

Rolling the Stone Away Planning Team

Conference Call Notes

Thursday, February 9, 2017

Participating: Ray Bagnuolo, Barb Crabtree, Marianne Duddy-Burke, Nicole Garcia, Pamela Lightsey, Jim Mitulski, Rick Mixon, Sylvia Rhue, Mel Soriano, Justin Tanis, Marnie Warner, Judith Wray. Staff: Mark Bowman, Carl Foote, Susan Gore.

NOTE: See agenda for reports presented in this conference call.

1) PERSONNEL

Barb reported on all the recent work of the Personnel Committee. Welcome Susan Gore as Development Coordinator and Carl Foote as Website Manager who are on this call. Ann Craig is coming on board as Media Coordinator and Lauren Bennett is serving as Conference Assistant. We are looking for some assistance with graphic design on the logo and website. The next priority will be to get candidates for the Audio-Visual Manager. Everyone is urged to get this job announcement circulated through your group's communications.

2) MARRIOTT ST. LOUIS AIRPORT

Mark noted that a report from his hotel site visit was circulated with the agenda. He was impressed that the hotel had made a contribution to a local LGBTQ group in our name and gave him a certificate when he arrived. The hotel is a great match for the program and housing facilities and location we have been looking forward.

Mark noted that he is in conversation with the Finance Committee about the registration fee and whether we include the costs of the meal package in the registration fee. It is a boon for us to have community meals where all participants can eat together and have time for conversation. But the hotel's current quote for meal package (\$193.44) would put our registration fee around \$300. Other option would be to let participants choose whether or not to purchase the meal plan but this raises several problems. Will resolve with Finance Committee.

3) CHANGE OF CONFERENCE DATES

Mark reviewed the 3 alternative date options given by our hotel: August 30-September 3 (Labor Day weekend), October 30-November 2, and January 12-14. He asked each planning team member to give their thoughts on the dates through the process of mutual invitation (Eric Law).

Marianne—Global Network of Rainbow Catholics has announced a conference that conflicts with the Labor Day dates. Weekdays would allow some other persons to participate.

Judith—Not Labor Day weekend. Likes the October 30-November dates as weekdays would allow clergy to participate who have Sunday duties. Weather concerns about January dates. Does have concern about the higher hotel costs.

Jim—like October connection with Reformation Sunday. Also likes the January 2018 dates to give us more time to raise more funds.

Pamela--does not go to conferences on holidays. So neither Labor Day nor ML King weekend work—is usually busy with related local events at those times. Good with the October 30-November 2 dates.

Ray—also will go with the October 30-November 2 dates.

Sylvia—October-November dates are good.

Barb—Would not want to move to Labor Day weekend. Likes that October/November dates overlap with LGBT History Month and All Saints. January dates create possible weather delays for travelers. Also Creating Change and Gay Christian Network meet later in January.

Nicole—likes the lower cost and use of outdoors over Labor Day weekend. But thinks we should not ask persons to give up a holiday. The October dates have higher expense. In January weather is a travel worry. Wondering if we have to meet this soon and might wait until spring 2018.

Rick—also wonders if we should look at dates later in 2018 to give us more time to raise funds and work on invitees.

Justin—favors the October dates for reasons already given.

Mark observed that most persons clearly favor the October 30-November 2 dates with a small group of voices thinking about a date a few months later. Pointed out that our planning model is that the volunteer planning team oversees while staff implement. Since we received the grant to hire staff in late November we have leaped ahead in our planning process and now have 8-9 months to fully implement plans. Delaying the conference by many months would necessitate paying staff longer and requiring more funds than the grant provides.

Rick noted that with this explanation he thinks it is best to go with October-November dates.

Susan asked if we have considered meeting in conjunction with another related gathering—to combine efforts and resources. Mark replied that we focused our efforts on finding the right venue for our event—which was quite difficult. However, we can enable other groups to meet around our conference. Justin noted that annual Trans Summit of CLGS does may meet alongside Rolling the Stone Away since a number of trans leaders will already be there.

Jim acknowledged Susan's creative question and pointed out that our goal should be to do a "good" conference and not try to be "perfect." What we can do with the time and resources we have will be very significant.

CONSENSUS—will move dates to October 30-November 2 to be finalized with hotel.

4) INVITATIONS COMMITTEE

Judith reported that the list of 45 first invitees was circulated. Everyone is encouraged to look over the persons proposed from their denomination to confirm that they should be the first one, two or three persons invited from that tradition. Then, in addition, everyone needs to add additional names to the master list so can have all names to consider inviting.

Mark noted that the committee has spent a lot of time working on this trying to find a balance in representing all our traditions, plus diversity of sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and race.

Barb asked if these are all being invited at the same time. Mark noted that this is the first group. Our budget goal is to invite 150 persons altogether, so more to come. The Committee suggested that Mark do the invitations and make them as personal as possible. So it will take him a couple weeks to get to inviting everyone on this list.

Marnie noted that some persons on the list will not be able to come. And also wonder how to approach persons who could easily pay their own way. Mark replied that we will acknowledge persons on the website who were invited but cannot come. Also the detailed information that will be sent to invitees does ask them to contribute what they can toward their expenses. Mark will run this language by Marnie before it is sent out.

Jim noted that we will also pay expenses for a caregiver for persons that need this to attend the conference. But we will not pay for “plus-ones” or partners. They can come at their expense.

Pamela asked the criteria used to determine these persons. Are we not trying to identify early activists? She proposed two persons who were not on the list: Monica Roberts and Miss Major. Mark replied that there would still be more persons invited; this was just a first list to get us started.

Rick stated that the committee had started with a list of 30 but expanded that to 45. There were a lot of different criteria considered including persons who had some current cachet and might draw persons to the conference.

Jim noted that the committee was not totally satisfied with the list here and wouldn't be with whatever list was given. We shouldn't see this as a static list but as one evolving as persons indicate that they are unable to come and we have funds to invite more persons. It's likely that at least 10 persons on this will be unable to come so we can name persons to replace those. We should not see this list as finished. We just have to limit whom we invite now because of funding limits.

Pamela noted that the list needs more persons of color so she will help in adding names to the master list.

Justin reported that the CLGS staff proposed that we recognize that many of our groups were initially led by white persons while persons of color were often marginalized and excluded from leadership in the groups. We have to both honor the work and accomplishments of the early leaders while also honoring those persons who were excluded from positions of leadership and involvement. This is a significant way to amplify the contributions of persons of color at the conference.

Rick noted picture of Georgia Harkness in back of meeting room at PSR and hopes that we will find ways to honor persons who did very early work on our behalf but are no longer living.

Mark suggested a process for moving ahead—that he receive additional or replacement names from members of the committee and this committee names 2-3 persons to review the final list with him so he can start extending invitations next week.

Jim proposed that Mark proceed with inviting this list so we find out who cannot come and also empower our Development Coordinator to move ahead so that Committee can look at its next step—meeting in the next week or so and coming up with another 25-30 names to add to the invitation list.

CONSENSUS—Mark will receive final suggestions from planning team members over the next 24 hours and then will proceed with extending invitations. Will also schedule next meeting of Invitations Committee.

5) WEBSITE

Carl reported on the link to the website draft everyone received. This is largely an outline of information that the website will contain. Invite feedback from persons on the organization and content of the pages. Have need for some graphics design help with the logo and the home page.

Rick (working on the logo with Sylvia) asked about the work Lauren sent around on possible logo. Mark noted her work was largely illuminating text rather than creating an image.

Marianne has a couple leads on graphic artists—would like to know what kind of stipend we could offer. Ray also has a possible design contact.

Mark noted that the goal is to have the website ready to release in a couple weeks. Staff will do the primary work with Carl on finalizing the website, but planning team members will get updates and be invited to give input. Mark also noted that Carl has been the website designer of LGBT-RAN since its beginning and the success of this program is largely through his contribution.

6) FINANCE

Marnie reported that we are still looking for 100% commitment from planning team members to provide financial support for our work. Asked if we could agree on a deadline by which everyone would make their contribution or pledge. Could we do this by February 14th?

Pamela asked if gifts can be made online; don't know link to do this. Mark said to direct any questions about how to make a gift or a pledge to him and he will help out.

Marnie also reminded persons to think about names of major donors they know or within their groups. These names can be given to Mark and/or Susan. Also suggest persons to think about the possibility of having a fundraising gathering in geographical areas where we have planning team members and a network of other supporters. Boston is one example.

Susan stated that she is quite pleased to be on board with our work. Her initial plan is to speak with every member of the planning team over the next week or so to gather information. Recognizes that there is not a one-size-fits-all strategy, but she needs as much as she can get to start off. Her personal goal is to have a plan in place by March 3rd with 30, 60 and 90 plans/accomplishments. She likes moving the date to late October, certainly gives some more weeks for the development work.

7) OTHER

Jim had posted to the chatbox that Justin is a graphics designer and might do our graphics work. [NOTE: after the meeting Mark talked with Justin and he agreed to do this.]

Justin asked if we have connected with congregations and supporters in the St. Louis area to see about volunteers, gifts in kind and assistance with hospitality.

Ray asked if we could have someone open and close our meetings with a reflection or prayer. Mark said he would ask persons to do this. Ray ended call with prayer.

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, March 15th 10:00AM Pacific/12:00NOON Central/1:00PM Eastern.