

Committee on Community Diversity  
Meeting Minutes

May 4, 2010

Administrative Conference Room  
Municipal Government Center

1. **Call to Order**

Committee Members Present: Vice-Chairman Larry Hamilton, Fred Enderle, Judy Terry, Gordon Wise, Helen Cuff, Barbara Miller, Debra Osborne and Richard Ghere.

Not Present and Excused: Terry Wright

Committee Vice-Chairman Larry Hamilton called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

2. **Approval of the Minutes** from the April 6, 2010 meeting. There were no corrections or additions. Ms. Cuff made a motion that the minutes be approved as read which Mr. Wise seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

3. **New Business**

- a. Update on the William McCulloch Statue Committee

Mr. Hamilton reported that progress continues with voting for the McCulloch Statue to be located in Statutory Hall. There is no age limit and it is open to all Ohio residents. Mr. Hamilton encourages everyone to cast their vote for Mr. McCulloch as a lifelong Ohio resident who championed for the rights of all people.

Reviewed from the previous meeting the idea of signage in front of the residence where Mr. McCulloch had lived. He did not own the property which is across from St. Paul's Church. Signage could include something indicating that this was the former residence of Mr. McCullough, Champion of Civil Rights. Mr. Wise knows the current owner of the residence, a colleague Dr. Inder Khera, a professor of Wright State and could be approached regarding the idea. Discussed other locations for signage such as Giles Park. There are already many signs in the same area with recognition of Brandon Saine, Mills Brothers, and Don Gentile. Ms. Terry stated that the Don Gentile sign is being refurbished and will be reposted.

The Committee then went on to discuss signage for Rossville. Mr. Hamilton asked if it was beyond our oversight. Mr. Enderle suggested that the Committee come up with a concept and then present it to the Commission. The Committee then discussed other aspects that should be considered in the decision making of Rossville signage, such as: property lines, township role, Ms. Gilmore's role, legal impact, if any, regarding right-of-way plans; State and/or regulatory, and approval from City Commission.

Mr. Hamilton explained to the Committee that Ms. Gilmore is the alleged last descendant of the freedmen of John Randolph. She has an oversight role in Rossville relating to the Randolph heritage. She operates the Rossville Museum out of her home. The Museum is open during the season to the public sometime during June through September, but not certain of the schedule but can be toured by appointment. The Randolph Slaves were freed according to the will provisions of John Randolph of Virginia. His will provided for several acres of land to be purchased. Land in Mercer County, Ohio was purchased for the freedmen to settle on. Taking boats on the Miami-Erie Canal, they reached Mercer County, only to be turned back. Returning to the Canal, they eventually stopped in Piqua where people were more friendly and receptive. They camped out in north Piqua, known as Rossville with many remaining there while others settled in Shelby County and parts of Miami County including Troy and West Milton.

The Committee also discussed options of a memorial, naming/renaming a street or signage reflecting the site of Rossville. Question was raised concerning the deed to Jackson cemetery, Township or Randolph Trust. Not sure who owns it. Ms. Gilmore is caregiver. Discussed ownership documentation and believed that there are people working on it – descendants of Randolph freedmen. It would be good to have Committee and City work together on the signage. Mr. Hamilton suggested that the Diversity Committee could work with other persons interested in signage for Rossville. Mr. Enderle stated that signage could go on city property with the design and modeling being done by others. Ms. Terry asked if brown historical signs are only permitted as part of Historical Society. Mr. Hamilton commented that he would like it to be recognized as historical as it is tremendous opportunity as part of our history. Heritage Festival, Park, could all be brought together with Rossville. Eventually a memorial could be placed there. Discussed possible location of signage with simple arrow placed along 25-A. Ms. Terry asked if the City of Piqua wants to be directed into area or would create issue for people. Mr. Enderle said that this would be an intergovernmental cooperation with sign commemorating Rossville former slaves and would be okay but anything else would be more complex. Mr. Wise reminded group that this is part of our history with the Randolph freed slaves and purchase of land and signage needs to be designated with that information. The freedmen also established a church and school in the Rossville area. The Committee agreed that the following action items need to be completed:

- 1) Review map to determine city limits
- 2) Ensure historically correct, not conflicting with Ohio Historical Society
- 3) History of Piqua area
  - a. Signage on 25-A
  - b. Explore historical accuracy of signage – with Jim Oda and/or other resources
- 4) Develop signage

The Committee decided in order to accomplish those action items, a trip to the Rossville Museum would be essential. Suggested meeting there June 1<sup>st</sup> but would have to call to determine hours of operation. Mr. Hamilton then suggested meeting at his home to develop ideas for signage. He would also offer three different dates for meeting to accommodate schedules and determine which date the majority could meet. Ms. Terry recommended that the signage mirror the Ohio

Historical signs. Mr. Hamilton said there is already an Ohio Historical sign in the Jackson Cemetery. He suggested that anyone wishing to ride over to the Rossville area were welcome to follow him to see the sign. Several members wished to participate after adjournment.

4. **Other Business**

Mr. Hamilton reminded the Committee of the PROD meeting with Mr. Michael Crutcher portraying Frederick Douglas. "Freedom's Struggles and the Quest for Civil Rights. Doing the Right Thing." He also reviewed the brochure which features pictures of Randolph freedmen, Dr. King and an inset of a picture of Ms. Gilmore.

Next Meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 1, 2010 beginning at 5:00 p.m. with location to be determined.

Mr. Hamilton moved to adjourn the meeting at 6 p.m. and Mr. Wise seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Barbara Miller, Recording Secretary