General Assembly Meeting: November 11, 2012

Agenda:
Open Forum
Discussion about the potential bookstore move

Opening of the Meeting: Meeting called to order at 7:03 pm

1. Fight song and role call
2. Open Forum
   a. Nicole Updegrove: We are responding to the incident of Paulie Lowther’s alleged brutalization by PSafe and working to deduce the WSA’s rule. We will keep the campus updated. There needs to be a response from the Administration and we will ensure that.
      i. Zach M: If you have any comments or concerns, please talk to me, Nicole, or Scott
      ii. Jason S: We need to address the issue of P-Safe-student relations soon.
      iii. Chloe M: Scott, Alton, and Lily are on PSAC.
   b. Christian H: Everyone should go to the forum tomorrow! (Especially the freshman)
      i. 7:30, do your best to come
3. Discussion about potential bookstore relocation
   a. Andrew Trexler: The university has been given an opportunity to relocate the bookstore. This is very new information (1 week). Things are not firm at all right now, and no decisions are firm, but we need to decide in 30 days.
      i. Map: It’s near Russell and Writing House
      ii. There would be a number of things in the complex: restaurants, cafe, and local businesses
      iii. Place where the Middletown community and the Wesleyan community interact
      iv. We would have opportunity to decide what to do with the old space
      v. Argus and WESU would not be affected
      vi. What would happen to Red & Black?
         1. The new complex could have an establishment that takes Middletown Cash but not points
vii. Essential questions: What are you guys looking for in the new book store? Is this a good move? What would happen to the space?
b. Jesse R-S: What would happen to Red & Black? What is the consideration? Is there a possibility for the employees of R&B to get another space?
   i. A. Trexler: Nothing has been confirmed. However, that is the reason for this forum, we want your opinion on the R&B issue.
   ii. Jesse R-S: There is a big concern about losing a dining option, especially for Juniors, because it’s the closest. Also, it is not controlled by Bon Appetit, and there are a lot of things that we can do with that space.
c. Arya A: This is a bad idea. The bookstore is already pretty far away. Putting it farther away would make more people complain. It’s cool that we have a development, but I think that it’s a poor idea due to distance. We should look to move it closer to campus.
d. Jake B: Is this development going to happen regardless of the move of Broad Street Books?
   i. Andrew Trexler: Yes.
   ii. Jake B: There could be problems with the geography. It will make the area more urban, due to the fact that this is a residential area.
e. Mansoor A: Would the bookstore be a franchise with the rights to put Wesleyan on things?
   i. A. Trexler: This would be more like ‘Wesleyan Books,’ and we would have a fair amount of say in their operation.
f. Kara Linn: R&B is operated by people who depend on it for their income, and I don’t think it’s up to us. Also, it’s really far away. Kara does NOT support.
g. Nicole Updegrove: The university has been trying to get off the North End of Wash (currently, the discussion concerns selling Buddhist House). If we are moving a new building north of Wash, maybe it doesn’t make sense for Buddhist House to be sold. Also, the BSB (Broad Street Books) space could be used for other things.
   i. A. Trexler: There are 180 people who live across Washington street, and it would be hard to negotiate a contract with Bon Appetit (in regards to R&B)
h. Scott E: The parking on Wash? It could be difficult if a parking lot is not build. In your email, you (A. Trexler) said that this could reduce costs. How?
   i. A. Trexler: It’s what the finance Office told me
i. Jason Shatz: Is this partially a response to storage space for books and other supplies?
   i. A. Trexler: No. Storage space would be the same.
j. Christian H: On Wash, what is happening and where?
A. Trexler: the developers bought some properties and are already planning something.

Christian H: In terms of the location, is it going to be very inconvenient for certain people?

A. Trexler: the weight of population is closer to Broad Street, but there are certainly people there. It’s going to make the biggest difference for Juniors in Hi/Lo Rise. Also, traffic is a concern.

Ellen P: What’s the deal for cardinal tech in usdan? could textbooks be sold there?

A. Trexler: No, space is an issue. It’s way too small.

Nicole Brenner: I think it would be really cool if the BSB area could be used as a student uni center

Kate Cullen: It could be valuable to get the town hall in on this.

A. Trexler: Forum on the 27th, 4:30 pm, 41 Wylys Room 112

1. Middletown Relations Committee should do outreach.

Jake B: It would just be even harder to move the bookstore. More people would just buy online. It could hurt business if the University has a stake in business. Have you looked into the zoning and how the neighbourhood has reacted?

A. Trexler: I don’t really know... about the neighbourhood reaction

1. Changing vendors: this could be an opportunity to change to a more economic text book plan.

Benny Docter: Two questions. Do we know what the retailer is?

A. Trexler: No, not in talks

Sam U: Who’s the developer?

A. Trexler: I don’t know.

Sam U: it could be very enticing if there is a national retailer

Sam Ebb: We could change vendors if we change location. Could we still change vendors if we do not change location?

A. Trexler: We would have to negotiate with the vendor and BSB (Broad Street Books)

Sam: This move needs to have a R&B or some other dining venue to success.

Christian H: If R&B does not move, people could lose their jobs. Is there a way that we can retain that? I’m very interested in seeing how MidWes reactions and the Middletown view on the move. Forum with Middletown

Jason S: If we are searching for national retailers, we should make sure they fall in the guidelines of the CIR

Kate Cullen: We have not done that in the past, but I can ask

Sam U: This is probably the developers decision not ours

Andrew Trexler: If we do decide to join in on the development, we would have some say.
iv. Syed: Are we sure that there would be national retailers?
   1. A. Trexler: Not yet.

v. Syed: MidWes is waiting for more information. Washington street has some stores
   1. Main street market is also around there (similarity)

u. Scott Elias: Architectural structure and business?
   i. A. Trexler: We would have some control over the architecture.
   ii. Scott E: Is chipotlé a possibility?
      1. A. Trexler: We can ask.

v. Grant T: How would the move affect the other tenants of the BSB?
   i. A. Trexler: I don’t think they would be affected by it. Only affect the two floors that BSB occupies. The possible exception is R&B.

w. Andrew Trexler: I think that this is a very good opportunity to increase the number of locations on campus that Middletown residents come to. R&B needs to stick around in some fashion. One idea is to turn it completely into a dining facility. It could be used for other things like music practice rooms, or just student spaces. It would be better to have explicit purposes for those spaces, though. Recording studios and dance studios, for example. I’m in favor of this move, but I’m one student out of 3000.
   i. Christian H: How long would it take for the development to actual happen?
      1. A. Trexler: I don’t know.

x. Arya A: How would Wes be seen by the great community if we staple our name to a developer. Need more info to be comfortable with such a move. It’s really far away, and you need to compare it to some of the dorms on Foss Hill and some senior houses. With respect to the other houses on wash, they could be used for Greek Houses.

y. Guest: I was born in Middletown. I live on Washington Street. I’m not the Lorax, I can’t speak for the north end. However, Washington Street is really dangerous. People have been hit by cars there. It could become more dangerous. It’s important to have pro-business places in Middletown, however, i don’t think that these larger chains can really know what Middletown’s about. Thanks.

z. Jacob Musinksy: It’s not really that far. A 15 minute walk is not a big deal. Other schools are farther. There has to be a restaurant. There should not be any option of removing food (Juniors). In MidWes, we said that someone was interested in doing record studios. Having that space (Concert space, perhaps?) could be really beneficial.

aa. Jake Blumenthal: My problem with developing BSB space is the money. Maybe down the road, we can develop it but, I don’t like the way it will change our relationship with Middletown. People should go to Main more
bb. Zach Malter: We need to know more about the developer. We need to think about the consequences of having the bookstore in a building that we don’t know. We could lose the bookstore if it’s not our building. This presents a good opportunity, but I think that this could mean other opportunities for other partnerships with the developer. We need to know exactly what we’re doing with the BSB space.

cc. Martin M: does wes own the building that BSB operates in?
   i. A. Trexler: Yes, but BSB is a third-party vendor. We would still own the building BSB operates in now. We could also get another vendor.

dd. L. Rex: Parking lot?
   i. A. Trexler: I think there are plans for the development in the parking lot, but I’m not 100% certain.

ee. Trexler: I think that if we moved, it would be contingent on fair demonstration that students can get to the bookstore. We could make a strong case that R&B needs to stay no matter what happens. Shift conversation to what would you like in a bookstore: Three things: books that are interesting to read, a space where you can sit and study, some sort of food.

ff. Christian H: Safety is very important. I think that a consistent effort needs to made in regards to safety. Are we more likely to stay with our current vendor if we stay at broad street?
   i. A. Trexler: I don’t know, but we would do an evaluation.

gg. Lily D: The walk should be taken into consideration. We chose to come to a small school, so walks should not be that long. People already complain about BSB’s distance, and it’s farther away. Too far. If we were to make the move, would the transition period coincide with the academic year? summer?
   i. A. Trexler: I don’t know.

hh. Mansoor Alam: I’m somewhat a local, so I know the purpose that Washington street serves. A lot of cars are getting back on the highway, and the highway turns into a road. A lot of people go really fast on Wash. It’s pretty dangerous, especially since wes students have a tendency to not walk on the crosswalk. None of us have sat in on a Planning and Zoning meeting, so I feel uncomfortable having this conversation. Making a popular Mid decision would be good
   i. Musinsky: MidWes is talking about this
   ii. A. Trexler: I called this meeting because this is happening very quickly and I’d rather have more conversations than fewer.
   ii. L. Rex: There could be a walkway made (Kate Cullen likes bridges)

jj. Sam Ebb: The difference in the walk (from WeShop to each location) is a tenth of a mile. Not substantial, just a perceived difference. It would be cool to have a place where you can have talks, open mics, etc. as part of a bookstore.

kk. A. Trexler: One of the major reasons why I’m pursuing this is because if we did move we would still have a bookstore, but the old building would be able to be
used for a different purpose. The cost of renovating the building is fairly minimal, compared to the cost of renovating Squash or building an entirely new one from scratch.

ll. J. Blumenthal: I would not have a bookstore. Bookstores are going incredibly out of style. I want study space and food. Who buys books at BSB that are not textbooks? Textbooks can be bought out of the back of a truck.

mm. Mari: Student jobs on campus. This could be a really good opportunity to increase the number of jobs. There are some books besides textbook, like obscure German books.

nn. Justin: An elevated walkway (Kate Cullen’s bridge, she’s awesome) could be feasible and awesome

oo. Nicole Updegrove: We really do need a bookstore, especially for freshmen, who choose their classes while on campus. We could also influence the architecture of the new bookstore, which can be great for improving the student experience - and the experience for non-Wesleyan people.

pp. Kate Cullen: Having a bookstore is a college institution. Prospective students come and expect it to be there. It’s part of school pride, and it’s something that nice to have

i. Mari: Paraphernalia is important also.

qq. Sam Usdan: Three things. There are more financially feasible ways than an overhead walkway. A speedwalk with a crosswalk on it could be cool. 2. If we wanted to, since the school spirit part is important, we could retain that in the current building, but move the books. This could be really awesome, and bring in $$$.

rr. Alton: The property is going to be developed anyway.

ss. Jason S: If we wanted to make sure that the Argus and WESU stay in their current locations we wouldn’t want to put a dance studio there. It would be easier to paint the crosswalk (Sam U: They already have that. It doesn’t work). The textbooks would still have to be sold. Kindles are not legit. They also have to sell supplies, flags, badges, etc.

tt. Christian H: I’m mad at Jake. I want my bookstore. Bookstores form the corner stones of the community, especially in a college town. We need a bookstore.

uu. Jake Blumenthal: Libs = bookstores (Christian H: No). Bookstores are exploitive. We need textbooks, but we only need it for a month (Nicole Brenner: Like halloween stores)

vv. Arya Alizadeh: this is a joke idea, but now i like it. Let’s move our bookstore to the Art Library. Turn BSB into a dance space. If we could get some sort of artsy performance space in the new development.

ww. A. Trexler: Art Library is a quarter the space of BSB. There is no possible way that could happen. The paraphernalia occupies half of the bottom floor, so
it’s not just a wall. Safety on Washington Street. To reduce vehicle speed: we could change from asphalt from brick because it’s a change in surface. You can’t buy books at the library, people run out of books, it’s bad.

xx. Jason S: Washington Street is a state highway, look into how to change the surfaces.

yy. Nicole Updegrove: This could be really beneficial to the Middletown community - and if we don’t want to buy in to this bookstore, it might not be made. Red and Black is not really welcoming to Midtown residents. Since we have a say in the architecture, we could make it more beneficial - maybe we can make it better oriented for children, and make the cafe more amenable to people who aren’t on a meal plan! The North End can definitely benefit from this.

zz. Syed Ali: A bookstore had great potential to be more inviting to the Middletown community. It could have events for the community. Monetize. 190 High is inadequate. The speed of Wash street is a concern, so road changes could happen, but these need to be financially viable. We need to address all Wash street to not privilege Wes.

aaa. Lily D: Self-Checkout Kiosk

bbb. Benny Docter: how BSB operates. To what extent is BSB monetize. I agree with Jake on the service of BSB. Students can use Amazon. We should use the BSB space for something else that makes more money.

ccc. Lili Borland: I don’t think that it’s a good idea to split up the bookstore, spirit wear, and R&B. Bookstore (no textbooks, spirit) does not make that much money. It’s important because it complements what else is in that building

ddd. Christian H: I love the library! A bookstore provides a space for community to come and develop. Libraries are more academic spaces than bookstores. Bookstores and libs are different animals.

eee. Mandy: It’s kind of dangerous to describe the north end as sketchy. There’s community health center, green street, residents, and there are a lot of things to do in the north end. Wesleyan is good for Middletown. The street is dangerous and people jaywalk. Starbucks would not build community.

fff. Jake Blumenthal: This project is definitely aimed at Wesleyan students. For example, Starbucks is not aimed at Middletown residents, only Wesleyan students. The developer really wants to work with Wesleyan.
   i. A. Trexler: The developers are trying to build a space where Wes and Middletown residents interact. It’s a core concept. It’s not going to be a place primarily for Wesleyan students.
   ii. Jake Blumenthal: Middletown residents don’t go to BSB. No Middletown residents are looking for a bookstore.

ggg. Ellen P: I really do think that this new space could be used to better relations. For example, Fairfield.
I. Jake B: I’m from Fairfield, and that’s not true. No one from Fairfield goes to the bookstore.

ii. Ellen P: The ride would go in the direction, so that could be expanded.

hhh. Kate Cullen: It would be neat to have a book club in the new space where Middletown residents interact with Wes students and fac.

iii. Mansoor A: The idea that business on Main would profit from this development is ridiculous. If you put in mainstream business, people would stop going to the independents on Main. Middletown residents do not have any reason to go to a bookstore. I think we should have a truck. Go to the talks on this: check emails.

jjj. Sam Usdan: In response to Mansoor, probably the reason why you don’t see any student-local interaction on route 66 because you basically need a car to get there. Having national retailers could be really good for the community. If you have something that generates money, that’s good tax-wise. Other larger retailers will be attracted to the town. Basically, it could raise desirability and property values. does do an economic good.

kkk. Andrew Trexler: People are making the assumption that McDonalds is going in here, that’s not true. National chains means, at the very most, a restaurant and something akin to a Starbucks. The point of the development is to allow local business to set up shop. If you go to BSB, it’s ugly. Gasman station across BSB is sketchy. BSB is gated, so middletown residents are not really likely to go there. In Trexler’s hometown, there is a bookstore that is popular among the residents, so he takes issue with the idea that the bookstore would only be used by Wesleyan students.

lll. Jake Blumenthal: Fairfield and Middletown are VERY different (Ellen). The bookstore used to be a Border’s, but it was replaced by a smaller bookstore. Not the same thing. It’s a textbook warehouse.

mmm. Sam Ebb: It might be interesting to try and get a representative of the developers at this meeting in November so that they could answer questions, talk to students, etc. and clarify what they are planning to do with the space.

nnn. Jacob Musinsky: I don’t think that by having 3 retail places, I don’t think it’s gonna become a giant mall. It does not mean that people are not going to go to Main Street. Starbucks is unlikely. This space to have little talks would be awesome.

ooo. Christian H: Wes could have a big say in how this is developed. We should use our support as leverage to have the support of the community. In terms of bookstores going into obsolescence, I agree with Jake, but I think that, on a college campus, it is very profitable and viable on this economy. It should be a place that is actively seeking out students and residents. Keep in mind macro and micro economics. We are really not the people to make the decision about national chains.
Mandy: You want to keep Wes weird. And it’s a little hard to “keep Wes weird” and have chains. Once a developer gets there, they can do whatever they want. Chains would ruin our identity. Consider what kind of Middletown you want.

Andrew Trexler: Talk with your neighbors and get them to come on the 27th. I think that this is a good opportunity for Wesleyan and we should be carefully considering it. The developers can do what they want, they own these buildings but putting our name in the complex would give us more power. This is not about national chains. It’s about local businesses and promoting community.

Jake Blumenthal: “People would still go to Main street”- Musinsky - that may be true, but it’s hard to really get a lot of Middletown. Final conclusions: I can’t really see this being about local businesses. This is something we can’t commit to now, but we can’t be the vanguard. There are too many negative possibilities.

Nicole Brenner: Do we want to have to worry if our bookstore is going to go out of business? Our contract is coming up with Follett, could we get another provider?

A. Trexler: We need to negotiate with Broad Street. I don’t think that there is any possibility that the bookstore will go out of business and just go away.

Jesse R-S: Reiterate A. Trexler. The question of “Are bookstores viable?” is not relevant.

A. Trexler: What would be the effect of Wesleyan having the bookstore? If we decide not to move now, it’s improbable that we could move to that location. Now or never sort of situation.

Alton: I think we’re talking like we can control what is built there. I feel like if they already know what they are going to do, I would be in favor.

Ellen P: We should really use this opportunity to create a Win-Win situation. We would open up space with BSB. Another interesting question: could a Middletown business move into the Art Library? Could someone do research about bookstores at other schools?

Lili B: There are so few places were bookstores are wanted. A college is one of them. It’s important to keep this in mind when discussing this issue.

Mansoor: I sent an email. I’d be willing to take 6 people to Zoning Committee

Maggie: If it’s something like a chain, Middletown has a meeting, and if there is backlash, then it probably won’t happen

A. Trexler: A development is set. What goes into that development is not.

Trexler: Proposing a straw poll: are you in favor of this move:

Result: Y-19 N-7 A-7
A. Trexler: Email us atatrexler@wesleyan.edu to voice any concerns about this.

i. Also npeters@wesleyan.edu

ii. wsa@wesleyan.edu

4. Committee Reports
   a. Stack:
      i. Arya A: Why is ITC it’s own Committee Report?
         1. Chloe: It has a lot of stuff.
         2. Grant: Does not care about the font size. I do this because I have 7 members who really work hard.
         3. Syed: We’ve already been doing this, and a lot of the things on the ITC Committee Report are their own separate issues.
      ii. Mari: Chairs of subcommittee should be able to give their own part of the report. Canvassing is important because we are elected by the student body and generally the only time we talk to them around election time. We should always have the interest of the student body in mind. Chloe is the chair of GA and she is taking at her function. You can miss it, but you will get an absence. Come and respect the Chlordinator.
      iii. Mansoor: Students with disabilities are scared of speaking out because of losing their accommodations. There have been laws that have been broken and there could be lawsuits against the university. [When you have someone in the disability chair position who is so incompetent], it’s very distressing and detrimental.
      iv. Arya Alizadeh: Having ITC have it’s own committee report is a very underhanded way of progressing ITC to begin it’s own standing committee. However, this was discussed last year, and ITC was not made it’s own standing committee.
      v. Zach Malter: If you have any questions about canvassing, talk to me or Chloe after the meeting.
      vi. A. Trexler: I don’t think that this is an underhanded way of subtly creating ITC as it’s own standing committee. CANVASS. It’s vitally important because we are student representatives. It’s extremely important that we do outreach. Canvassing is extremely important and you really should come.
      vii. Christian H: I think that Mari is just allowing Grant to talk because he does a lot of work. It would be inefficient to Mari to talk about all of ITC. Canvassing is important, and we should do even more. If you do not feel compelled to know what the people who elected you feel, you should resign.
         1. Mansoor: that’s out of line
viii. Jake Blumenthal: I support canvassing, but I can’t attend canvassing.
ix. A. Trexler: If you can’t make any of the canvassing times, talk to Chloe or Zach. I canvassed every Monday as a freshman and its a great way to get to know students, get the temperature of campus, and generate some new ideas. You can (and should) do it on your own whenever.
x. Jason S: Canvassing does not have to be constitutionally mandated, it is mandated by our titles.
xi. Christian H: I didn’t mean to offend anyone. Canvassing can also be personal, people should think of springboard questions.
xii. Scott Elias: Opposition is to the formalized structure. I suggest that we bring up the issue of the bookstore. Mention the forum on the 27th (Check email for all the fora, all the fun WSA stuff)

5. Minutes Approved
6. New Business and Announcements

Meeting Adjourned: 9:30/pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Bruno Machiavelo ‘16 & Grant Tanenbaum ‘15