

# Douglass High School Commemorative Committee

Location: Frederick Douglass Elementary School Library

## MEETING MINUTES

December 12, 2022

APPROVED

### ATTENDEES:

**Committee Members:** Charles Avery, Erica Bush, Dwight Brooks, Carlotta Coates, Gertrude Evans, Mary Randolph, James Roberts, Larry Simms, Sylvia Smith

**Absent:** Gladys Burke, Valerie Bush, Tammy Carter, Glory Howard, Joyce Jackson, Larry Roeder, Michelle Thomas

**Guests:** Alvin Dodson, Janet Wiggins, Helen Avery, Charlotte Coates, Walt Hogan

**LCPS Staff:** Kevin Lewis, Lottie Spurlock, Melissa Tello, Kathleen Devens, Sara Howard-O'Brien, Donna Torraca

**Loudoun County Staff:** Carl Rush, Karen Cornejo Guillen, Mary Frances Forcier, Glen Barbour, Shalom Black

Charles Avery welcomed the Committee and guests to the meeting and wished everyone Happy Holidays. Janet Wiggins shared that she continues to reach out to Mr. Hankerson to obtain the original photos of the band but has been unable to reach him so far.

### Review of Meeting Minutes:

The Committee reviewed the November 14th meeting minutes. A suggestion was made to remove the word "and" on Page 2 under Mural Subcommittee in the first line. Seeing no further corrections, Gert Evans made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Jim Roberts seconded.

### Reconciliation Committee: Community Outreach

Erica welcomed Loudoun County Staff, Shalom Black, and the County Public Affairs and Communications Office.

Shalom Black introduced Glen Barbour and Mary Frances Forcier from the County Public Affairs and Communication Office, along with Carl Rush and Karen Cornejo Guillen from the Equity Office. She invited each to discuss their office and role at the County.

Mr. Rush provided an overview of the Equity Office and the Board of Supervisors' plans for a larger segregation study. The study is a two-phase approach and will take approximately 2 years to complete. The first phase will be a study conducted by UVA scholars with expertise in Massive Resistance and Desegregation. They will review court cases, Board of Supervisors minutes, School Board minutes, legal opinions, tax records, and other documents. The study will take approximately 8-9 months. In Phase II a Board appointed Committee will be established with representatives from the community including those who attended Carver, Douglass and Banneker, Black History Committee, NAACP, and others to review and discuss the report and provide recommendations to the Board of Supervisors on how to remedy some of the things that

Douglass High School Commemorative Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
December 12, 2022

occurred. Those who are a part of the Commemorative Committee are welcome to be a part of this new Committee when it is formed.

Dwight Brooks stated that Douglass High School is a cornerstone to celebrate all that the Black community accomplished and he feels the story should begin to be told with the opening of the building. Glen Barbour agreed, stating the question was: How do we do that and what would you like the Board of Supervisors and LCPS Communication Offices to do?

Gert Evans stated that she has received requests for an interview from both the Washington Post and NBC News but has declined. How should the Committee handle these requests? Mr. Barbour suggested contacting the Staff Liaisons for the Committee so that the inquiry can be evaluated and then facilitated through the Communications Office. He noted that individual members would need to be careful in speaking so that they are not perceived as speaking for the School Board, the Board of Supervisors, or even the DHSCC. Mr. Lewis concurred on behalf of LCPS.

Mary Frances Forcier introduced herself and her background as a historian. She stated that there are many perspectives and interests and she would like to see a coordinated effort to tell the story. Documentation of the history is scattered among many sources and resources such as the Clerk of the Circuit Court, Balch Library, Loudoun County, Loudoun County School Board, and Black History Committee, and it would be helpful to bring all those resources together. How do we do that? She noted that this is an opportunity to create a more unified approach to these resources.

Erica Bush asked if we knew who our target audience is. There are many audiences to consider such as generational, political views, students, elderly, those new to Loudoun, and those who have grown up here. Charles Avery reminded the group that when the Committee first started he observed that all were historians and that the Douglass history is ingrained in Loudoun County's history. Douglass represents how the African American community shaped education in Loudoun County.

Glen Barbour stated that a communication plan is needed to establish an approach to educate the public about the facility, present, and past, and establish what the top five items need to be done on day one, what would come later in the year and what would be needed in the future if funding was available. The Committee is concerned that there will be pushback from the community for all that is being done on campus. Mr. Barbour suggested a series of opportunities for the public to attend which could include videos, discussions, and other events. The Committee feels there are several in the public who are interested in the project and want to hear the stories. There was a discussion regarding scheduling events and how to do that. Coordination will be needed between County Parks and Rec., LCPS, and the Town of Leesburg.

Discussion on the types of communication included oral histories, letters to the editor, making the Apology video readily available to the public, events (dedication, education component of new facility, tours), online communication, individually sharing the story and other avenues. Who are the audiences and how do we reach them? What are our priorities? It was offered that a top priority is to let the public know why we are doing all of this. It was recommended that the

Committee brainstorm all the ideas and then narrow down to available capacity and available resources. It does not need to be done all at once but through many opportunities.

Shalom thanked everyone for their feedback and this will be discussed further at the Reconciliation Committee on Wednesday, December 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Progress Update/DHS-CC Commemorative Elements:**

Melissa reviewed the construction update showing photos of the front plaza, Heritage Walk, amphitheater, classrooms, and kitchen area. In January she will provide an update on what commemorative elements LCPS feels can be installed by opening and a timeline of each element. Melissa shared the timeline currently in place for the project for furniture delivery and possible occupancy.

Sara stated that LCPS has been referring to the walkway from the front plaza to the low wall which will acknowledge the LDAA, MLK, NAACP, Edwin Washington, and The County-Wide League as the “Heritage Walk”. Does the Committee want to keep that name or is there something different that area should be referred to on the campus maps? It was decided that the Committee would consider the name over the holidays and come back with any recommendations at the January 9, 2023, Committee meeting.

**Douglass Commemorative Consortium:**

Carlotta reported that the Consortium met in early November and will be meeting again in the next two weeks.

**SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Mural Subcommittee:** Larry Simms, Joyce Jackson, Larry Roeder

After review of the rankings of the initial seven art submissions from the Committee members since the November meeting, the Subcommittee narrowed down the choices from the seven initial submissions to four options and provided copies of each proposal for the full Committee’s review and consideration: Kaeley Boyle, Danielle Ferrin, Kim Kim, and Jason Tetlak. These four artists received the most rankings. Larry Simms asked for a vote from each Committee member as to which artist and style/proposal they would like to see. Roll Call was taken and Kaeley Boyle received two votes, Jason Tetlak six votes, with one abstention.

Sara explained that Tuesday, December 13<sup>th</sup>, the Town Council would be reviewing the Public Art Guidelines and specifically the Private Property Mural Pilot Program Guidelines that are under consideration for an amendment to allow the mural to be placed on the Douglass property. If a positive decision is made at that meeting, the mural would then be reviewed by the Commission on Public Art and then the Town Council.

**Reconciliation Subcommittee:**

Erica welcomed Mr. Walt Hogan to the meeting. He thanked everyone for the invite to attend.

Douglass High School Commemorative Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
December 12, 2022

**Dedication Subcommittee:**

Erica stated that it was now time to create a Dedication Subcommittee to work with LCPS on plans for the dedication to occur sometime in Spring 2023. Erica Bush, Larry Simms, Jim Roberts and Mary Randolph volunteered for the Subcommittee. Sara and Donna will be reaching out to schedule a Subcommittee meeting. [Note: On December 13 Gladys Burke also volunteered to be on the Dedication Subcommittee]

**Closing:** Charles thanked everyone for their time and reminded them that the next meeting is Monday, January 9, 2023, wishing everyone a wonderful holiday.

S:\Planning\Donna's Folder\DOUGLASS\Commemorative Committee Info\Meeting Agendas and Minutes\2022 Agendas and Minutes\Dec 12 2022 DHSCC Meeting Minutes DRAFT (v3).docx-