

George Jay PAC Executive Special Meeting  
9 June 2021  
6:30- 8:20pm  
Zoom

In attendance

**Executive** - Matthew Payne (President), Leslie Rewega (Treasurer), Sam Albers (Secretary), Naomi McCormick (Member at Large)

**Guest** - Dr. Tim Stanley, Lorilee Wastasecoot, Kristine Dos Santos

**Voting members** - Zeta Lay, Roberta Hamme, Dorothy Wong, Melissa Kay, Sarah Sweeney, Andrea Walker Collins, Maritia Gully, Colleen Danks, Rob Crosby-Shearer, Cara Gibson, Rozee Hyder, Brooke Albers, Michael Stewart, Erin King, Teresa Mukhtar, Melanie Cullins, Heather Dean, David Boudinot, Vincent Gornall, Erin Macklem, Yin Lam, Lundie Russell, Ryan McCormick, Andrew Wilkinson, Sekwan Wabasca, Sarah Mutesi, Hannah Relleve, Rebecca Freedman, Emma Gillespie, Jo Addison, Jack Bissell, Ashley Kruse, Andrew Buckles, Karla Marshall, Sonja Childs, Kate Berniaz, Angela Carmichael

**Staff** - Bhamini McDonald, Jen Loukras, Marcy O'Keefe, Aly Mackay, Sarah Winkler, Rebecca Bathurst-Hunt, Ai Linh Trinh, Joanne Buxton, Tarrah Macdonald, Leila Durzi, Melanie Postle, Deanna Reid, Sandra Kurtz

Minutes

1. Meeting called at 6:32
2. Agenda accepted as circulated
3. Meeting accepted (Cara thought it might not be needed)
4. Introduction why we are: Matthew
  - a. Long history of name changing
  - b. School district initiated the process (The George Jay Naming Committee)
  - c. We are here to provide direction to the PAC rep for the renaming committee
  - d. Motion is not intended to provide direction either way
5. Melanie Postle:
  - a. Decision is to change the name or not change the name
  - b. Choosing the name is a separate process
  - c. Meeting upcoming with elders in the community
  - d. Next meeting in September - intent is to hopefully vote in September. As more information is presented it means that maybe that won't happen
  - e. Committee's goal is to balance the volume of feedback.
  - f. This meeting is great to inform parents
6. Angela Carmicheal (update June 2nd meeting)
  - a. Trying to be as authentic as possible. Warning NSFW language in her report

- b. Leslie Le (past principal at George Jay) presented. Grateful for the collective efforts to bring this issue forward (Angela, Dr. Stanley, school district). Tried to raise issues with the name in the past. Has personally faced racism as a Chinese Canadian as a school aged child. Her belief is that a name change is needed and will bring powerful reconciliation “across the board”.
  - c. Terry Smith (past principal of George Jay). Wrong to keep the name of a school of a man who was a racist. Terry feels ashamed for her blindness in the past of racist imagery and messages. In favour of the name change. She thinks it's time.
  - d. Expressing hope that Melanie Postle will stay on the committee
  - e. Additional updates will be provided directly in this meeting
7. Dr. Tim Stanley
- a. Acknowledge Anishinabewaki traditional territories
  - b. Interest in identify ways to inform people about racism
  - c. 20 years lived in Vancouver.
  - d. Mixed ancestry including experiences on his parents having to registry under a Chinese registry
  - e. George Jay was school district administrator. Also was the biggest advocate for segregated Chinese streams in Canada. Specific malice toward Chinese people including preferentially enforcing policies towards Chinese people.
  - f. Outlining Chinese resistance to racist segrationist policies including a year long strike again public school segregation.
  - g. George Jay labeled Chinese students (many of them 2nd and 3rd generation Canadian) “other” students.
  - h. Dr. Stanley makes the case that George Jay more racist than contemporary norms
  - i. Built career on racist ideas with particular malice towards Chinese people
  - j. Renaming isn't forgetting history but rather more deeply learning it.
8. Dr Stan Le
- a. Read by Ai Linh Trinh (staff member of naming committee)
  - b. Opposed to renaming of George Jay school
  - c. Have maintained a successful dental practice in community
  - d. Father paid \$500 as a head tax.
  - e. Changing the name of the school doesn't change the racism he has faced
  - f. George Jay was not the only person to be racist towards the Chinese community
  - g. Removing the name does not teach students anything about racism
  - h. Political apologies has be sufficient healing for him
  - i. A renaming would be a hurtful opening of past wounds. No longer they are victims but are looking celebrate successes
  - j. Also expressing significant concerns about the cost of renaming.
9. Kristine Dos Santos
- a. Expressing concern that her experiences have been too average.
  - b. Her family is of mixed ancestry descent.
  - c. Welcome, valued, belonging - daughter feels that in George Jay and in Victoria in general

- d. Each day her daughter passes by George Jay. The reminder of the name is a constant memory of the racist past in a negative way
  - e. George Jay, because of the racist past, cannot be a source of a pride. This contrast to other school who's name is a point of pride
  - f. Her daughter has a right to not drive by a school named after a racist man.
  - g. Doesn't want the name to diminish the work of the school
10. Deanna Reid
- a. Deanna feels a close connection to this decision
  - b. Grateful for effort to dismantle system racism
  - c. Deanna has been on a personal journey to develop equity and anti-racist pedagogy
  - d. While we do not support the racist policies of George Jay, they don't think changing the name has anything to do with this
  - e. Anecdote: a discussion of naming a canoe. "Name will come when it is ready. Work is still to be done".
  - f. Highlighting the work already being done. Equity committees, library diversity scans
  - g. Asking to please not change the name and instead please focus on anti-racism initiatives.
11. Loralie Wastasecoot
- a. Mother former student. Looked at the George Jay values. One thing that she noticed is that it prevents discrimination
  - b. Wondering where the dignity is for students who attend a school with such a racist past
  - c. Drawing a link between the removal of John A MacDonald statue and the changing of the name.
  - d. Citing many examples of discriminatory behaviour by John A MacDonald highlighting the damage of segregationist policies. Demonstrating clear racist behaviours towards education.
  - e. Monuments of racist behaviours (George Jay) re-enforce systemic racism in the school systems and represent a barrier to reconciliation.
  - f. We look at the work of others for inspiration. Totem pole at Oaklands bring indigenous values into the classroom.
  - g. How can look at including the children in renaming George Jay?
  - h. Reconciliation isn't just about indigenous people but also how Chinese people experienced racist during Canada and British Columbia's past.
12. George Jay teachers
- a. Grateful for the opportunity to contribute
  - b. Reflection has been for 2 years. Been working towards anti-racism activities
  - c. Teachers are nervous about speaking out
  - d. Three reasons teachers are against name change
    - i. Costs

- ii. George Jay represents more than just the name of George Jay the administrator but also forms the identity. More than just the name. Teachers have worked to make George Jay a safe place
- iii. The name of the man and the name of the school are two very different things to the teachers.

13. Cara

- a. Do we want to be ancestors who treat people correctly?
- b. We don't want not change because we are cheap
- c. How do we create an entry way for representation for all?
- d. Cost should not dictate doing the right thing

14. Dorothy

- a. Name matters
- b. Dorothy sees her own family history in George Jay's history
- c. Talks about legacy of being dismissed and how this contributes to conformity
- d. Things are changing and she doesn't want to be complacent
- e. Wants to see the name of the school reflect the community

15. Ai Linh Trinh

- a. Emotional process
- b. Vietnamese descent - came to Canada as a refugee.
- c. So grateful to come to a place that is welcoming. Acknowledging flaws.
- d. George Jay isn't someone we should celebrate but isn't some we shouldn't forget.
- e. Allyship should not shape a solution for the voices we intent to advocate for

16. Leslie Rewega

- a. Much of this work will fall on to teachers
- b. PAC will call for volunteers to help lessen to burden on school staff

17. Brooke Albers

- a. Brooke reading her letter.
- b. Relating her experiences with communities of B.C.
- c. Languages are so important for students to embrace the land they live on.
- d. Important for students to understand

18. Dr. Stanley, do you have any ideas for us to expand our imaginations on how to not forget the past while still potentially changing the name (not falling into forgetting)?

- a. The suggestion of a plaque in the school to remember George Jay and her history
- b. Strongly agrees with the work that the real work is in anti-racism initiatives
- c. Hope to continue to build an anti-racist community

19. Erin

- a. Expressing concerns about the number of people at the meeting and how representative of this of the General George Jay caregiver population