

Union Council Minutes Summer 2018

August 6, 2018

State Room, Memorial Union

Present: Brennan Bahr, Yogev Ben-Yitschak, Farhat Bhuiyan (by phone), Mills Botham, George Cutlip, Susan Dibbell, Mark Guthier, Heidi Lang, Fernanda Martinez, Liz Preston, Erin Roberge, Chris Verhaeghe, Argyle Wade

Guests: Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Lori Reesor, Shauna Breneman, Lori DeMeuse, Miguel Guevara, Kayla Huynh, Meredith McGlone, Sherrill and Doug Randall.

Call to Order

Mills Botham called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

Land Acknowledgement

Mills Botham read a statement acknowledging that the land UW-Madison occupies was previously that of the Ho-Chunk Nation and that today UW-Madison respects the inherent sovereignty of the Ho-Chunk Nation, along with the eleven other First Nations of Wisconsin.

Introductions

Council members introduced themselves to the large number of meeting guests.

Approval of July 17 Meeting Minutes

Liz Preston motioned and Mark Guthier seconded approval of the 7/17/18 meeting minutes.

Open Forum

No open forum topics were brought forth.

Report from Naming Subcommittee

Brennan Bahr reported that members of the naming sub-committee, which included the Randalls, met July 30 to discuss possible solutions. Mills Botham read through the sub-committee's proposed resolution which is to be considered an amendment to the 4/25/18 resolution on this same topic. Mark Guthier stated the sub-committee met for nearly two hours and everyone felt they had a chance to bring what they had to the table. The spirit of the resolution was to find a way to honor the perspective of the students while finding a way to honor the professional legacy of Porter Butts and Fredric March.

Yogev Ben-Yitschak inquired about who will produce the signage. Mills responded that the Marketing Department will produce the temporary signage, samples of which will be discussed later in this meeting. Union Council will work on the permanent solution during the academic year.

Chris Verhaeghe inquired whether there is any legal obligation regarding the renaming of the Play Circle since it was named with gift. Mark Guthier responded that the Chancellor's Office and the UW Foundation researched the gift conditions and there are no legal concerns.

Liz Preston asked that a Union representative contact Adan Abu-Hakmeh and Spring Sherrod to invite them into the process and engage them in a positive way.

George Cutlip stated that this resolution embodies the spirit of Porter Butts, but he feels that the process is out of sequence. He would like the permanent signage ready to be installed at the time the rooms are renamed. We run the risk of putting a dark mark on Porter's legacy and great care needs to be taken to ensure that doesn't happen. Fernanda Martinez added that if the timing isn't right it will look like a bad decision.

Updates:

- **Options for Porter Butts Temporary Signage**

Susan Dibbell circulated the text of the current signage for the Porter Butts Gallery and an example of what is proposed for the temporary signage. She also displayed a dated plaque of Porter Butts which will be redone and hung in the Founders' Room where others will be recognized.

- **Options for Fredric March Temporary Signage**

Susan shared a sample of the temporary signage which will be displayed at The Play Circle.

Yogev stated that he would like the signage to reference the reason for renaming the spaces. Discussion took place and it was determined that this is very complex issue and we need to be thoughtful about the information provided and how it is presented. Mills Botham asked that drafts of the temporary signage be sent to Union Council for feedback.

New Business

Mills Botham presented the following documents used in the naming decision process to be formally accepted as part of the minutes.

- **Acceptance of Open Forum Transcripts**

Liz Preston made a motion to accept the 7/11/18 and 7/12/18 Open Forum transcripts. Brennan Bahr seconded the motion.

- **Acceptance of Timeline Document**

Liz Preston requested the addition of the creator(s) of the timeline to the document, which was compiled by Doug, Sherrill, and Cara Randall; the Wisconsin Union Association and Union Staff. Argyle Wade requested the date of creation be added. Liz Preston made a motion to accept the transcripts with the suggested additions. George Cutlip seconded the motion.

- **Acceptance of Butts Family Criteria Document**

Mills Botham explained that the Randall family provided this document listing the accomplishments of Porter's that they would like included in the recognition piece. Argyle Wade requested that the names of the Randall family involved, and the date be added to the document. Brennan Bahr made a motion to accept the document with the suggested additions. Susan Dibbell seconded the motion.

- **Resolution: Porter Butts Gallery and Fredric March Play Circle**

Mark Guthier brought Council's attention to a copy of a letter from the March family to the Chancellor. A copy of the letter has been added to the Named Spaces folder.

Discussion took place on the amount of research done on Fredric March. There are two biographies and information available in the Named Spaces Box. It was agreed that there is a lot that we don't know, and more research needs to be done. We need to understand more of what the Union's connection is with Fredric March.

Liz Preston made a motion to move forward with discussion on the resolution. Yogev seconded the motion. Motion approved.

Mark Guthier suggested moving forward in one of two ways. Either by adding additional descriptive words around removing Fredric March's name or using a similar approach to Fredric March as we are for Porter Butts.

Liz Preston read the amendment to the Yale Report and expressed her opinion that this resolution is the right way to move forward. She thanked the Randalls for their willingness to listen to the student voices and expressed her opinion that the hybrid approach in working with the Randalls has been so powerful.

George Cutlip stated that we are an inclusionary organization. In that spirit it behooves us to make everyone feel comfortable here. Whatever we resolve we will set a path that others can follow comfortably.

Mills stated that the adoption of this resolution is not a condemnation of these men. It will provide an opportunity to more fully tell their stories and this is the message he would like to see moving forward.

George Cutlip made a motion to revise the resolution that the actual removal of the names not occur until the appropriate remedial signage and other educational efforts are in place and operating. This will be in accordance with the timeline proposed and agreed to by the sub-committee. Discussion took place and it was determined this was implied in the original motion. Mr. Cutlip withdrew his motion based on the discussion.

Fernanda Hernandez made a friendly amendment to bullets one and three to add "to add temporary signage near the gallery that explains the reasoning behind the renaming."

Yogev Ben-Yitschak made a motion to approve the resolution as follows. Fernanda Martinez seconded the motion. The motion passed with 8 approved, 2 opposed and 1 abstention.

In response to a motion passed at the April 25, 2018, Union Council meeting requesting further study of this issue over the summer, Union Council continued to meet. During May – July, 2018, Union Council studied the Chancellor's Ad Hoc Study Group Report on the Ku Klux Klan at UW-Madison; worked with the family of Porter Butts to review additional archival materials on the activities of Porter Butts and Fredric March as students in the 1920s; reviewed biographical material on the professional lives of Butts and March; conducted open forums to hear from students and the larger community; and listened to the concerns of petitioners as to the existence of the named spaces.

In response to and in respect of students who have voiced their concerns regarding the named programming spaces in Memorial Union; and to responsibly place into context the entirety of Porter Butts' and Fredric March's lives; and to educate the campus and community on the student groups of the 1920s; and to allow sufficient time for due diligence to occur in completing the documentation of all facets of this story, Union Council resolves:

- To relocate the Porter Butts name from the gallery before the 2018-19 academic year begins to another permanent non-programming location within Memorial

- Union, to add temporary signage near the gallery that explains the reasoning behind the renaming; *and*
- To determine the most appropriate way to fully explain, recognize and honor the entirety of Porter Butts' contribution to UW-Madison and the college union movement nationally, which would include:
 - In the short term, installing a temporary Porter Butts biographical piece in the Founder's Room on the 2nd Floor of Memorial Union; and
 - Establishing a team consisting of students, staff and Wisconsin Union Association Trustees to develop content for an interactive kiosk about Porter Butts' contributions, philosophy and impact, by the end of the 2018-19 academic year; and
 - Providing an account of both the inter-fraternity honorary society of the 1920s known as the Ku Klux Klan (which was sanctioned by the campus) and the larger national organization known as the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, which also recognizes there will always be unknown facts about the possible connection between these groups; and
 - Working with campus leadership to identify books and other resources for the Hamel Family Browsing Library that speak to the values of diversity, inclusion, community-building and the Wisconsin Union (to be funded by action of Union Council); and
 - To remove Fredric March's name from the Play Circle before the 2018-19 academic year begins with the understanding that more research into his legacy is needed before a possible solution for recognition elsewhere can be decided upon, to add temporary signage near the Play Circle that explains the reasoning behind the renaming; *and*
 - To include in Union Council's public communication about this issue:
 - A call to action for the University to acknowledge the additional research about Porter Butts that has been discovered since the Ad Hoc Study Group Report; and
 - Affirmation of the role the Wisconsin Union will continue to play in improving campus climate; and
 - A commitment to actively engage in and support the work of our campus partners in fulfilling the recommendations of the Chancellor's Ad Hoc Study Group Report.

**This resolution is to be considered an amendment to the [April 25, 2018, resolution](#) on this same topic (particularly, Item #2 from that resolution). Nothing in this resolution should negate the remaining provisions of that original resolution.*

The resolution will now go to the chancellor, who was aware of where we stood tonight.

Liz Preston would like to follow up on the outcome of the resolution on this issue that was passed by Union Council in October 2007. It was agreed that it will be a discussion item at an upcoming meeting.

Susan Dibbell thanked the Randalls for being very gracious and open in coming to this conclusion.

Briefing on Information Release

Brennan Bahr announced that the Union will be sending out a press release publicizing the approval of the resolution early the morning of August 8.

Thank You to Those Leaving Council

Mills Botham thanked Erin Roberge, Fernanda Martinez and George Cutlip for their service to Union Council this summer.

Adjourn

Brennan Bahr made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:45. Liz Preston seconded the motion.