

Douglass High School Commemorative Committee
Location: Frederick Douglass Elementary School Library

APPROVED

MEETING MINUTES
January 10, 2022, 6:00 p.m.

ATTENDEES:

Committee Members: Charles Avery, Erica Bush, Dwight Brooks, Valerie Bush, Carlotta Coates, James Roberts, Larry Roeder, Larry Simms, Sylvia Smith

Absent: Gladys Burke, Tammy Carter, Gertrude Evans, Glory Howard, Joyce Jackson, Mary Randolph, Michelle Thomas

Guests: Charlotte Coates, Alvin Dodson, Janet Wiggins

LCPS Staff: Beverly Tate, Melissa Tello, Kathy Devens, Chris Watson, Sara Howard-O'Brien, Donna Torraca

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

The Committee moved to the multi-purpose room for a light and sound demonstration of the stage area provided by Chris Watkins with LCPS Department of Digital Information. The Committee then returned to the library for a PowerPoint overview of the system that will be installed at Douglass High School when the renovations are completed. It was noted that the primary difference between the proposed Douglass lighting system and current LCPS high school lighting systems is the theatrical lighting that is provided in high schools to allow for full performances. The stage and venue at Douglass is much smaller and more suited to the lighting systems provided at our new elementary schools. The demonstration was conducted at the request of the Committee to provide insight into the technology that will be available in the new space.

The Committee reviewed the minutes from the December 13, 2021 meeting. Carlotta Coates made a motion to approve and Jim Roberts seconded.

2021 DHS-CC Recap:

Charles provided a recap of the Committee accomplishments for 2021 and thanked all for their time and work to date. The Committee has made great strides. He noted that there is much work to be done but felt with the sub-committees they could reach the goal of being completed by Fall 2022.

Responsibility of Stakeholders (EWP, LDAA, and NAACP):

The stakeholders have provided input as to their intentions for use of space at Douglass. Charles asked the best approach for the groups to work together and carry out the Mission of the three organizations. Charles posed questions for the three groups to think about: do the stakeholders feel comfortable with what they are to do in this space, how will the three interact? How much of your own materials will you bring in; what do you want to see in this space; how will you manage the space? and how will the three act as a unit? Larry Roeder suggested the three organizations meet and discuss their goals in more detail. He offered to send out a meeting

invite to all three. Carlotta agreed that was a good idea and that LDAA would be willing to meet. After the groups meet, they will provide a report back to the Commemorative Committee. Charles also posed a question to the DHSCC: what does the Committee see as the role of the stakeholder groups? The Committee members should provide input to the three organizations as to what should be done in this space.

Reconciliation Subcommittee:

The newly adopted Commemorative Committee Mission Statement and agreement to be involved with the reconciliation task was reviewed. There was discussion regarding what was meant by “reconciliation” in 2022. It would seem to mean something much different than reconciliation in the 1960’s and there was discussion as to whether reconciliation was the correct term to use. Suggestions included endowments, scholarships, educational programs, and other items that could benefit the black community and address inequity. There was also a discussion of the unintentional disadvantages for many minority groups.

The following Committee members requested to be on the Reconciliation Subcommittee: Larry Simms, Valerie Bush, Jim Roberts, Charles Avery, Erica Bush, Dwight Brooks, Tammy Carter, and Gert Evans.

Subcommittee Reports:

Erica reviewed the Subcommittees appointed in November (Front Plaza/Entry Area, Amphitheater and Timeline) and asked if there were any new items to report since the December 13th meeting. All committees are waiting for the BBB presentation before continuing discussions.

Additional Subcommittees:

In an effort to continue moving forward additional Committees were discussed and members volunteered to assist:

Time Capsule: Valerie Bush, Larry Roeder, Jim Roberts
W&OD trail Sign: Dwight Brooks and Tammy Carter
Murals: Larry Simms, Larry Roeder and Joyce Jackson
Kiosk/Computer Screen: Carlotta Coates and Valerie Bush
Pavers & Quotes: Carlotta Coates and Gert Evans

These groups will meet outside of regular meetings. The current task is to determine location and design, not content. These Committees will report back to the full Committee by the next meeting, January 24th.

Oral History:

Larry Simms recapped the success of the oral history project in 2021. In the last few months, 21 video interviews have taken place, two of which were former teachers. The team traveled to Maryland earlier in the month to interview Mr. Hankerson and is hopeful to interview the Sims in the coming months. Interviews will be conducted in Middleburg on January 27 and at Thomas Balch Library on February 4. Members suggested conducting some interviews by Zoom for those who have moved away from the area and we are unable to interview in person such as Guthrie Ashton, David Henry Thornton, and Virginia McCoram. Larry will discuss this with the

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team and reach out to some of those individuals. Valerie and Carlotta will supply contact information.

On February 17th a roundtable discussion is planned. There are six individuals covering a span of Douglass High School years who will participate. Committee members are welcome to send ideas for questions. The only initial comment was the question on reconciliation, and what the interviewees would like to see as a result of the reconciliation efforts.

Closing:

In closing, Erica asked how the members felt regarding in-person meetings. The majority felt that in-person meetings were best, particularly for the next meeting where BBB will be making a presentation. If the school system becomes virtual, then the Committee meetings will need to be conducted virtually as well. At this time, there is no discussion for school to be virtual, so meetings will continue to be in person.

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