

Nineteenth Amendment Centennial Committee
January 7, 2020 Community Presentation & Meeting
5:30-7:00 PM, Citywide Senior Center, 806 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, MA 02139

Members present: Marian Darlington-Hope, Kimberly Sansoucy, Kim Bernstein, Sofia Bernstein, Sarah Burks, Gail Willett, Vanessa Till Hooper, Tanya Ford-Crump

Staff present: Lillian Hsu, Hilary Zelson, Jennifer Mathews

- Presentation on project background and next steps:
 - City staff and Committee members Marian Darlington-Hope, Kim Bernstein & Sofia Bernstein presented
 - Full presentation available here:
<https://www.cambridgema.gov/Departments/citymanagersoffice/100years/~medi a/70A9AC2E65CF481E9FED5F650ABD814B.ashx>
- Public Comment:
 - Meeting opened to public comment. Jennifer Mathews explained that all public comment would be provided to the artists to inform their work as they develop proposals.
 - Committee members and City staff answered process questions where possible.
 - Summary of feedback for artists:
 - Interest in role that race played in determining whether states ratified the amendment (high school student doing thesis on women's suffrage)
 - Interest in the messiness of democracy and the extent of disagreements among minority communities during the suffrage movement
 - To what extent do we want this story to be about Cambridge vs. the broader topic?
 - Kim Bernstein (member of centennial committee, mother of Sofia Bernstein): her original idea was women and Cambridge; after lots of discussions by the committee and hearing from the historians, concluded that Cambridge is one of criteria but not top three.
 - Is Schlesinger Library going to be available to artists? (Yes)
 - Resident: glad the Common is the site – right now there is lots of old history but not about women; would like something artistic, different, eye-catching, unusual but also informative; Cambridge role in the movement.
 - Artists need to read a lot of the stories; would like programming after it's installed – once a month or yearly public gathering at the site; tours; indoor/outdoor programming for all seasons.
 - Sarah Burks (Historical Commission): The Historical Commission spoke positively about the potential for art that inspires and engages the public

while being respectful of the Common; she has been researching organizations – will make it available to the artists.

- Marian Darlington-Hope: programming has been part of the Committee conversation.
- The 19th Amendment events committee and the Schlesinger have been working with Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School students (#hervote) – interviews with women <https://registerforum.org/10862/news/hervote-club-mobilizes-women-for-2020-elections/>
- Hopes that all ages and classes throughout the year and every year can be part of a celebration (schools, senior housing, etc.)
- Cambridge Common is equidistant between the Schlesinger and Harvard Law School – good choice.
- Suffrage was alright until women of color came along and then for some it was not alright – we need to make sure women of color are not marginalized; move women away from the margins and bring to the center
- Footage from the “Kitchen Table” event at the library <https://cambridgehistory.org/recap/9-25-19-claiming-our-seats-a-kitchen-table-dialogue-on-womens-voting-rights/>
- Outreach important for the community meetings; online public feedback form after proposals are displayed; proposals on city website; get the atypical audience
- Project is great opportunity for education, where people can see themselves (educational concept of “mirrors and windows”); also an opportunity to question the idea of the “centennial” – for some it was is not 100 years, but only 55 years since Voting Rights Act. Today there are still some who are disenfranchised, e.g. indigenous women.
- Committee and staff thanked public for thoughtful comments and feedback.
- Artist-team Mags Harries & Lajos Heder of Cambridge were present; spoke about helpfulness of public feedback, the public art process, and thoughts on this project.
- After approx. 1 hour, public comment closed.
- Regular Committee Business:
 - Discussed potential membership for Selection Committee. Want representation from diverse backgrounds covering arts, history, women’s groups, neighborhood and community groups, and youth/students. Jennifer Mathews will email draft membership list and begin reaching out to identified stakeholder groups regarding representative(s) for Committee.
 - Committee will meet next on Tuesday, February 4, 2020
 - Regular meeting to complete planning for February 12, 2020 community event and discuss Selection Committee process further.