

8/4 Memorial Committee Minutes

June 23, 2021

3:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Dayton Metro Library

Sandy Gudorf, President, Downtown Dayton Partnership and Committee Co-Chair, made brief welcoming remarks. As part of her comments, she apologized for a subcommittee miscommunication. She also stated that she takes responsibility for the misunderstanding and hopes that we can move forward, working together and focusing on the vision for the memorial and the work ahead of us.

Sandy Hunt, Director of Witness Division, Montgomery County Prosecutor's Office and Committee Co-Chair, also made welcoming remarks and asked committee member to introduce themselves by using one word that starts with the letter of their first names.

Committee members present included:

Dana Graham, ODBA Board Member, Community Manager, Genuine Work; Kevin Gray, Westchester Education Services; Natalie Skilliter, Owner of Corner Kitchen, ODBA President; Austin Smith (on phone) Owner, Ned Peppers; Holly Hornbeak, City of Dayton; Linda Ashworth, Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce; Samantha Elder, Montgomery County Alcohol, Drug, Addiction and Mental Health Services (ADAMHS); Michelle Lovely, The Dayton Foundation; Chris Shaw, Dayton City Commission; Bethany Ramsey, Owner of Puff Apothecary, Oregon District Resident/Business Owner; Rob Jones, Ferncliff Funeral Director, Oregon District Resident; Brian Zamostny, City of Dayton; Lasandra James, Director Miami Valley Community Action Partnership, Victim's mother; Sandra Gudorf, President, Downtown Dayton Partnership; and Sandy Hunt, Montgomery County Persecutor's office.

Torey Hollingsworth, City of Dayton and Dion Greene were not present.

Staff present included: Beth Whelley, Fahlgren Mortine, Facilitator, Elizabeth Mills, DDP and Laura Woeste, DDP

Suggested Committee Ground Rules (full outline attached to email)

Sandy Hunt began the meeting by outlining some suggested Committee Ground Rules for discussion. Input is valued and welcomed, and the purpose is to listen and respect each other. She stated that we all experienced some type of trauma that we need to deal with. It is important to remember this is not a support group, but if you need additional support, please reach out to myself or Samantha Elder from ADAMHS. We will make sure that you get the assistance you need.

Sandy Hunt suggested that it is important to provide a meeting schedule. Once dates are agreed upon as a group, dates will be communicated in advance and timelines will be given. Bethany Ramsey requested that public survey results are shared from the three groups before moving forward with timelines and other subcommittee work.

Sandy Hunt suggested that the Committee meet monthly for the next six months. Committee agreed. DDP will send out several meeting options with virtual options.

Committee agreed there should be a chair for each subcommittee and agrees that co-chairs will select/appoint subcommittee leads. DDP will send agendas and reminders. Specific timelines will be determined later. It is important to ensure the Steering Committee's work reflect the desires of the community. Sandy Hunt added that the co-chairs will make themselves available for any questions or concerns throughout this process. She added that it is important that we respect everyone's privacy as well. We will also specifically define decisions the group will make and how they will be made.

Sandy Hunt outlined suggested Committee Ground Rules and they are as follows:

Suggested Committee Ground Rules:

1. Recognize that our committee's diversity is a strength and each person's input is equally valued.
2. Make a commitment to attend all scheduled meetings and be an active participant. *If you cannot attend a meeting notify one of the chairpersons in advance.*
3. Respect each committee member and allow everyone a chance to be heard.
4. Information discussed during meetings will be kept confidential until it is made public.
5. Names of committee members will not be shared without permission from that member.
6. All media inquiries will be directed to the chairpersons.
7. Agree to disagree; discourse is healthy, and not every decision will be unanimous.
8. Once a consensus has been reached, support group decisions and actions.

Sandy Hunt asked if there are other ground rules. Dana Graham asked what decisions or expectations will the committee be part of and what they will be tasked with deciding? Sandy Hunt responded that everyone will have the opportunity to give input. After some discussion, Sandy Hunt reported that the guidelines will be sent out to the committee for comment.

Sandy Hunt then introduced Beth Whelley, Fahlgren Mortine, Facilitator to lead the committee in a discussion.

Hopes and Concerns Facilitated Discussion

Beth Whelley introduced an exercise for individual reflection and sharing. She asked what our hopes and concerns were for the memorial and our work moving forward. She asked the group to write them on the cards provided. Beth Whelley spoke on the phone with Austin to get his concern and hope. Beth Whelley collected hopes and concerns from all meeting attendees.

Beth Whelley then asked that, given what you've written, make a pledge to yourself and fellow participants, how you will orient yourself and address yourself to those thoughts. This pledge will not be collected or shared with the other committee members. Beth Whelley then shared concerns and hopes after shuffling cards. Below are all of the concerns and hopes shared by all committee members.

Concerns: Conflict, disagreement, continuance of pain, all voices have a chance to be heard, emotion, pleasing everyone is impossible, community acceptance, emotional, political and other distractions of goal, with passage of time, memorial will be forgotten and not kept up. Disappointment from the Greater Dayton Region, diversity of writer's home, negative, perpetuation of fear, find joy and peace of a group that we accomplished, lack of transparency, separate meetings, lack of community healing, accountability of those who have a voice to the community, lack of trust, healing and sensitively, lack of accountability of those leading this project, will my emotions stay intact.

Hopes: Meaningful, healing, people feeling left out, for a meaningful process that creates significance, healing and place of comfort, open and need to move forward stronger, community openness and healing that this process is the memorial and not necessarily an object, my hope is to have a voice input in the memorial, peace for the community, something special for those who were impacted by the tragedy, strength, a place to remember, this process will focus on the task at hand and trauma, peace and unity, finding peace, resolution, healing, remembrance, unity, create something meaningful that creates healing.

It was requested that all concerns and hopes be included in the minutes. They are listed below.

Concerns

People Feeling Left Out

Will my emotions stay intact?

The starting focus on community healing, cultural impact from tragedy, and the sensitivity needed to navigate those spaces and conversations.
Lack of accountability and transparency from those who are leading this project
Lack of trust
Lack of transparency on past meetings that have occurred. Separate meetings being had that involve planning. A lack of community healing and building with in person discussions. Accountability with community stake holders that have a voice & responsibility to the community
Negative reminder and perpetuation of fear
That this process is reflective of the diversity needed to achieve my “hope.”
Disappointment w/in the Greater Dayton region that the memorial ‘missed the mark!
With passage of time, memorial will be forgotten and not be kept up.
Distractions (emotional, political, etc.) from ultimate goal
Community Acceptance
Pleasing everyone=impossible
Emotion
That all voices have a chance to be heard
Conflict, disagreement
Continuance of pain

HOPES:

We find joy and peace as a group that we accomplish what we set out to do.
Create something meaningful that supports healing
Healing
Remembrance
Unity
Resolution
(finding peace)
this process will focus on the task at hand BUT also focus on the real aspect of trauma
A piece/memorial that unifies the community
A place to remember
Hope, Strength
Something special that makes people remember and honor those who were impacted by the tragedy.
Peace for our community
My hope is to have a voice/input on the memorial (hope)
Provide inspiration for better future—forward looking
Open to be organic and hear what community is feeling & need to move forward stronger. Community healing & openness that this process is the memorial not necessarily an object. Open to be organic and hear what community is feeling & need to move forward stronger
End product place of healing + comfort
Hope: for a meaningful process that creates an everlasting memorial of significance.
Positive, Healing

Beth Whelley then asked for comments and discussion around everyone’s hopes and concerns, reminding the group to be gentle and respectful of each other. Key themes discussed included the need to emphasize healing, transparency, the importance of input into the process, and the need for this committee to talk to each other and facilitate conversations. Several comments were made regarding the impact of the pandemic on the healing process. The committee also stressed the need for a vision for the memorial and the important of healing as well as the need to reach out to diverse groups in our community to make sure everyone is heard.

Beth Whelley then divided the committee into two groups for a fun “get-to-know you” exercise.

Vision for the Memorial

Beth Whelley then led a discussion on the vision for the memorial – what the committee wanted to create. What should be our Vision Statement?

There was a lengthy discussion regard the vision for the memorial. Key themes included the space itself, a process that leads to what the community really wants, hearing from diverse groups, the acknowledgement that we may not be able to please everyone, the need for the memorial to be special, provide comfort and healing, celebration of life and something that is respectful of the loved ones lost, and the creation of something that is truly Dayton. It was emphasized that the collection of data is very important, but not the collection of data, itself, but the importance of hearing what our community wants. The importance of process was also discussed in detail to ensure we hear from the community. It needs to be transparent and have checks and balances.

Beth Whelley thanked everyone for their comments and said the goal of the next meeting will be to develop and finalize the committee’s vision statement.

Sandy Hunt and Sandy Gudorf also thanked everyone for their time. The meeting minutes and notes will be prepared and the focus of the next meeting will be to review preliminary survey results and develop a Vision Statement.

Note: Agendas were distributed, printed copies of the survey and subcommittees were available at the meeting.