

AHS Mascot Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, July 15, 2021

AHS Library 7:00 PM

Meeting #2 (July 1st meeting was cancelled due to AHS softball finals)

Attendees:

Libby Arsenault, Kristen Comeau, Kerri Dalton, Chris DiNuzzio, Glen Gearin, Alexandra Labrecque, Hannah Schalck, Tom Waldron, Sam Wilmot

Members not present: Miesha Acevedo, Peter Campbell, Robert Capelli, Callista Chabot, Paul DiLorenzo, Steve Gross, Paige Hanson, Marc Ouellet, Aidan Whittier

One member of the public present

Meeting Format:

Mascot Committee is a sub-committee of the School Committee; meetings are considered “open” format – public may attend meetings but may not participate

Administrative Items:

- Introductions from new attendees
- Unable to vote on prior meeting's minutes as not enough members in attendance
- Voted to cancel July 29th meeting due to low member availability

Discussions and Task Items:

- **History of the AHS “Indian” mascot:**
 - How and why was it originally chosen? Is there a local history?
 - Kerri offered to research further
- **Prior considerations of AHS mascot:**
 - Sam has final report from 2016 review and will share with committee via email
 - Glen will request any other related documents from Elizabeth McAndrews, Superintendent
- **Communities with similar mascots:**
 - We should consider other communities that have gone through this process, locally and nationally, and review their methods for gathering information, decision making, etc.
 - What were their outcomes? Wakefield School Committee voted to terminate their mascot but due to public opposition it became a ballot measure
- **Public vote:**
 - Should we consider getting it on our ballot for this fall's election?
 - Requires signatures from 20% of registered voters to be presented to city lawyers for review/accuracy, then School Committee to vote on making it a ballot measure
 - Sam offered to investigate further for deadline date, etc.
 - Concerns were raised about public's lack of education on the topic to vote objectively

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- **Documentation:**
 - Kristen offered to create a Google drive and share with committee members for storing, sharing, reviewing of pertinent documents, articles, etc.
 - Will transfer all files to a flash drive or other storage media for record keeping/archival

- **Stakeholders:**
 - Libby would like to make a list of stakeholders and will share Miesha's presentation with committee via email or shared drive
 - Glen would like to make a list of ways to reach the whole community (surveys, media, exit polls, etc.)
 - Chris would like AMS & AHS students to be surveyed

- **Pros and Cons / For and Against:**
 - Are there Native organizations that are in favor of our mascot? Gene Weeden is supposed to send info to Glen as evidence "for" keeping it
 - What organizations are against it? Local store owner is Native and offended by it
 - Can we make a list of pros and cons of the mascot?
 - 7th grade ELA held a debate on the topic and the "for" team found it difficult to find any positives – Chris will reach out to Andrew Goodwin for information, documents, etc.
 - Kristen has also found it difficult to find positives and suggested we each try it as well
 - Libby is a social worker and can share the negative impact it has on students

- **Guest Speakers:**
 - We should set a date for testimonials from Natives to speak at a future meeting
 - Glen to obtain permission for public speakers at our meeting

- **MA Legislature:**
 - There is currently a bill in committee that, if passed, would prohibit the use of Native American mascots, logos, and team names by public schools in the Commonwealth
 - Kristen offered to investigate the status of this bill

Next AHS Mascot Committee Meeting Thursday, August 12th @ 7:00 PM in AHS Library