

**NAMING COMMITTEE**  
**April 4, 2018**  
**MINUTES**

*Present: Fred Lebow, Carla Benka, John Bain, Helen Charlupski, Wendy Ecker, Harry Friedman*  
*Staff: Melissa Goff*

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The minutes from the 8/16/2016 meeting were approved.

Committee organization - Fred Lebow was unanimously elected chair

Members gave introductions and explained their history and affiliation with the Committee.

Deborah Brown, the petitioner for the Devotion School warrant article gave information on her research and history of the School that prompted her to seek a name change. She learned through Hidden Brookline about the connection between Devotion and the school. The defense that everyone did it then is not acceptable. She discussed slavery and the historical trauma and impact on kids walking into school knowing that history.

Committee members questioned the initial proposal of Roland Hayes and asked about his connection to the school.

Helen Charlupski stated that she would like for the Town to follow the process established by the Naming Committee. The School Committee needs to make a recommendation, and she has started a subcommittee to look at all school names. There will be an update before Town Meeting but the work may not be done by then.

Harold Brown spoke in favor of keeping the Devotion School name. Ronald Brown also spoke in favor of Devotion.

Ruth Kaplan was a Devotion School graduate and supports a name change. She had no opinion on whether or not Roland Hayes was a suitable alternative.

Leonard Bernstein said that there are other issues to consider besides slavery.

Barbara O'Brien said that she had seven kids that went to Devotion School. She feels that slave ownership was just one facet of Devotion's life and does not want to change the name of the school.

John Wilson was suggested as another possible name alternative.

Rita McNally said she was against changing the name. She worked on the Roland Hayes resolution and feels that he has no connection to that school. She feels Symphony Hall would be more appropriate.

John Bain said you cannot sweep away history. He is worried about what's next. He thinks there needs to be more context on how slaves were treated.

Carla said that the ultimate question for Town Meeting is does slave ownership cancel out other attributes.

Fred said he was worried about ripple effect of what one change may do, especially with changing street names.

Helen made a motion to refer to the School Committee's Ad HOC task force established to address this proposal. Carla seconded the motion. The Committee unanimously approved the motion.

The Committee briefly discussed the Park bench guidelines. Fred said that he thinks that they are too vague. Other towns have benches everywhere. He would like someone to work to improve program. John said that he thought he could bring this up with the Park and Recreation Commission since this was their jurisdiction.

The meeting adjourned at 7PM.