

# Douglass High School Commemorative Committee

Location: Frederick Douglass Elementary School Library

## MEETING MINUTES February 28, 2022, 6:00 p.m.

APPROVED

### ATTENDEES:

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

**Absent:** Erica Bush, Glory Howard

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

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

Charles Avery welcomed the Committee and guests. There were no public comments provided.

The Committee reviewed the minutes from the February 7, 2022 meeting. Gert Evans made a motion to approve the minutes and Valerie Bush seconded.

### Construction Update:

Melissa Tello shared that renovations to the interior 1950/1960's portion of the building continue. In the 1941 historic section, millwork and trim is being restored and work has started with restoration of the ceiling. At a future meeting interior finishes will be shared with the Committee for their consideration. Brick samples are being reviewed and LCPS will only be replacing those bricks that are in poor condition (deteriorating). Time capsule exploration in the cornerstone will be done soon from the interior of the building. With the weather warming in the coming weeks there will be more activity outside. The front of the building will be cleared and ground penetrating radar will be used to determine if there is a time capsule in the front area.

### Playground Update:

Sara Howard-O'Brien reported that Loudoun County Parks & Recreation (PR&CS) invited LCPS to participate in the County Staff's review of recommendations received from public outreach and discuss incorporation of those ideas into the project. No decisions have been made and additional meetings have been scheduled. LCPS staff is there to represent the recommendations made by the Committee. If Committee members have additional suggestions regarding themes, groups of people to be reflected in the panels or additional recommendations for statutes, suggestions should be sent to Sara and Donna Torraca so they can be shared with PR&CS. A more detailed report is included in the Committee's meeting packet.

**Responsibility of Stakeholder Groups:**

Larry Roeder reported that the stakeholders would like to be a part of any dedication that will occur with the opening of the building and requested that the Superintendent and School Board be in attendance. This is relative due to the fact that the Superintendent did not attend the original Douglass High Dedication which took place in May of 1942.

The stakeholders discussed a reenactment of the play *The Cavalcade of Negroana* that was performed at the Ashburn Colored School in 1941. This play was based on a similar play performed at the American Negro Exposition in 1940 to celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of slavery in the U.S. All three stakeholders would need to have extensive involvement and assistance would be needed from LCPS and the Black History Committee. The play could be updated to include new information and would shine a light on what the black community did for themselves.

Charles Avery shared that the MOU's for the stakeholders are being drafted and the School Board will be reviewing.

**SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Reconciliation Subcommittee:**

Sara Howard-O'Brien shared that the Joint Committee Action Item for the Study and Reconciliation for the Operation of Segregated Schools in Loudoun County is before the Board of Supervisors at their March 1, 2022 meeting. A copy of the item has been provided to the Committee in their meeting packet.

Larry Roeder shared that he had met with Supervisor Briskman and she would like to attend a future Commemorative Committee meeting to discuss the next steps.

**Time Capsule Subcommittee:** Valerie Bush, Larry Roeder, Jim Roberts

Larry Roeder provided the Time Capsule Subcommittee report to the full Committee.

Recommendations included:

- locating a time capsule inside
- size of capsule,
- content,
- digital and paper items,
- plaque information on the capsule itself as well as the location in the building,
- who may place items in the capsule, and
- when it should be opened

Committee members discussed the type of paper that should be used for each Committee member and organization, who would open the capsule, what would happen with the contents once opened, whether members could share their own letters, whether members could see the (read) the time capsule contents, and the use of the cloud to store information. Larry shared that

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he would research archivable paper and envelope costs and costs for cloud storage. LCPS will investigate the potential to use the school's Cloud space to hold this content. The Committee felt more time was needed to consider the contents of the capsule.

Melissa Tello shared that LCPS and BBB would need to think about locations in the building. The proposed capsule is rather large. What type of artifacts would the Committee like to place in the capsule? Is there a need for such a large capsule?

Roll Call votes were taken on some items and others were tabled for future discussion as follows:

1. Locate the Time Capsule Inside rather than outside and buried:  
Passed 13-0-1-2 (Mary Randolph Abstain; Erica Bush and Glory Howard Absent)
2. Size of Time Capsule will be based on contents – no vote was taken
3. Exterior Information on the Capsule should include:
  - o Picture on the front
  - o Names of Committee members
  - o Year documents were inserted
  - o Date to be openedPassed 12-0-2-2 (Valerie Bush and Mary Randolph Abstain; Erica Bush and Glory Howard absent)
4. Motion was made to table the content of the time capsule and bring the item back to the full Committee at the next meeting by Valerie Bush, seconded by Larry Simms.  
Passed 12-2-2 (Gladys Burke and Jim Roberts voting No; Erica Bush and Glory Howard Absent)
5. Items will be placed by each Committee member, each member organization and from the Committee as a whole.  
Passed 13-0-1-2 (Mary Randolph Abstain; Erica Bush and Glory Howard Absent)
6. Contents of the capsule could be both digital and on archivable paper. Larry Roeder to research digital options and report back to the subcommittee/committee on options.  
Passed 12-0-2-2 (Gertrude Evans and Mary Randolph Abstain; Erica Bush and Glory Howard Absent)
7. Valerie Bush made a motion and Tammy Carter seconded to consolidate the Douglass High School and Loudoun County discussion with previous content discussion and table for a future meeting.  
Passed 12-0-2-2 (Gladys Burke and Mary Randolph Abstain; Erica Bush and Glory Howard Absent)
8. Larry Roeder made a motion to amend the Subcommittee's initial recommendation for the capsule to be opened in 50 years (2072) to the opening in 2041 to coincide with the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Douglass High School. Joyce Jackson seconded.  
Passed 11-1-1-3 (Gertrude Evans voting No; Mary Randolph Abstain; Erica Bush, Glory Howard and Larry Simms Absent)
9. Plaque at the location of the time capsule to include:
  - o What is behind the plaque
  - o Frederick Douglass Quote
  - o Created by DHS-CC

- When to be opened  
Passed 13-0-1-2 (Mary Randolph Abstain; Erica Bush and Glory Howard Absent)

**W&OD Trail Sign Subcommittee:** Dwight Brooks and Tammy Carter

Tammy Carter presented the Subcommittees recommendation to use a particular image of Frederick Douglass including the quote: *“In a composite nation like ours, as before the law, there should be no rich, no poor, no high, no low, no white, no black, but common country, common citizenship, equal rights and a common destiny.”* Additional content, which would be simple and invite the reader to explore the Douglass campus will be at a future meeting. Roll Call was taken; the recommendation passed 14-0-2 (Erica Bush and Glory Howard Absent)

**Timeline Subcommittee:** Gert Evans and Gladys Burke

Charles Avery invited the Committee to move to the hallway outside the library to review a mock-up of the size of the timeline proposed by BBB. Melissa Tello shared that this is the largest that BBB would recommend and the timeline could certainly be smaller, should the Committee decide that this is too large. The timeline is similar in size to the existing Frederick Douglass Elementary School timeline and the 18x18 squares were compared to some of the components in the existing timeline. The timeline at Douglass High School will have much more room for visitors to review and reflect than is currently available at Frederick Douglass Elementary School. Members were asked to consider the mock-up and be prepared to discuss this at a future meeting.

**Oral History:**

Larry Simms shared that the round table was conducted and provided a great discussion. Additional interviews will now be conducted with those former students who live out of the area and will be done via Zoom. Larry also shared that a former classmate who was interviewed in Middleburg, Arthur Lloyd, has passed away.

**Closing:**

Due to the lateness of the evening, the remaining Subcommittees will report out to the full Committee at the March 14, 2022 meeting. Charles thanked everyone for coming and the Committee was reminded to bring the February 11<sup>th</sup> supplemental information and the February 28<sup>th</sup> packet with them to the next meeting.