

Douglass High School Commemorative Committee

Location: Frederick Douglass Elementary School Library

MEETING MINUTES

April 17, 2023

APPROVED

ATTENDEES:

Committee Members: Charles Avery, Erica Bush, Gladys Burke, Valerie Bush, Dwight Brooks, Tammy Carter, Carlotta Coates, Gertrude Evans, James Roberts, Larry Roeder, Larry Simms

Absent: Glory Howard, Joyce Jackson, Mary Randolph, Michelle Thomas, Sylvia Smith

Guests: Alvin Dodson, Janet Wiggins, Helen Avery, Charlotte Coates, Reggie Simms

LCPS Staff: Sara Howard-O'Brien, Donna Torraca

Charles Avery welcomed the Committee and guests to the meeting and recognized Reggie Simms, Douglass High School Class of 1955.

Review of Meeting Minutes:

The Committee reviewed the March 13, 2023, meeting minutes. Dwight Brooks made a motion to approve the minutes. Jim Roberts seconded.

Progress Update/DHS-CC Commemorative Elements:

Sara shared photos of the construction progress and commemorative elements.

The following updates were provided:

- The drive aisles have been top-coated and are now smooth for driving.
- The basketball court has been fenced (on the east, south, and west sides of the court, with the latter set further out from the court)
- The outdoor restrooms are complete
- Sculpture fabrication is underway and remains on schedule for a November 2023 delivery
- The Mural has been approved through the Town of Leesburg process and the artist is scheduled to begin work the first week in May.
- The East Courtyard bench with the statue of Frederick Douglass is to be installed May 10 (bench) and May 12 (statue)
- The West Courtyard Memorial Tree and fountain are projected for mid-May installation.

LCPS Staff learned April 16th that there are Exterior commemorative elements that will be delayed:

- Engraved Pavers are to be delivered late April with installation to be determined (TBD)
- The Monument Sign is delayed with installation TBD

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- Site Furnishings (Benches, Tables, etc) are to be delivered late April with installation TBD
- Exterior Custom Signage is delayed in fabrication with installation TBD – June/July estimated. This includes:
 - Exterior Commemorative Signs
 - Exterior Directory
 - “Did You Know?” Signs (West Courtyard)
 - Amphitheater Sign Panels, Lettering and Flagpoles
 - Inspiration Way Curved Wall
 - W&OD Trail Sign

LCPS is disappointed but wanted Committee members to know the status. Staff will continue to push for as many of the items to be in place as possible by May 21st but there will be components that will not be there. To address this issue, staff will have large graphic boards prepared for display in the respective locations (or inside/weather dependent) so that guests may “see” what is coming.

The Committee asked how often the restrooms were open? LCPS said they would follow-up with Parks & Rec.

Interior elements are progressing nicely and are anticipated to be in place by May 21st:

- Time Capsule installation complete; plaque installation expected mid-May
- Display Cases, \$1 Bill Display & Frederick Douglass Bust Display; all display cases have been received with installation to occur the week of May 15
- Interior Custom Signage: In Fabrication with installation planned for mid-May
 - Front & Back Timelines
 - Interior Commemorative Signs (Room Signage)
 - Interior Directory
- 1941 Area Basketball Hoops: mid-May
- 1941 Replica Scoreboard: Installation complete 1960’s (the score numbers can be changed)
- Gym Photo and Logo Graphic Panels are to be installed late April
- One item in question is the Frederick Douglass Portrait Collage at the rear of the Stage; the installation is TBD
- Band Room mural is also underway (of shop class photo) and is expected to be complete by May 21.
- Band Picture for the band room is delayed as the original photo needs to be secured for quality photo enlargement

Consortium Move-In: The stakeholders may move into their offices starting May 8th. LCPS has ordered devices to hang pictures, maps, and other historical information for the stakeholder rooms. These picture hanging systems avoid damage to the walls and historic features. Installation is scheduled for mid-May.

Sculpture Update and Site Visit to Jeff Hall's Studio: Committee members discussed a visit to see the progress on the sculpture and selected Saturday, April 22 @ 1 pm for the visit.

Kiosk Update: Donna and Sara have been working with LCPS Digital Innovation and the kiosks are to be ordered shortly. These include the touchscreen for The Struggle Years Timeline plus the four kiosks to be located in the front hall, behind the stage near the Treasured Memories timeline, in the PR&CS area near the gym, and in the band room.

Douglass Commemorative Consortium:

Carlotta Coates reported that the Consortium has arranged to hold two tour guide training sessions with Barry Harrelson, an expert in training docents. The training sessions are slated for May 11 at 11:30 and the early afternoon of May 22. Carlotta is confirming dates with LCPS to conduct a walk-through of the site to familiarize Barry and tour guides with the campus. Carlotta will send an email to confirm the sessions and asked that everyone willing to participate let her know. Tours are currently scheduled for 6-8 pm the evening of May 22 and 11am -1pm on May 27 and 28. A summary description of the commemorative items is currently under review. The DHSCC sub-committees submitted information about their respective areas which was compiled to provide information for training future tour guides.

Carlotta advised that the Consortium had a conference call to review events to be scheduled and that they are hoping to gain access to the Parks and Recreation calendar to help with event planning. Each of the Consortium organizations is providing a primary and alternate contact to allow for enhanced coordination. There is a Friends of the Consortium email that may be utilized to reach out to the Consortium (douglassconsortium@gmail.com) for Consortium related questions. Donna advised that the Douglass web site is now available and the link (<https://www.lcps.org/douglass>) will be sent to all committee members. The re-dedication event on May 21 will be live streamed to this web site.

Carlotta also advised that the Consortium will be coordinating a “lunch and learn” with Visit Loudoun, the County’s Tourism Board, to share information about Douglass and the planned tours and events.

A question was raised as to whether people interested in taking a tour could drop in at the facility to do so. The example was for out-of-town alumni that may be in the area but do not have a tour scheduled. Sara responded that people should be able to drop in and that there had been discussion about utilizing the tour guide summary to create a self-guided tour document. The facility will be staffed during regular business hours. From this question a discussion ensued on how safety and security will be managed at the facility.

There will be front administrative personnel to monitor entry into the building. Similar to school sites, visitors will be a need to “buzz in” to the facility and present identification (such as a driver’s license). LCPS also provides security personnel on site during the day and patrols all school facilities on a rotating basis in the evening. Parks, Recreation and Community Services (PR&CS) manage the facility after hours and on the weekends. LCPS will need to check with PR&CS about their security procedures. Committee members asked:

- How will safety and security be managed at the facility? During the day? During the evening? Does PR&CS have security staff for the events they manage in the evenings?
- Will there be a “check-in” to enter the building?
- How should tours be managed in relation to that check-in?
- Will individuals be able to come to the facility for a self-guided tour? If an out of the area alumni happens to be in town and wants to stop in and see Douglass without an official tour is that possible?
- Could there be a briefing to the Consortium on how security is managed and what they should do if something happens? Who should they contact?

Sara will follow-up on these questions and report back to the Committee.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

Reconciliation Subcommittee:

Charles Avery provided an update on the work of the Reconciliation Subcommittee. The Subcommittee is considering three primary recommendations to the Board of Supervisors and School Board. These include 1) the previously discussed documentary 2) personnel to support the Consortium/curator at Douglass and 3) the recommendations offered by the DHSCC/Reconciliation Subcommittee at the beginning of the Reconciliation Subcommittee work. The Reconciliation Subcommittee will be reviewing these recommendations at the April 26, 2023, meeting. These items will be brought back to the DHSCC at the May 15, 2023, meeting for review.

DHSCC members asked questions pertaining to:

How does the Loudoun County School Board versus the Board of Supervisors relate to the Reconciliation Subcommittee? Sara advised that the Reconciliation Subcommittee is a Board of Supervisors initiated Subcommittee. The Board of Supervisors will be the decision-making body with regard to the recommendations. Both Boards work together, and the respective staffs coordinate. As such the School Board, through the Joint School Board and Board of Supervisors Committee, will be briefed on the Reconciliation Committee work.

What is the concept for the personnel to be added? There was discussion among the Reconciliation Subcommittee members on how the proposed staff would interface with the LDAA curator role. Some felt the proposed staff person would be the lead curator while others felt the person would serve as support. The proposed staff addition is anticipated to be part time and would have technological skills to help with the kiosks, coordinate events and generally facilitate communication and work to be undertaken by the Consortium related to the educational component of Douglass. The proposed staff role will be discussed further. Charles noted that he would like to have Carlotta, Sara and Donna attend the next Reconciliation Subcommittee meeting.

Was there outreach to LDAA alumni for the proposed recommendations? The recommendations being considered are those that were put forth at the very beginning of the Reconciliation Subcommittee and included recommendations from the DHSCC. The primary “ask” has consistently been to “tell the story”. Each person on the Subcommittee offered numerous suggestions. These will be consolidated and considered. Both Erica Bush and Charles, Reconciliation Committee co-chairs, asked members to submit any ideas or input to the Reconciliation Subcommittee.

Larry Roeder reported on the upcoming release of the Dirt Don't Burn book written by the Edwin Washington Society (EWS) which documents the struggle for educational opportunities by Loudoun's Black Community. EWS wants to help get the story out, in part, through this book and will be publicizing its release.

Dedication Subcommittee:

Valerie Bush shared updates on the rededication event:

- The alumni preview of the renovated 1941 portion of the high school is scheduled for 12:30-1:30. Entry will be allowed to those with the LDAA distributed wristbands. There is no program for this open house; it is an opportunity for alumni to have a first look at the renovation.
- The rededication event will begin at 2 pm with doors opening at 1:25 pm. The program is designed to be approximately 60-70 minutes.
- Ribbon cutting will follow the program at the front of the building. The ribbon is to be held by the DHSCC members and the officials speaking at the event (LCSB Chair, Assistant Superintendent, BOS Chair, and Leesburg Mayor). The ribbon will be cut by the four previously selected alumni (Ronald Hampton, Sterling Cook, Almeta Ferrell Johnson, and Rosetta Bush). The ribbon cutting will be live-streamed allowing guests to remain in the gym to view, if desired, and particularly, if the weather is bad.
- Following the ribbon cutting guests will be allowed to tour the building. Color-coded bookmarkers will be used to allow groups to enter to ensure adequate space to view and to keep within the fire-code occupancy requirements.
- Invitations to the event are being mailed the week of April 24. RSVPs are required to obtain entry tickets. LCPS has a list of alumni to check as RSVPs are received. Information on parking along with event tickets will be sent as RSVP's are received. For those alumni that have already responded that they will attend, their tickets and parking information will be included in their invitations. The invitations also provide the live-stream information to allow alumni that cannot attend to watch. (Note: the event will be recorded and posted for later viewing)
- Each DHSCC member will receive four tickets. All affiliated organizations, those with representation on the DHSCC, will receive the same number of tickets (10) and be asked to RSVP.
- Parking is being provided in multiple locations with volunteers stationed at each parking lot to assist and direct traffic. Shuttle Service will be provided to and from Frederick Douglass Elementary and Douglass High School. A second shuttle service will be provided to and from Loudoun County Parking Garage on Loudoun Street and Douglass High School.

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- The DHSCC had previously discussed their participation in the open house following the ribbon cutting. A list of potential assignments, included in the packet, was reviewed. Each member has been assigned a location in the building or on the campus to be available to respond to guest questions. The co-chairs will be moving throughout the facility to respond to questions and assist. The goal will be to keep the guests moving throughout the campus and encourage them to return for a more in-depth visit. Numerous volunteers will be participating in the event from check-in and ushers to parking attendants and refreshments.
- Dress code for the event is suggested as business casual.

There is an LDAA sponsored event for Saturday, May 20, with the guest speaker, Mr. Kevin Greene, great, great grandson of Frederick Douglass. This will be held at 705-H East Market Street in the Parks, Recreation, and Community Services temporary offices (the shopping center to the left as you enter Leesburg, behind the Wells Fargo). It is an evening event with time to be determined, likely 5-7 pm or 6-8 pm. Valerie will send an email for this event.

Brandon Hunt, Dean of Frederick Douglass Elementary School (FDES), stopped by the meeting to thank the Committee for coming to the school for their meetings. He noted how much it meant to be a part of the process. He said that FDES has already scheduled two field trips to Douglass High School, and they are very excited to see the Committee's work. He noted that the students are also eager to visit the PR&CS playground.

Donna and Sara will email the information to Committee members for the site visit to Jeff Hall's art studio, the web link to The Historic Douglass High School Education and Development Campus, <https://www.lcps.org/douglass>, and the Committee assignments for the rededication open house to follow the ribbon cutting.

S:\Planning\Donna's Folder\DOUGLASS\Commemorative Committee Info\Meeting Agendas and Minutes\2023 Agendas and Minutes\April 17 2023 DHSCC Meeting Minutes DRAFT .docx-