

Douglass High School Commemorative Committee

Location: Frederick Douglass Elementary School Library

MEETING MINUTES

June 27, 2022, 6:00 p.m.

APPROVED

ATTENDEES:

- Committee Members:** Charles Avery, Erica Bush, Dwight Brooks, Valerie Bush, Tammy Carter, Carlotta Coates, Gertrude Evans, Glory Howard, Mary Randolph, James Roberts, Larry Roeder, Larry Simms, Sylvia Smith
- Absent:** Gladys Burke, Joyce Jackson, Michelle Thomas
- Guests:** Charlotte Coates, Alvin Dodson, Janet Wiggins, Helen Avery, Jaxon Roberts
- LCPS Staff:** Kathleen Devens, Sara Howard-O'Brien, Donna Torraca
- County Staff:** Shalom E. Black, County Liaison to Reconciliation Subcommittee

Charles Avery welcomed the Committee and Guests. Jaxon Roberts shared that it was his grandfather's birthday, and all wished Mr. Roberts a Happy Birthday.

The Committee reviewed the minutes from the June 13, 2022, meeting. Gert Evans made a correction to Page 1 under Consortium Update correcting "communication" to "communicating" and addition on Page 3 that Larry Simms was the second on Dwight's motion to table discussion regarding the time capsule. Seeing no further corrections, Gert Evans made a motion to approve as amended. Valerie Bush seconded. All in favor.

Charles welcomed Shalom Black from County Administration who is the County Liaison to the Reconciliation Subcommittee. Shalom introduced herself and provided her background in Human Services and work with the County Equity Office. She has been employed with Loudoun County for five year and is currently a project manager in the County Administration Office. She shared with the Committee that she will be assisting the Subcommittee with the discussion of the impacts to alumni, staff, descendants, and the community in general over the forced sale of the Douglass High School property. Guiding questions will be provided for discussion and assist the Subcommittee with providing input regarding the impact of the sale. Recommendations will then be shared with the Board of Supervisors and School Board Joint Committee and then respective boards. Shalom will reach out in the coming days seeking preference for on-line or in-person meetings and times to meet so the next meeting can be scheduled.

Charles inquired if research had been done regarding other jurisdictions and what they were doing and Shalom confirmed that the County has been researching other jurisdictions and can provide a library of different studies from around the country. Charles also inquired as to the contractor that will be doing the larger task of the history of discrimination in the County. Shalom stated no contract had been approved and signed at this time but anticipated that may occur in August or September. Carlotta Coates asked how the Committee members could contact her. Shalom advised that LCPS staff has her contact information and that she will provide her information in the upcoming email to coordinate meeting times. She also distributed her business card.

Playground Update:

Sara Howard-O'Brien shared the example panel that Parks & Recreation has provided for the playground panels. Parks & Recreation plans to open the playground simultaneously with the opening of the campus building in the fall. She has requested a final list of who will be noted in the playground panels. The two statues will be coming after the opening of the playground and will be of Martin Luther King and Barack Obama.

Sculpture Discussion

Charles inquired if the artists would be providing an update regarding the sculpture. Sara shared that the Call For Artists is out for solicitation from the art community with a deadline of July 29, 2022, for submissions. The Subcommittee and then the full Committee will be able to review all the submissions after July 29. LCPS has saved the roof from the 1941 portion of the building and has stated in the Call that those materials are available, should the artists be interested in incorporating them into the sculpture. It is hoped that the materials can be used either within the sculpture or as a part of another feature on campus. Charles stated that Larry Roeder had expressed concern regarding the Call and asked him to say a few words.

Larry shared that he was concerned that the call to artists had deviated from the understanding the committee had earlier achieved, which was to erect a simple statue of two segregation-era children (boy and girl) walking up a slope, which signified the long dangerous struggle of blacks for equal education in general and for a high school. Around the dais was to be the categories of local people who supported the kids: parents, teachers, drivers, janitors, etc., in other words, the ancestors of the people in the room

Charles inquired if the artists were provided information regarding the schools' history. Donna shared that all the Committee documents are on-line, and the Call provided a link to those documents where the artists could review all the Committee's discussions and have all the history. The documents on-line included the informative Elaine Thompson article regarding the history and struggle for education in Loudoun. In addition to those documents, LCPS has posted the National Register nomination packet which provided several historical documents and historical information regarding the struggle. Should the Committee not find anything to their liking from the artists submissions from this Call For Artists another call can be posted.

NOTE: At the May 23, 2022, meeting there was discussion regarding the sculpture and the Committee was asked by LCPS Staff if they wanted to be specific or general in their request for a sculpture. The Committee stated they would like it to be general to provide the artist the flexibility to be creative. Mr. Roeder was absent for that discussion.

Consortium Update:

Carlotta Coates shared that all three groups have received their draft MOU and each group is meeting individually with LCPS. Once all MOUs are agreed upon, they will go back to the School Board for review and approval. Larry Simms asked if the three groups could provide a report for their plans moving forward once the space is provided. Carlotta stated that once the MOUs are approved the consortium could provide a report at that time.

Meeting Schedule:

Charles thanked everyone for all their work over the last 13+ months and all that has been accomplished over that time. He inquired whether the Committee desired to meet once a month which will allow more time for Subcommittees to meet. Several members felt that the Committee was not quite ready to cut back on meetings and that there were still key decisions to be made and they needed to keep the momentum going.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

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

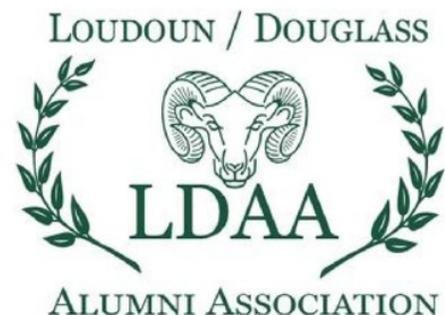
Larry Simms provided a recap of past meeting discussions where the Committee voted unanimously to endorse a sports theme mural on the gym wall at the outdoor basketball court. The approval for specific sports figures to be portrayed in the mural was brought back for reconsideration at the last meeting. The Subcommittee is now recommending that the mural continue to be a sports theme, inclusive of all sports, and generic without specific sports figures. There had been a recommendation from the Subcommittee for a quote but that has been tabled until further direction is provided from the School Board attorney regarding use of quotes.

The Committee also discussed the logos and the panels in the gym. The Committee has endorsed 4 panels for photos and 2 panels for logos plus a logo in the floor of the gym. The specific logo(s) to be used has not been voted and approved by the full Committee. The Subcommittee does not have a recommendation at this time for specific photos in the panels and wondered if these could be generic. The Committee would like to see photos on the panels and in the floor of the gym the letters DHS, the 1941 Ram logo that was shown in previous photos from the LDAA timeline draft and the LDAA Logo on each end of the gym. The Subcommittee will come back with photo recommendations at the next meeting.

Roll Call was taken, and the Committee voted 13-0 to have a mural on the wall at the outdoor basketball court of a sports theme, inclusive of all sports; Four photos (content to be determined) in panels, 2 behind the bleachers and one on each end; LDAA Logo on one end of gym and Ram Logo on other end of gym with DHS in the center court floor. Gladys Burke, Joyce Jackson, and Michelle Thomas were absent for the vote.

LOGOS for panels one on each end of 1960 Gym

The RAMS to be flipped so it reads in the same direction as Douglass High School



Pavers & Quotes Subcommittee: Carlotta Coates, Valerie Bush, Tammy Carter

Sara shared with the Committee that in verifying the quotes and checking with the schools Communications and Community Engagement Office that some of the quotes approved by the Committee are not available for use. The School Board attorney's office has confirmed that any Disney related quotes cannot be used due to copyright. Staff is awaiting further direction from the school's attorney regarding the use of other quotes recommended. Once guidance is provided, LCPS will work with the Subcommittee regarding replacing appropriate quotes or other information in the pavers and inside the school as appropriate.

Timeline Subcommittee: Gert Evans, Gladys Burke, and Dwight Brooks

Gert Evans reported that the Timeline Subcommittee met and revised the timeline presented at the last meeting to capture key events. Gert reviewed the new timeline photos and info as an update with continued revisions to come.

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

The Committee previously agreed to what information would be provided on the outside of the time capsule which will be placed under the stage. Sara provided a copy of the information that has been submitted to Heritage Time Capsule to be etched on the outside of the capsule. Donna advised that the time capsule has been ordered along with two preservation kits which should provide ample supplies for the items recommended for inclusion in the capsule. The Committee also agreed to what would appear on the plaque identifying the location of the time capsule and when to open. A mock-up of this information was provided in the packet, along with the Subcommittee's recommended quote by Frederick Douglass to be placed on the plaque. The Committee was asked to vote on the quote "*The life of a nation is secure only while the nation is honest, truthful and virtuous*".

Roll call was taken, and the Committee voted 13-0 for approval of the recommended quote with Gladys Burke, Joyce Jackson and Michelle Thomas absent for the vote.

The Committee then revisited the discussion regarding whether visitors to the DHS-CC meetings or members of the public in general could place items in the capsule. There was also discussion to allow LCPS Staff (Donna and Sara) to be allowed to include something in the time capsule.

Roll Call was taken, and the Committee voted 13-0 for Donna and Sara to place items in the time capsule with Gladys Burke, Joyce Jackson and Michelle Thomas absent for the vote.

Roll all was taken again concerning visitors and others to include items in the capsule. The Committee voted against allowing others to include items by a vote of 5-6 with Larry Roeder abstaining and Gladys Burke, Joyce Jackson and Michelle Thomas absent for the vote.

State Historic Marker and W&OD Trail Sign

LDAA and LCPS have been working with the State Department of Historic Resources for corrections to the historic marker that was in front of the school on Market Street. Donna reported that we hope to have confirmation of approval of the recommended changes in July so that the sign can be installed before the campus is reopened.

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Donna has been working with NOVA Parks and the W&OD Railroad Regional Park for placement of a sign at the W&OD Trail and the Douglass property. We hope to have a sign installed by the time of the campus reopening.

Oral History Update:

Larry Simms reported that the project is winding up. Questions are being sent out to various people that were unable to be videotaped or recorded by Zoom. Ms. McCorn was sent a list of several questions and provided wonderful answers to all which can now be shared in the kiosk along with others who have been taped.

Closing: Charles thanked everyone for their time and reminded them that the next meeting is July 11th.

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