibility. Brian noted that he is the person who updates the Commission's web page and that he agreed with the suggestion.

Peace and Restorative Justice Circles

The ad-hoc working group following up on the peace circles that the Peace Commission organized in the winter is continuing to meet. Members of that group have been working with Cambridge Rindge & Latin School and were involved in planning a circle for August, but that has been postponed. CRLS may again hold the circles in the late fall. These and other issues will be discussed at a working group planning meeting in September.

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

Update and Goals

Brian explained that he has met with a smaller working group, including Ardeene, Gail, Mo, Betty, and Linda. They discussed a number of details, including food, the call for nominees (due date August 31), and the question of the number of nominees to whom the Commission will give the award. The working group is inclined towards a smaller number of awardees this year, approximately 10. They felt that a smaller number of awardees will make the award more significant to receive, however, they recognize that a larger number of awardees generally results in great attendance at the award ceremony.

One commissioner asked what the secondary gains to the award are. The Commission listed increasing commission membership as well as the potential for outreach to different constituencies within Cambridge. One commissioner mentioned the existence of an elaborate grid used in previous years to illustrate the different constituencies that each award recipient represented.

Awardees

Another commissioner raised the question of whether the Commission would be granting awards to groups, as opposed to individuals, again this year. After a brief discussion, the consensus was that the award would be granted to some groups and some individuals this

year. Brian distributed a list of the nominations to date. He also suggested that commissioners email and/or mail a letter explaining the award and the nomination process to all of their friends. Brian explained that he is not planning to select the award winners on his own but rather in collaboration with the working group. The Commission agreed that the working group would present their suggestions to the Commission and then the full Commission would make the final decision to give the award to those individuals/groups. After much discussion, the Commissioners present agreed that the Commission should grant the award to between 8 and 10 individuals or groups.

Location

Brian has checked on a number of places, and while many are unavailable, there are some promising possibilities. Suggestions included Cambridge College (unavailable), YMCA (unavailable), Episcopal Divinity School (unavailable on Sundays from now on), CRLS cafeteria (one Commissioner well acquainted with the cafeteria strongly discouraged this selection for the reason of poor acoustics), Cambridge Multicultural Arts Center (expensive), St. Paul's Church Christian Life Center, youth centers around Cambridge, Walker Memorial at MIT, Google office space, EDS, East End House, the New School of Music, David Rockefeller Center at Harvard, etc. One Commissioner suggested that if the Commission finds a suitable venue for the event, then the venue should be booked now for next year (2009).

Program

Some programming options discussed included a keynote speaker, a performance by a local student chorus, and a musical performance by a better-known performer. Possible keynote speakers discussed included Dick Gregory, James Carroll, Jimmy Tingle, David Able (writer for the Globe; Frank knows him), Robert J. Lifton, Bob Moses (Betty's suggestion), Howard Zinn, Ed Rodman, Robin Harris (principal at Fletcher Maynard Academy). It was agreed that the speaker should be given 15 minutes with the expectation that the speaker would take no more than 20 minutes. The theme to which the speaker should speak was suggested to be "the importance of peacemaking at all levels of the community in Cambridge." Possible performers suggested included Nneena Freelon (daughter of Queen [Mother Frances Pierce](#)), and Carlos (a street performer Ardeene knows).

Miscellaneous details

Set-up on the day of the event will probably be from 12 to 4 pm, with the event running from 4 to 7 pm. The working group hopes for an audience of approximately 200-300 guests. There will be a suggested donation collected at the door.

Tasks:

- Brian will call Ed Rodman (1st choice keynote speaker), Bob Moses (2nd choice, Betty knows him), and then Robin Harris (3rd choice).
- Ardeene will call Nneena Freelon
- ***Food donations*** (followed by the name of the Commissioner who volunteered to call the business):
 - o Trader Joes (Rachael) for beverages and desserts
 - o Andala Café
 - o Frank offered to contact his 20-30 sources for food in Cambridge
 - o Middle East (Brian)
 - o East Coast Grill (Frank)

- Harvest Co-op (Nancy)
- Whole Foods (Rachael)
- Veggie Planet (?)
- B-Side Lounge (Nancy)
- Ardeene (Carberry's)
- 1369 (Frank)
- Chang Sho (Gail)
- Christopher's (Frank)
- Shaw's (Ardeene)

The next regular meeting will be Tuesday, September 23 at 5:45 at 51 Inman St.

The retreat meeting will be Sunday, September 21 from 12:00 to 6:30 at Lesley University, Alumni Hall, Room 1010, 29 Everett St., Cambridge