



Cambridge Peace Commission

City of Cambridge, Massachusetts

Cambridge Peace Commission Meeting

Monday, June 23, 2008, 6:00-8:30

51 Inman St. – Conference Room B, second floor

Minutes

Attending: Moacir Barbosa, Linda Brion-Meisels, Brian Corr, Cecilia Duran, Gail Epstein, Martin Federman, Grove Harris, Ilse Heyman, Thomas Massaro, Mushtaque Mirza, Nancy Murray, Nancy Seymour, Rachel Wyon

Regrets: Betty Burkes, Louise Dunlap, Radhika Rao

Absent: Pat O'Brien, Ayanna Parris, Abha Sur, Larry Ward

On Leave: Ardeene Goodridge

Opening

- Tom read a Buddhist meditation on Peace
- Brian read a Quaker piece on consensus and decision-making

Check-in

- Minute-takers –Marty Federman and Gail Epstein

Upcoming Meeting:

- Tuesday - July 29, 2008, 5:45 p.m. at 51 Inman St., Cambridge

Updates/Reports

Peace Circles and next steps:

The ad-hoc working group that organized the citywide peace circles this winter has continued meeting, and includes individual from the Cambridge public Schools, the peace Commission, and from the broader Cambridge community. They will continue their work to continue creating circles in the city, including support of an initiative being pursued in the schools, including a two-hour circle at CRLS on August 25. There will be a preparatory meeting for keepers for those circles in July.

There is a working group meeting (open to new people) at the Peace Commission office on Wed., September 10 from 3:00-5:00 p.m. Information will follow.

Status of Cambridge Chronicle column:

Brian reported that the space for a column in the *Cambridge Chronicle* is still available, with columns being 700 words or less, and that it could start running monthly. Columns

need to be submitted during the first week of the month with a proposed headline. The commission decided that Brian should let the paper know that the commission would like to continue with Peace Matters as has been done for the past years – i.e., being able to submit opinion pieces under that heading as issues, ideas, and opportunities arise, but without committing to a regular monthly column. It was agreed that Commissioners and Brian would write columns both out of individual initiative and as the result of decisions made at Peace Commission meetings. Before submitting columns to the Chronicle, Commissioners should get input from other Commissioners and run them past Brian.

Working group on membership of the Peace Commission:

Brian put together a draft of a “Commissioner’s Handbook” and has spoken to some Commissioners to confirm who is and is not interested in continuing as members of the Commission as of this summer. This is a first draft and Brian is asking for reactions, suggestions, feedback, and/or input. There was a general sense that the commission should be clear about its needs and what would best serve the mission in whatever decisions are made. Caution was urged about making changes rapidly.

Brian is soliciting suggestions about how people can be involved in the Peace Commission even if they are not actually Commissioners.

The suggestion was made that the work of the Commission is advanced if individual commissioners are representative of different constituencies in Cambridge. It was also suggested that members who “represent” certain communities in Cambridge step down, it is important to find people from those same communities to replace them.

Welcoming Massachusetts:

The event has been rescheduled for Tuesday, July 8, 11:00 a.m., State House steps (Park Street T).

Upcoming Events and Ideas for Future Meetings

Hiroshima exhibit at Lesley College:

Photos of Hiroshima & Nagasaki: June 23-July 18, Second Floor Atrium, University Hall (old Sears Building), Lesley University, 1815 Mass. Ave. (sponsored by the government of Japan to encourage the abolition of nuclear weapons). 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.

Agenda ideas for Peace Commission retreat:

Sunday, Sept. 21 – Noon to 6:30 p.m.
(Place to be determined)

The retreat was described by commissioners as an important time for Commissioners to (re)connect – members are asked to think about what should be on the agenda for that day. Some suggestions included priorities for the Commission, areas people are interested in working on, and getting to know each other as part of creating deeper connection and community and working together more effectively.

June 24 Reception Planning

Gail has put together list of people volunteering to help before, during and after the reception welcoming Brian and the new director of the Peace Commission: Gail, Nancy S.

and Mushtaque on set-up at 3:45; Tom, Linda and Nancy S. on clean-up; Gail on bringing supplies and give-a-ways for guests; Tom will introducing Brian (around 5:30).

Training for parents on how to navigate public schools

Cecilia discussed the idea of doing the training – and the effect it is would have on the parents involved and how teachers can work most effectively with their students

Rachel, Mo and Nancy S. will be part of a working group to help Ayanna and Cecilia organize a fall event.

Possible collaboration with Cambridge UJP on Winter Soldier

Nancy S. let the Commission know that UJP is interested in doing something with the Winter Soldier tapes and has asked whether the Commission can be involved in this project.

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

The issues to be addressed were:

- Number of awardees
- Review draft timeline
- Program questions and ideas
- Assigning tasks/next steps

The immediate question for the commission was whether its is committed to having this event this year (Sunday, November 16, approx. 4-7pm) and, if so, are people willing to serve on a working group to advise Brian on the practical issues and logistics (e.g., restaurant solicitations to be dealt with this summer, realistic size and scope of event, selecting recipients).

The decision was made to have the event as planned due to its importance in the community and as something people look to the commission to do (especially as the commission did not hold it in Fall 2007). A working group to advise Brian was formed including: Mo, Linda, Marty, Gail, and Betty. Gail suggested that Brian find the lists of candidates considered in 2006 who did not get awards as a starting point.

Presentation from Mass. Coalition to Save Darfur

Jeff Govenda (Membership Coordinator) and Jirair Ratevosian (Director of Event Planning) of the Massachusetts Coalition to Save Darfur made a presentation, followed by a discussion with the commission. The mission of the coalition is to stimulate, support, and facilitate the efforts of faith-based and secular organizations and individuals to educate, focus attention, and inspire action to help the people of Darfur. In service of that work, it organizes a wide variety of events, activities, and lobbying work. It has also launched an initiative to build support for “genocide-free investing” which asks investors to take a broader look how they investing their funds, rather than just about “divestment.”

After introducing the coalition and its work, discussion focused on the situation on the ground in Sudan now, and exploring ideas for collaboration between the Commission and the Coalition. A number of members of the commission agreed to join the coalition’s mailing list and Brian will keep the commission informed about activities and opportunities for working together.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, July 29 at 5:45 at 51 Inman St.
