

**School Committee Ad Hoc Task Force on School Names**

**Monday, April 30, 2018**

5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

School Committee Room, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Town Hall

Ad Hoc Task Force Members Present: Helen Charlupski, Barbara Brown, Malcolm Cawthorne, John Dempsey, Mark Gray, Sari Gubar, Ken Liss, Farah Mamedova, and Pam Roberts.

Ad Hoc Task Force Members Absent: Lloyd Gellineau and Misti Jaynes.

Staff Present: Robin Coyne.

Others Present: School Committee Chairman David Pollak.

**1) Approval of Minutes of the April 30, 2018 Meeting**

On a motion of Ms. Roberts and seconded by Dr. Brown, the School Committee Ad Hoc Task Force on School Names voted unanimously to approve the April 24, 2018 minutes, as amended.

**2) Consideration of Ad Hoc Task Force Statement to the School Committee Expressing Support for Town Meeting Warrant Article 23**

The Ad Hoc Task Force discussed the draft statement to the School Committee expressing support for Town Meeting Warrant Article 23. Ms. Charlupski noted that Ms. Jaynes is unable to attend this evening's meeting, but wanted to share her letter to the School Committee in support of Article 23 (Attachment A). The Ad Hoc Task Force recommended clarifying edits to the section on the Edward Devotion family. The final language is below.

**APRIL 30, 2018**

**Brookline School Committee Ad Hoc Task Force on School Names:  
Recommendation on Renaming of the Edward Devotion School**

The Ad Hoc Task Force on School Names, established by the Brookline School Committee on March 22nd, voted unanimously on April 24th to recommend that the School Committee vote favorably on Town Meeting Warrant Article 23 calling for the removal of Edward Devotion's name from the Edward Devotion School. The Devotion question is only one part of the work of the Task Force. The Task Force was charged with examining the names of all of the Brookline schools and will continue to meet and to research school names and the naming process.

The Task Force members are a representative, diverse group of Brookline citizens and interested parties. They include:

School Committee Capital Subcommittee Chair/Naming Committee Member Helen Charlupski

Hidden Brookline Chair Barbara Brown

Brookline High School History Teacher/Devotion Alum Malcolm Cawthorne

Past Devotion Teacher, Vice Principal, and Principal John Dempsey

Brookline Office of Diversity, Inclusion & Community Relations Director Lloyd Gellineau  
Devotion Alum/Community Member/Town Meeting Member Mark Gray  
Devotion/Steps to Success Parent Misti Jaynes  
Brookline Historical Society President Ken Liss  
Devotion Student Farah Mamedova  
Devotion Parent/Community Member Pam Roberts  
Brookline High School Student Sari Gubar

The Task Force conducted research on the legacy of Edward Devotion. Edward Devotion's father or grandfather was a French Huguenot (Protestant) who came to Brookline from France at a time when Protestants were being persecuted. He was an early settler in the Muddy River hamlet, which in 1705 became the Town of Brookline. The school is named after either his son or his grandson, the second Edward Devotion, 1668-1744. The second Edward Devotion was a resident of colonial Brookline who held several local offices and who left money in his will for the town toward the establishment of a school in the center of town, which was then Walnut Street. An inventory of his property compiled after his death included land, livestock, household goods and "one Negrow" valued at 30 pounds. (see attached 1. chronology of Devotion and the school 2. his will)

The Task Force was working under a tight deadline ahead of the School Committee's discussion and possible vote on April 26th — less than a month before Town Meeting. The Task Force carried out its work in a thoughtful and respectful manner despite the urgency. The Task Force listened to current and former students, parents, and teachers at the school and to other members of the community. There are strong opinions and emotions on both sides of the question, but the members of the Task Force felt the reasons for changing the name outweighed those for keeping it the same.

The local debate is taking place amid a national conversation on the propriety of honoring slave holders and supporters of slavery on public and private buildings and monuments. The Devotion question provides an opportunity to recognize and discuss the fact that slavery and its legacy had and have an impact in Brookline as well as nationally.

The minutes of the Task Force and documents compiled by its members are available on the School Committee website: <https://www.brookline.k12.ma.us/Page/2339>. A fuller report on the Task Force's charge to look at all Brookline School names will be forthcoming. (Given the upcoming School Committee meeting 4/26/18, the Task Force members felt it was important to make our recommendation known even before this full report could be written.)

### **3) Meeting Schedule, Next Steps, and Agenda for Next Meeting**

The Ad Hoc Task Force will meet on Monday, May 21, 2018 and on Monday, June 11, 2018. Both meetings will take place from 5:30 PM-7:00 PM and will be held in the Walsh School Committee Room, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Town Hall. The May 21, 2018 agenda will include presentation of Ad Hoc Task Force research on Lawrence (continuation from

today's meeting) and Driscoll (and Heath, if time permits). The June 11, 2018 agenda will include presentation of Ad Hoc Task Force research on Baker, Heath, and Runkle.

Mr. Cawthorne, Ms. Gubar, and Ms. Roberts offered to present the Ad Hoc Task Force Statement on Article 23 to Town Meeting. The Moderator will ask Town Meeting to take up Article 23 out of order as the first item on May 29, 2018 to make it easier for interested parties (including students) to attend.

The Ad Hoc Task Force discussed the need to communicate with the public and engage the community on the naming issue. Mr. Pollak reported that the School Committee charged the Superintendent to work with Devotion leadership to develop a plan to address communication needs and issues raised by a name change. The Superintendent will come back to the School Committee with recommendations.

#### **4) Presentation of Dr. Brown's Research on Amos Adams Lawrence**

##### **AMOS ADAMS LAWRENCE 1818-1886**

##### **A few sources (other than Wikipedia!)**

*The Life of Amos A Lawrence: with extracts from his diary and correspondence*, William Lawrence (his son), Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1888 (found in the Brookline Room of the main library).

*Stark, Mad Abolitionists: Lawrence, Kansas and the Battle over Slavery in the Civil War*, Robert Sutton, Skyhorse Publishing, 2017. Written by the former chief historian of the Nat'l Park Service (who admits within the text that AAL actually wasn't a full abolitionist).

*Sloane House: Preserving the Lawrence Legacy*, Beverly Brown, Kevin Carleton, Christine Wynne, Boston: Boston University, 2010. "Sloane House", completed in 1851, in Brookline is the former residence of AAL. It once included a substantial farm of 90 acres in what is now called "Cottage Farm" after his estate. Deeply carved in the chimney of his home are 2 dates: the date the Confederacy surrendered and the date Lincoln died. AAL's papers are collected at the MA Historical Society

##### **Some general biographical details:**

- \* First generation of the Lawrences arrived with Puritans in 1662; a later generation fought at Bunker Hill
- \* Harvard graduate, 1835 (& later an Overseer of the College)
- \* Industrialist/merchant: owned various textile factories north of Boston and in NH which brought him great wealth (His parents were also wealthy). First producer of knit fabrics.
- \* Devout and active Episcopalian, gave the church substantial funds.
- \* In the 1840's and early 50's he was a supporter of "colonization" which campaigned for and funded free African Americans to leave the US and settle in Liberia.
- \* Candidate for governor in 1858 and 1860

**His most notable achievements came from beyond his business successes:**

- 1854: the forced return of Anthony Burns to slavery, amid protests by many thousand Bostonians (following the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850) was the biggest turning point in AAL's life. He wrote his uncle: "we went to bed one night old-fashioned, conservative, Compromise Union Whigs and waked up stark mad [anti-slavery]". He thereafter gave a huge portion of his income to the anti-slavery movement, once writing that he needed to earn more so he could give more.
- Leader and principle funder of the Emigrant Aid Company which fostered and funded the emigration of MA and other residents to Kansas in order to have sufficient (white, male) voters vote to enter the Union as a free state. KS did enter the Union as a free state.
- After receiving a letter from a friend in KS, asking for help, as they were being killed by pro-slavery men ("Bloody Kansas"), he immediately sent several crates of rifles labelled "primers". They reportedly came into Brown's hands, though he was not their immediate recipient.
- Good friend of John Brown, sometimes sending him funds, though he strongly disapproved of the Harper's Ferry Raid, believing it would lead to a civil war. AAL throughout the 1850's continued to believe that the South could be persuaded to stay in the Union and that slavery could be ended without war. AAL wrote about Brown at the time of Brown's death: "He died grandly. Nevertheless, he must be called a fanatic."
- Lawrence KS, home of the University, is named in his honor. He wrote, asking that KS not do this; they replied that it was already done. He also gave the land for the founding of Lawrence College in WI.
- Helped fund the MA Regiment of Cavalry (& the 54<sup>th</sup>? I'd need to check further re the 54th)
- Is believed to have given away \$700,000 which in 2014 was the equivalent of \$21 million.

**His thoughts on education for girls and women (from a letter to a friend in Nov 1854, quoted in source #1 above, p. 116).**

*My own impression is that we have fallen into a great error here in MA of late years, by raising the standard of female education so high that physical development has been checked, and the constitutions weakened. Our girls are good scholars and good school mistresses; but they are unhealthy and weak, and do not have strong children; and while we are refining the intellect, we are injuring the stock."*

Ad Hoc Task Force Discussion

Mr. Lawrence did more than most in Massachusetts to end slavery, including substantial financial support to the anti-slavery movement and his role as a leader and funder of the Emigrant Aid Company (fostered/funded emigration to Kansas to have sufficient voters to enter the Union as a free state). Dr. Brown was told that Mr. Lawrence refused to use cotton from the south for his mill and instead purchased it from India. Ad Hoc Task Force members were troubled by Mr. Lawrence's statement regarding education for girls

and women. It was pointed out that as far as we know, Mr. Lawrence did not act on these beliefs, while we know he acted on his anti-slavery beliefs.

The Ad Hoc Task Force asked Dr. Brown to try to address a number of questions. What were the reasons the School Committee chose to name the school after Mr. Lawrence? Did Mr. Lawrence donate land to the town/schools? How did Mr. Lawrence support “colonization” and did his support have any impact? What were his views and actions towards the people who worked for him, unions, and strikebreakers? Is there any additional information on his views and actions towards women? Is there any written information on his reported refusal to purchase cotton from the south?

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 PM.