

August 9, 2022

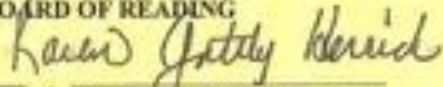
## Reading Commemorates Bill Russell Resolution

**Whereas,** The Select Board of the Town of Reading honors his civil rights legacy by actively supporting the vision of an inclusive and welcoming community; celebrates Bill Russell's life, his impact on our community, his impact on race relations, as well as his unparalleled success on the basketball court; and supports efforts to learn from and gain inspiration from his values as he lived them. Our world and our town are better places because of his tireless efforts

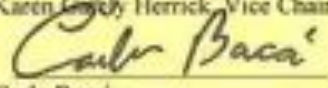
Now, therefore, be it resolved, that we, the Reading Select Board, decree that a day be designated as Bill Russell Day, and that the Town Manager be instructed to designate such date by appropriate recognition and ceremonies.

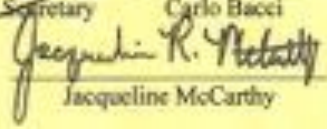
### SELECT BOARD OF READING

  
Mark L. Duckser, Chair

  
Karen Gately Herrick, Vice Chair

  
Christopher Haley, Secretary

  
Carlo Bacci

  
Jacqueline McCarthy

# CATO Conversation

- Held a viewing party at the Reading Public Library on March 2, 2023
- Held a conversation at RPL on March 6, 2023 and discussed the following:
  - Discrimination and harassment the Russell family endured while living in Reading
  - Recommendations for properly memorializing Bill Russell in Town
  - The role the Town of Reading should take

# Key Findings

# Themes from Breakout Groups

- Bill Russell's family must be notified, and engaged if possible, when events/actions are to be taken in his honor.
- Current and former Black residents and community members' various experiences need to be shared and understood by the community at large.
- Black residents and community members have a very different experience and views regarding racism compared to those of the non-Black communities.
- Any events/actions should prioritize feedback and input from current and former Black residents and community members.
- The best way to honor Mr. Russell and his beliefs is to actively and intentionally ensure positive experiences and outcomes for historically marginalized residents and community members.

# Key Recommendation - Create an Ad-Hoc Committee

Bill Russell Ad-Hoc Commemoration Establishment Committee (BRACE)

# Purpose - BRACE

- Acknowledge and express accountability for the mistreatment of Bill Russell.
- Develop a long-term plan to implement the Select Board's proclamation presented on Aug. 9, 2022.
- Establish the funding and infrastructure for the long-term action plan.
- Honor Bill Russell's legacy by striving to create a vision of an inclusive, equitable, and welcoming community.

# Membership

- Membership will consist of 7 diverse Reading residents, with 3 associate members
  - 1 Select Board Member or designee (ex-officio, appointed by the Select Board)
  - 1 Designee of the Office of Equity and Social Justice (appointed by the Director of OESJ)
  - 1 Employee of the Reading Police Department (ex-officio, appointed by Civil Rights Officer)
  - 2 Reading residents (appointed by the Select Board)
  - 1 Resident student currently enrolled in a school, public or private, funded or partially funded by Reading in Grades 9-12 (appointed by the School Committee)
  - 1 The Coalition of Us (CATO) Member or designee (appointed by CATO)
  - 1 School Committee Member or designee (ex-officio, appointed by the School Committee)
  - 1 Council of Aging Member or designee, with preference to someone who may have been in town during Russell's tenure (appointed by the Council on Aging)
  - 1 Designee of the Reading Public Library and Board of Library Trustees (appointed by BOLT)

# Action Plan Creation Process

- Research Bill Russell's history.
- Gather input from the Committee's members, Reading residents, and other information from local DEI related surveys.
- Hold regular meetings and actively seek community engagement.
- Explore ways in which the town can acknowledge and express accountability for the mistreatment of Bill Russell and his family.
- Identify ways that town resources can be more readily accessible to all residents in Reading.



## Action Plan Creation Process (cont.):

- Invite members of historically marginalized communities to share their stories to better inform Committee and community decisions.
- Collect and archive these stories in order to develop or add to a database to share these stories with others in the community.
- Encourage relationships between town administration, departments, and organizations that will promote, collaborate, and implement the plans recommended by the Committee.
- Gather, analyze, and organize information for future planning decisions and the best practices related to events, programs, and activities that promote equity, inclusion, and ensure a welcoming community.

# Action Plan Creation Process (cont.)

- Research and recommend a structural framework for long-term planning to annually honor and promote the civil rights values advocated and exemplified by Bill Russell.
- Plan and hold at least one choice of community-wide event, program, or activity to launch the annual program.
- Research options for establishing an ongoing town funding source that will ensure continuity for this annual program.
- BRACE will work with the Town Manager to transfer all information and responsibilities in after the Committee's sunset.

# BRACE Shall Consider the Following:

- Black and brown voices in the choice of recommendation.
- Ways to engage as many residents as possible, in both the planning and programming.
- Listen to and consider the concerns and ideas of all residents, administration, and volunteers.
- Using public funds and grants to ensure the continuity of the recommendations.
- If possible, establish contact with the Russell family and inform them of the Committee, its purposes, and any related future programming.
- If the Committee aspires to use Bill Russell's name in the title of their recommended plan, the Committee will attempt to obtain permission and invite the Russell family to programming.
- Committee members are encouraged to attend the second CATO Conversation to be held in Feb 2024.

# BRACE Deliverables

1. Provide the Select Board with a report exploring the best ways for the Town to acknowledge and express accountability for the mistreatment experienced by the Russell Family.
2. Submit multiple options for program recommendations with rationale and suggestions for funding mechanisms to the Select Board by December 31, 2024, unless otherwise approved by the Select Board.
3. Work with the Town Manager to transfer all information and responsibilities to the town department/leadership that will ensure the continuation of the annual program after the Committee's sunset.

# BRACE Sunset

- The Committee will sunset after achieving the specified action items outlined.
- The goal is to be accomplished by December 31, 2024, but may be extended with a Select Board vote.

# Conclusion

- Create the Bill Russell Ad-Hoc Commemoration Establishment Committee (BRACE) to honor Bill Russell's life and legacy.
- Consider the options provided by BRACE and schedule the first acknowledgement and commemoration by the end of 2024.
- Committee members are invited to attend the second CATO conversation to be held in February 2024.

Recommendations for Honoring Bill Russell  
in the Town of Reading

