

Hollins Working Group on Slavery and Its Contemporary Legacies

Minutes for Meeting Sept. 10, 2019 (amended 9/11/19)

Present: Idella Glenn, Rebecca Rosen, Chris Florio, Maryke Barber, Beth Harris, Karen Callaway, Bill Krause, Jeri Suarez, Jon Bohland, Courtney Chenette, Ashleigh Breske, Amy Dixon, Jenine Culligan.

Action Items:

- Rebecca is writing to President Gray re: Hollins commitment to/funding for the Green Ridge Cemetery Project.
- Courtney is looking into legal issues related to same.
- Idella is contacting Ebenezer Baptist Church about their involvement with the Cemetery.
- Maryke and Courtney will work on updating the apology text, and furthering the conversation with President & Board.
- Jenine, Ashleigh and Beth will discuss a potential exhibit.
- Rebecca will contact Bolden descendants to ask permission to exhibit film (see film clip)
- Maryke, Ashleigh, Jenine and Beth will help Idella to prepare for "Changing the Narrative" on Oct. 15.
- Jeri will reach out to students who might be interested in joining the group; everyone is encouraged to do this (as well as encouraging interested staff and faculty).

Green Ridge Cemetery Project: Bill Krause reported on work he did over the Summer. The following is adapted from his email to the group:

Brittney Flowers and Bill met with Phil North, Chair of the Roanoke County Board of Supervisors and representative of the Hollins district, Dan O'Donnell, County Administrator, and Tom Klatka, of the Virginia State Historical Resources Department. They were extremely supportive of the project. As a result of the meeting, Bailey Howard-Debois, of the county planning department, was appointed to help us with the project going forward.... Idella and Bill also met with Minister Vicki Carter, of First Baptist Church of Hollins. Nearby businesses have also been approached and have given positive responses.

The County has prepared a schematic of the site with suggestions for layout and landscaping. Suggestions include added greenery (appropriate to a local 19th century cemetery) and benches toward the rear of the site, as well as a marker. Brittney has identified 20-25 names of people buried in the cemetery.

Legal issues to be resolved include a commitment to ongoing maintenance (Hollins University, First Baptist Church of Hollins, and Ebenezer Baptist Church, hopefully) ; land ownership (currently no one, according to the county but title searching needs to be done to confirm this) ; what liability would be incurred by taking responsibility for maintenance (and by whom); whether a 501 (c) (3) should be formed specifically to receive tax deductible gifts and take responsibility for the initial restoration and ongoing maintenance, or whether the project should fall under the 501 (c) (3) status of the Hollins University or one of the churches.

Jon Bohland suggested adding ground penetrating radar to budget projections, for future research.

Board Presentation: Our presentation to the Board of Trustees in May was well-received, however, there has not been a formal response and our request for funding for a researcher position has so far been unsuccessful. We will continue to try.

Apology: After introducing the idea of an apology to the board in May, we would now like to ask President Gray and the Board to formally endorse the apology this year. Courtney plans to encourage discussion of the issue this fall on campus; Maryke will update the final section of the apology draft, in which we suggest what actions the university will take going forward, to match the current projects and priorities of our group. Bill suggested the cemetery project as one potential action, which led to a discussion of whether the apology could happen at an event connected to the cemetery.

Short Term Course: Jon announced that the short term course will happen again this year, and suggestions for month-long projects for the students are welcome.

Exhibit: Jenine, Ashleigh and Beth will be looking at possibilities of an exhibit. Space in the Museum might be available in between already booked shows, or alternate space in the VAC lobby/hallways; space in the library (2nd floor alcoves) is also a possibility.

Film Clip – Amy Gerber-Stroh might have located a film clip of Clem Bolden; Rebecca will initiate contact with Bolden descendants to ask for permission to show the clip. Maryke suggested discussing specific permissions related to archiving, screening, and exhibit (also online).

Website – Maryke encouraged everyone to turn in any materials that might be able to go on the website, whether text, photos, presentations, etc. Note: putting materials online is publishing, so we do need permission for any materials under copyright.

App – Jon and Brittney are working on the walking tour app, please contact Jon if you want to help.

“Changing the Narrative” Event – A community dialogue on the legacy of slavery will be held at Hollins on October 15. This event is part of a series funded by a 6-city grant. Idella is working on a 40minute presentation on the work of the group; Maryke, Ashleigh, Jenine and Beth offered to help.

Grant Applications – Rebecca and Idella are working on grant applications to fund a researcher position.

USS Conference, Fall 2019 – Oct. 9-12, Xavier University and the University of Cincinnati co-hosting. Hollins can fund 1 person to attend; if you are interested contact Rebecca Rosen.

Student Contacts & Needs – Rebecca suggested reaching out to student groups to offer the support of our group. The discussion led to inviting more students to join the Working Group, to ensure the inclusion of as many student voices as possible and to ensure the burden of participation is not always borne by the same people. Jeri is reaching out to students who may be interested, including BSA.