

Wooster Square Monument Sub-Committee
Meeting of November 5, 2020 6:00pm via Zoom
Minutes

Sub-Committee members in attendance: Bill Iovanne, Jr. Co-Chair; Laura F. Luzzi, Co-Chair, Rev. Harlon Dalton, Elsie Chapman, Frances Calzetta, Frank Carrano, Paul Criscuolo, Sarah Greenblatt, Frank Gargano, Charlie Murphy, Neil Thomas Proto, Richard Ramadei, Cindy Rosarbo, Rosa Santana

Sub-Committee members absent - Aleta Staton

Full-Committee members in observance: Anna Festa, Adriane Jefferson, Carl Babb, Rheta DeBenedet, Michael Piscitelli, Vin Mauro

The meeting was called to order at 6:02pm.

Motion for acceptance of the minutes for discussion from October 29, 2020 was made by Frank Carrano and seconded by Paul Criscuolo. Bill asked for corrections – Fran Calzetta had some add-on amendments which Bill made and read to the committee. Bill asked for any discussion on the add-ons. There were no discussions and no objections to the motion to approve as amended.

Bill discussed the possible funding by the Mellon Foundation. They have funds set aside for monuments. Frank Carrano did some research and explained the process. First, we need to submit a brief overview of what we want to do and if accepted, we will be asked to submit a proposal. He submitted the overview on our behalf. It will take several weeks to hear back. He said that we will need to make this proposal with an accredited 501(c)(3) and suggested either the City of New Haven or the Wooster Square Conservancy. Charlie mentioned that Bonnie Rosenberg, President of the Conservancy responded affirmatively. This would be a wonderful partnership with that group. Bill asked if there would be any advantage to asking the City and it was said that a strong letter of support from the City would help us with the Mellon Foundation.

Laura as well as others thanked Frank Carrano for spearheading this project.

Sarah said that a collaborative effort between the committee, the city and the community is important if we are asked to submit a proposal

The proposal will have to include validation and costs, etc.

Adriane asked if we had any alternative ideas for funding and Bill was going to ask her and Mike Piscitelli for some suggestions. Adriane said she would be happy to

identify other grants. We would also do private fundraising as well. We shouldn't limit the funding to one source but submit multiple applications.

Vin Mauro knows a grant writer and he will see what they can do for us as there are certain ways to write a grant.

Now that we have the concept for ground level, a discussion was had on what, if anything, we want to put on top of the base. Do we want the immigrant family experience?

Harlon would prefer nothing but rather we tell the historic story, a sort of telling place.

He spoke about the Vietnam wall and the sculptures that were put up after the wall. They were life-sized and people gather around the wall and not the sculptures. He felt the memorial itself is the story.

Paul respectfully disagreed with Harlon. Nothing leaves a void. It lets people think that Columbus is going back. Leaving it vacant is the wrong choice.

Harlon said that if we don't put something we need to say why.

Charlie is in favor the immigrant family and feels something abstract is cold. Something human that brings together the story, the people, the parents, the kids. It brings the whole story together.

Bill said that in order to move forward we need to present to the full committee for approval. We have one part already established. Part 2 is what goes on top and needs to be presented to the full committee. It will also need to go to the Board of Alders and the Parks Department.

What goes on top should be an embellishment and not the focus of this public work of art.

Elsie disagrees with Charlie. What ever goes on top can take away from the bottom. It should be symbolic and should reflect the diverse community. She said that Italy has it's own symbols. A star, a gear wheel and olive branch and an oak branch and



explained the symbolism of each one.

Sarah agrees with the symbol, linked to the Italian community

Rich suggested the Unisphere which is a symbol of diversity and unity.

Frank Carrano is torn. In one respect he feels that the panels and images are enough and what else would we need? What we are proposing to do is spend some time with photographic representation. Do we need an image on top that will grab their attention and will bring them to ground level to the story of what we want to tell. Leaving it empty can pay homage to what was there, it makes a statement.

Harlon said that being able to tell the story of when it was – any human experience is universal.

Bill feels that not putting anything up will bring a lot of criticism and debate as to whether Columbus is going back.

Fran said sketches of our concept would be helpful and the immigrant family should be at ground level.

Frank Carrano agrees that we need to have someone sketch out the concept and how it would look with nothing or something. We need to consider that. Maybe some kind of water feature, cascading over the pedestal as an alternative.

Elsie said the idea of a sketch would be good. We should put it out to artists for a rendering - an architectural rendering.

Harlon suggesting a contest for students.

Sarah agreed that water is a source of life.

Adriane wouldn't recommend sketches stating that when the time comes we need to publish a Call to Artists; Harlon said we are just trying to visualize it at this point.

Charlie said that the water idea is great but not practical.

Rich agreed that there are a lot of problems with water. He said we need to get this settled and then present it to architects.

Laura said she too has been going back and forth but said people are going to relate to a family. The water is not practical and mentioned several issues with the water fountain at the Hamden Town Hall.

Frank Carrano thinks that we need something at eye level. With the new technology and new techniques and feels that people who are still missing the Columbus statue would want something up there.

Harlon suggested something on all 4 sides of the pedestal and perhaps lighting it up in the colors of the Italian flag.

Bill did a roll call and asked who of the sub-committee wanted something on top. There were 8 for something on top and 2 no. Harlon Dalton and Rich Ramadei voted no.

It was said that scale is an issue and it should not distract from what is at ground level

The next meeting will be a full committee meeting on November 19th. We should try to get some sketches in the next couple of weeks

Adriane and Mike will get the approval process to us before the next meeting and Mike said that he has sat on many committees and said we have done a remarkable job!

Bill spoke with Dave Bilowski who is also impressed with our idea and doesn't think we will have any problems.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25pm

Respectfully submitted,
Cindy Rosarbo
President, Saint Andrew Ladies Society