



Cambridge Peace Commission

City of Cambridge, Massachusetts

Cambridge Peace Commission Meeting

Wednesday, May 27, 2008, 6:00-8:30

51 Inman St., – Conference Room B, second floor

Minutes

Attending: Linda Brion-Meisels, Betty Burkes, Brian Corr, Louise Dunlap, Gail Epstein, Martin Federman, Ardeene Goodridge, Grove Harris, Ilse Heyman, Tom Massaro, Mushtaque Mirza, Pat O'Brien, Nancy Seymour, Rachel Wyon

Absent: Abha Sur, Nadia Chamblin-Foster, Nancy Murray, Mo Barbosa, Cecilia Duran, Ayanna Parris, Radhika Rao, Larry Ward [Nancy and Mo were unable to make the meeting because of the closure of the MBTA Red Line due to a fire]

Opening

Gail Epstein from The Secret Teachings of Plants

Check-in

Minute-taker – Louise Dunlap

Upcoming Meetings:

- Monday - June 23, 2008
- Tuesday - July 29, 2008

Both of these meetings will begin at 5:45 p.m. at 51 Inman St., Cambridge

Updates/Reports

The Lemon Tree event: 250 people; lifting up Hilda Silverstein; amazing; Sandy Tolan is “so many people in one”; important to hold his inclusiveness/sensitivity as we plan next year’s Holocaust Commemoration.

Planetwalker event: wonderful speaker, talks with body and hands; range of audience involvement impressive—children older people, different people from those we see at other Peace Commission events; good idea to partner more often with Cambridge forum to reach out more widely.

Cambridge Holocaust Commemoration: again holding up Hilda; it worked to do it with help of city, especially Vali Buland. Meeting tomorrow to review & plan for next year. We should decide over time if we want to hold on to this event or let it go to the city. Fewer people there, perhaps because time is passing and so many from that era are gone.

Mothers Walk for Peace: Many had intended to go for years and this was the first time; a fabulous and touching day; many from Cambridge Friends Meeting; several thousand people there.

Immigration and the Border: Rachel spoke about Lois Martin's work out of Tucson. Because of the wall, more people are dying of exposure in the desert. Situation worsening; deaths not counted; denial. Need humane borders. Rachel will send email about what we can do.

Peace Circles: alive though quiet. Plan after circles ended was to continue one circle with people from any of the previous circles. Also to discuss how to expand in Cambridge. June gathering is changing date. Working group meets June 2.

Upcoming Events

Hiroshima exhibit at Lesley College: Photos of Hiroshima & Nagasaki June 23-July 18 in University Hall in old Sears Building. Sponsored by government of Japan to encourage anti-nuclear activity. Opening is Wednesday, July 1 at 5:30 in same place—with one survivor speaking and other guests from Japan. Louise will give Peace Pagoda address to Linda.

International Peace Day, Sept 21. Marty's research on the spot showed that this holiday was proclaimed by the UN fairly recently. So far, as is known it doesn't have a meaningful peace event connected with it—but Betty is interested in using it as a good date to work on a peace project across the schools in Cambridge. The date in September is good for that and we could use it to make peace more dramatic and present in the lives of children. Enlisting art teachers? PeaceGames? Making cranes with kids at each school? After school programs/youth centers? Link with other groups if any are already doing something? Librarians usually helpful. Working group of Rachel, Betty, and Nancy Seymour will investigate and see if it would fit into the curriculum or if it would be asking teachers to do additional work. Could be small. If we're too late for this year, we could look to Sept 2009.

Peace Commission Retreat—Suggest all Commissioners protect Sept 21, 12-6:30 pm. The idea would be to have the retreat sooner rather than later to get to know Brian, and he us, better. Before or during this retreat we need to revisit the issue of commission membership. (As proposed by Gail, a task force will discuss need for and process around new members: Brian, Gail, Marty, and Ilse, with Tom helping as he can.)

Alewife Park Serve/Friends of Alewife Reservation would like a closer relationship with the Peace Commission. None of us is free to attend a meeting June 9, but Ardeene has a possible interest in serving on their Board. Betty, Brian, Marty, Nancy, & Ardeene are interested in visiting their Ecology camp. We will revisit the issue of longer-term connections in the fall after these contacts.

Planning for 2008 Peace and Justice Awards

Sunday, November 16, 4-7 pm

- How to get many communities deeply involved? Cross fertilizing? More interaction with new people built in to program than in previous years?
- How many awards to give this year: most people wanted fewer than 15, many urged we keep it to single-digit, but there was not full consensus. We will revisit the issue of numbers. Could we give other awards throughout the year? Could we draw in more past awardees by honoring them in some way? Having them present the awards?
- Where to have it: Cambridge College? Dance performance space at Old Cambridge Baptist Church?

- Program possibilities: how to balance content so that people are drawn to the event? How to balance content and time for interaction? One idea was working out dance performance as a centerpiece with Jose Mateo (who is interested in working with the Peace Commission.) Another suggestion was facilitation with interactive/improv drama techniques of Augusto Boal.
- Brian is sending requests for nominees to schools; they will then go out to wider list. Then we will filter and create balance through matrix of categories.
- A program working group (Brian, Ardeene, Pat, Betty, & Nancy, though not in July) will meet in the next week or two to look at these and other issues.

June 24 Reception Planning 4:30-6:30 pm

Logistics: Simple food. Suggestion box and forms.

Program: 1-2 people from the Commission will say something; Also someone from the Personnel Department of the City. Brian will speak briefly. This could be another good time to invite and acknowledge former awardees. Need to contact other city departments.

Director's Update

Brian has become very busy—he now receives 30 to 50 emails per day and many calls and requests for information. Lots of focus at this point on internal business in the city, e.g. administrative work, meeting and meeting with city staff. Brian is also meeting with people from all parts of Cambridge, as many as possible. What are they hoping for? How can we collaborate? He is being well received and lots of people have ideas.

US Conference of Mayors meeting in Miami June 20-24: Brian called our attention to the upcoming US Mayors Conference in Miami where Mayors for Peace & others are promoting two peace resolutions. We will seek to gain our own mayor's support. The sense of the meeting is that the Commission supports both the resolution opposing military intervention in Iran and the one to eliminate all nuclear weapons by the year 2020.

For future meetings

Items on AFSC China delegation and training for parents were postponed. We will also discuss criteria for endorsing things on our next agenda. In addition, we need to keep the idea of a *Cambridge Chronicle* column more actively on the table. Checking in suggested with a Mennonite congregation that meets Sunday evenings at Harvard Epworth church, an outspoken religious group dedicated to peace.

Next two meetings are Monday, June 23 & Tuesday, July 29 at 5:45 at 51 Inman St.