

Douglass High School Commemorative Committee

Location: Frederick Douglass Elementary School Library

MEETING MINUTES

January 9, 2023

APPROVED

ATTENDEES:

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

Absent: Tammy Carter, Glory Howard, 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 and wished everyone Happy New Year. Gert congratulated Charles on his recent election as President of the Loudoun Douglass High School Alumni Association.

Review of Meeting Minutes:

The Committee reviewed the December 12th meeting minutes. Gert Evans made a motion to approve the minutes. Erica Bush seconded.

Progress Update/DHS-CC Commemorative Elements:

Melissa Tello shared photos of the construction progress both inside the building and on-site.

Heritage Trail Naming:

Sara discussed the labeling of the walk path and the question of continuing to label as "Heritage Trail" which was proposed by BBB or to another name. Various ideas were discussed and the Committee liked the term "Inspiration" rather than Heritage. Suggestions considered included Inspiration Trail, Inspiration Way and Inspiration Walk. Roll Call was taken and the Committee voted for Inspiration Way (5-4) with Gladys Burke, Tammy Carter, Glory Howard, Joyce Jackson and Michelle Thomas absent for the vote.

Statue Plaque:

Sara reviewed the suggested plaque language for the front of the statue that was taken from the Sculptor, Jeff Hall's submission. Larry Roeder suggested the language be slightly reworded and the Committee was in agreement. The plaque will read:

Upward Struggle

This work represents the resilience of the Black community and

The struggle for equal education

Jeffery L. Hall, Sculptor

2023

Douglass Commemorative Consortium:

Carlotta reported that the Consortium had not met but that all three organizations had signed MOUs with Loudoun County Public Schools.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

Mural Subcommittee: Larry Simms, Joyce Jackson, Larry Roeder

Donna Torraca reported that she had attended the Commission on Public Arts (COPA) monthly meeting earlier that evening, which is a step in the approval process needed from the Town of Leesburg, for the installation of the mural. The mural project, along with background of the overall Commemorative Committee and the Douglass High School project was discussed at the COPA meeting. Unfortunately, COPA did not have a quorum to vote on the project but will do so either at an interim meeting later this month or at their next meeting on February 6th. Once the mural is reviewed and a recommendation is made by COPA the project will go before Town Council for their review and approval. All artists have been contacted with an update of the process and quotes are being sought for the dibond panels. Once the Town Council has approved, an Agreement with the Artist, as well as a license agreement with the Town, will be needed to be secured before the mural can be installed.

Reconciliation Subcommittee:

Gert stated that the Reconciliation Committee was seeking more clarity regarding the objectives and goals of the group. Carl Rush will be attending the next meeting on Wednesday.

Dedication Subcommittee:

Valerie Bush was elected the Chair of this Subcommittee at their first meeting on January 4th. Valerie reviewed the recommendations made to date regarding the dedication explaining that two more meetings were scheduled this month with continued discussion and suggestions and ideas were welcome from all. Highlights of the discussion at the first meeting including, the date and time of the dedication, music at the dedication and then after with the tours, use of the DHS podium, and having a color guard for the program. The goal is to keep the program to 60 minutes or less.

The Committee questioned why the dedication date of May 21st was chosen and whether it would be best to move to the fall when more commemorative elements would be finished. The Subcommittee recommended May based on the projected construction timeframe, various graduation schedules, and felt strongly that it should be a Sunday afternoon in order to provide the best time for attendees. The Subcommittee also recommended that the dedication be held in the 1960 gym to keep the 1941 space open for tours. It was suggested that for commemorative items that are not completed by dedication, those could be noted on the dedication program. There was also discussion regarding who would be invited and how that would be handled. Valerie stated the Subcommittee would revisit the date next week, continue work on the invite list and logistics, along with food, speaker(s), program, dedication gift, placing of time capsule, and other elements for the event. It was suggested that one main speaker be chosen such as a descendant of Charles Hamilton Houston or John Wanzer. Larry Roeder stated that he felt all three Consortium organizations should be allowed to make remarks at the dedication to introduce themselves and their continued work after the dedication.

Docents will be needed to lead tours of the property both inside and out but tours will continue beyond the dedication by the Consortium for those who were unable to attend the dedication.

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Closing: Members were reminded that the letters for the time capsule are due now and that the MLK March is next Monday, January 16th. Erica and Charles thanked everyone for their time and reminded them that the next meeting is Monday, February 13, 2023.

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