

# Douglass High School Commemorative Committee

Location: Frederick Douglass Elementary School Library

## MEETING MINUTES

February 27, 2023

APPROVED

### ATTENDEES:

**Committee Members:** Charles Avery, Erica Bush, Gladys Burke, Valerie Bush, Dwight Brooks, Tammy Carter, Carlotta Coates, Gertrude Evans, Glory Howard, Mary Randolph, James Roberts, Larry Roeder, Larry Simms, Sylvia Smith

**Absent:** Joyce Jackson, Michelle Thomas

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

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

Charles Avery welcomed the Committee and guests to the meeting. Erica announced that there were two February birthdays, Valerie Bush and Alvin Dodson. The Committee wished them a happy birthday.

### Review of Meeting Minutes:

The Committee reviewed the January 9, 2023 meeting minutes. Larry Simms made a motion to approve the minutes. Jim Roberts seconded.

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

Melissa Tello shared photos of the construction progress and commemorative elements on-site. The water feature, requested by the Committee and selected by LCPS, was shared with the Committee. Questions were asked about the water feature specifications. [Information provided after the meeting: The fountain is 40" high, 17" wide and 18" deep.]

### Douglass Commemorative Consortium:

Carlotta reported that she and Larry Roeder with the Consortium had met. They will be providing a write-up for the dedication guide that LCPS is compiling by March 15<sup>th</sup>. Additionally, Carlotta reached out to Parks & Recreation to reserve the 1941 portion of the building and the gym to provide tours for Monday, May 22<sup>nd</sup> from 6-8 pm. She has also reserved the space for Saturday and Sunday, May 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> from 11-1 for additional tours.

The group also discussed training docents so there is consistent information being shared. Donna Torraca, Valerie, and Larry Roeder are checking on information regarding docents and training.

### SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

#### Reconciliation Subcommittee:

Erica reported that Phyllis Randall had joined the Subcommittee's most recent Zoom call and clarified what she is looking for regarding the forced sale of the land and providing information to others both within and outside Loudoun County. More specifically, Chair Randall would like

to see the Douglass story told “at large” and offered that the County has technical resources to get the story out, citing a documentary as one possible avenue.

**Dedication Subcommittee:**

Valerie Bush reported to the Committee that May 21, 2023, from 2-5 is the confirmed date and time for the dedication. There will be a program of approximately 1 hour and then an open house for guests to explore the commemorative components on the campus and inside the building. The Subcommittee would like to have youth involved and is working to obtain string music while guests await the beginning of the program, which will take place in the 1960 gym area. The Loudoun Community Gospel Choir has been chosen to sing Lift Every Voice and the Douglass High School Song. There are several individuals being considered as keynote speakers at this time.

To assist with traffic flow, due to the volume of guests anticipated, a bookmark in various colors will be used to designate when groups could view the 1941 portion of the building. There was a discussion on the anticipated number of guests and how the guests may be provided the opportunity to view the school without overcrowding in any one area. The Subcommittee is asking for bookmark design suggestions and those should be sent to Valerie by the end of the week.

LDAA will be inviting alumni to view the 1941 portion of the building from 12:00 – 1:30, invitation only, to help alleviate the number of people who will want to visit the front hall after the dedication ceremony. Those who visit between 12:00 and 1:30 will be provided a specific color bookmark to reflect that they have already been in the front hall. The issue of overflow was discussed should there be more in attendance than can fit in the gym. No decision was made at this time. A “playbill” or expanded program guide is being prepared that will provide not only the events for the ceremony but also information related to Douglass, the renovation and related items of interest.

**Visit to Douglass High School and Time Capsule Insertion:**

The Committee and four visitors traveled to Douglass High School building for a view of the 1941 renovation project and to place their items in the time capsule which is to be opened in 2072. The Committee inserted their individual letters as well as the submissions from the organizations that had appointed representatives to the Committee. At the conclusion of the time capsule ceremony, the Committee witnessed the capsule being inserted in the space underneath the stage. Staff from LCPS Communications and Community Engagement Office filmed the event. After the time capsule was inserted under the stage, various members of the Committee and long-time attendees were interviewed by the LCPS Communications Office regarding the renovation. LCPS Construction staff (Scott Klose and Anil Kumar), Kevin Lewis, Chief Operating Officer and Beverly Tate, Planning and GIS Services Division were also present.