

Douglass High School Commemorative Committee

Location: Frederick Douglass Elementary School Library

MEETING MINUTES

May 23, 2022, 6:00 p.m.

APPROVED

ATTENDEES:

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

Absent: Mary Randolph, Larry Roeder, Michelle Thomas

Guests: Charlotte Coates, Alvin Dodson, Janet Wiggins, Loretta Hall, Jaxon Roberts

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 May 9, 2022 meeting. Carlotta Coates made a correction to the naming of the Pavillion on Page 5 of the minutes from Bernice Carroll Sewell to Bernice Sewell Carroll. Charles Avery noted that Helen Avery was not in attendance as a guest on May 9 and asked that be corrected. Seeing no further corrections, Carlotta Coates made a motion to approve as amended. James Roberts seconded. All in favor.

Playground Update:

Sara reported that in the packets is a picture of a sample panel that Loudoun County Parks & Recreation is considering. The County has asked for additional samples showing more than one person or item on a panel. They are also considering famous athletes, information regarding historic black colleges and other items.

Consortium Update:

Carlotta Coates shared that each group has met with LCPS and have a draft MOU to review and share with their membership. Charles Avery asked if there was a timeline for this completion. Carlotta said that there was not.

Construction Update:

Melissa Tello shared that construction activities include site infrastructure, amphitheater formation, and interior framing continues. Ground Penetrating Radar in the front of the building to search for any time capsules is scheduled for Thursday, May 26th. Melissa also shared illustrations of the interior of the shop building. This building is not being restored (inside) to look like the 1942 shop due to the amount of renovation that has taken place over the the years and because the use has changed. The exterior will be maintained and the interior will have modern finishes. The history of the building will be told through the information panels in the courtyard next to the building and the interior photos the Committee is considering for installation. This building will be available for rental, when not in use by Parks & Recreation.

KEY VOTE ITEMS:

Melissa then walked the Committee through a list of key vote items that are needed from the Committee for the construction to continue progressing. Key items were as follows:

Wording of Pavers & Quotes on the Property:

The Pavers & Quotes Subcommittee has provided recommendations for acknowledgement of groups, quotes and inspirational words in the Front Plaza, Heritage Walk, East Courtyard and West Courtyard. Melissa Tello reviewed the Subcommittee recommendations. Discussions were as follows:

Front Entry Plaza Pavers: Eight pavers were identified in the front plaza area. Inspirational words were approved at the May 9, 2022 meeting (Pavers 5-9). Acknowledgement of groups was approved at the April 19, 2022 meeting (Pavers 1-3).

The exercise for this meeting was to approve the exact wording to be placed in the pavers. After discussion of the best approach to acknowledge veterans, it was decided to utilize one additional paver for inscription in the plaza area. The following layout and wording was approved with Paver 1 starting at the entrance to the front plaza from Market Street and continuing south to the front door of the building and ending with Paver 9:

1. In Honor of Douglass High School Veterans
2. In Honor of Douglass High School Bus Drivers, Custodians, Cafeteria Workers
1941-1968
3. In Honor of Douglass High School Guidance Counselors, Librarians, Secretaries
1941-1968
4. In Honor of Douglass High School Principals & Teachers
1941-1968
5. Welcome to
6. Our Journey,
7. Our Life,
8. Our Story,
9. (Y)Our History

Roll Call was taken, and the Committee voted to endorse the agreed to wording as stated above 12-1 with Charles Avery voting No and Mary Randolph, Larry Roeder, and Michelle Thomas absent for the vote.

Heritage Walk Pavers and Heritage Wall: The Subcommittee recommended that inspirational words appear in the pavers and bronze plaques acknowledging the County-Wide League and the key groups associated with Douglass be placed on the Heritage Wall. It was decided to table the discussion on the Heritage Wall so that the Committee could have additional time to consider the content of the plaques. The words recommended by the Subcommittee in Pavers 10-14 are as follows with Paver 10 closest to the front plaza area and Paver 14 closest to the Heritage Wall:

10. Envision
11. Inspire
12. Encourage

13. Believe
14. Achieve

Roll Call was taken, and the Committee voted to endorse the Subcommittee recommendation of the five inspirational words 13-0 with Mary Randolph, Larry Roeder, and Michelle Thomas absent for the vote.

East Courtyard Pavers: Six quotes were proposed in the East Courtyard pavers. The Committee reviewed and questioned the size of font in these pavers and if they would be consistent throughout. Melissa Tello shared that once a decision is made on the quotes the team will review for font size and any concerns or issues will be brought back to the Committee. The Subcommittee recommended:

- P6 “Your identity is your most valuable possession. Protect it.” Elastigirl (The Incredibles)
- P7 “The things that make me different are the things that make me.” Winnie-the-Pooh
- P10 “When you undervalue what you do, the world will undervalue who you are.” Oprah Winfrey
- P11 “Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we’ve been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.” Barack Obama
- P12 “There will be obstacles. There will be doubters. There will be mistakes. But with hard work, there are no limits.” Michael Phelps
- P14 “Oh yes, the past can hurt. But, you can either run from it or learn from it.” Rafiki (The Lion King)

Roll Call was taken, and the Committee voted to endorse the Subcommittee recommendation for the above wording 13-0 with Mary Randolph, Larry Roeder and Michelle Thomas absent for the vote.

West Courtyard Pavers: Seven pavers were identified for engraving in the courtyard outside and near the shop building. Two pavers were recommended by the Subcommittee for “Did You Know” information, one paver with a Frederick Douglass Quote and four pavers with quotes from former Douglass High School teachers. The Committee discussed the content of the “Did You Know” information and specifically the wording concerning desegregation in Loudoun County. After thoughtful and careful consideration, the Committee revised the recommended Subcommittee wording concerning desegregation. Additionally, because of the location of the pavers, the order of the paver information was revised so that the “Did You Know” information would be the first pavers visitors would see when coming from the parking lot. The following was brought forward to a vote:

- P1 “There’s a huckleberry, a blueberry, and a strawberry but you’re in a Library.” Otha Butler
- P3 “May you always have a belief in the worth and dignity of your fellow man and gauge your life accordingly.” Stephen M. Sydnor

- P4 “Without a struggle, there can be no progress.” Frederick Douglass
- P9 “Doesn’t matter if you finish at the top of the class or the bottom of the class, there is learning at both ends.” George Barrett, Jr.
- P10 “If a man don’t know, a man don’t know. Always ask questions.” Isaac J. Daniel
- P12 Douglass High School was placed on the National Register of Historic Places on September 24, 1992
- P15 Under Court Order Loudoun County was forced to fully integrate by the 1968-1969 school year.

Roll Call was taken, and the Committee agreed 12-0 for the above wording in the west courtyard pavers with Gladys Burke Abstaining and Mary Randolph, Larry Roeder, and Michelle Thomas absent for the vote.

Amphitheater Key Vote Items:

On March 14, 2022 the Committee voted to name the Amphitheater after the County-Wide League. There was also discussion, but no vote taken, to place the names of the officers of the County-Wide league on the low wall that frames the back of the podium. Upon further consideration and consultation with LCPS regarding the amount of engraving that would be required to place the names in this area, the Subcommittee brought forth a recommendation to have the name of the amphitheater appear on both sides of the wall. (Note: The location for the Countywide League names are addressed under the additional Amphitheater Subcommittee items later in the meeting.)

Roll Call was taken and the Committee endorsed the recommendation 10-3 with Dwight Brooks, Glory Howard and Larry Simms voting No and Mary Randolph, Larry Roeder, and Michelle Thomas absent for the vote.

The Subcommittee recommended that both sides of the low wall that frames the back of the podium be lit.

Roll Call was taken and the Committee endorsed the lighting recommendation 13-0 with Mary Randolph, Larry Roeder, and Michelle Thomas absent for the vote.

Mural at Outdoor Basketball Court Key Vote Items:

The Mural Subcommittee recommended that the mural have a sports theme.

Roll Call was taken and the Committee endorsed the sports theme recommendation 13-0 with Mary Randolph, Larry Roeder, and Michelle Thomas absent for the vote.

The Subcommittee recommended that sports figures Jackie Robinson, Arthur Ashe, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Jim Brown and Althea Gibson be portrayed in the mural. The Committee discussed whether there were local sports figures from Douglass High School that could be recognized or if the mural content could be generic without recommendation of any specific sports figure.

Roll Call was taken for the Subcommittees initial recommendation. The Subcommittee recommendation passed 7-2 with Gladys Burke and Joyce Jackson voting No, Erica Bush, Dwight Brooks, Valerie Bush and Glory Howard Abstaining and Mary Randolph, Larry Roeder, and Michelle Thomas absent for the vote.

The Mural Subcommittee proposed quotes for the Committee to choose from for placement above or below the mural. There was discussion regarding the quotes proposed and whether one quote for each sports figure should be included in the wall. The Committee voted to table this discussion until the next meeting so that more research could be done.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

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

At the April 18, 2022 meeting the Committee voted to have the four benches in the front plaza area dedicated to the four Principals of Douglass High School. Wording was proposed for the plaques on these benches as follows:

1. In Memory of George W. Liverpool, Principal Douglass High School 1940-1948
2. In Memory of Ulysses L. Oliver, Principal Douglass High School 1948-1952
3. In Memory of Stephen M. Sydnor, Principal Douglass High School 1952-1963
4. In Memory of James B. Woodson, Principal Douglass High School 1963-1968

Roll Call was taken for plaque wording for the benches. The Committee voted 12-0 with Gladys Burke, Mary Randolph, Larry Roeder, and Michelle Thomas absent for the vote

At the March 14, 2022 meeting the Committee voted to have a tree planted in the west courtyard dedicated to the teachers at Douglass High School. Wording was proposed for a bronze plaque at the base of the tree “In Honor of Our Teachers 1941-1968”.

Roll Call was taken for plaque wording and the Committee voted 12-0 for the wording as recommended with Gladys Burke, Mary Randolph, Larry Roeder, and Michelle Thomas absent for the vote.

At the March 28, 2022 meeting the Committee voted to acknowledging the Douglass High School at the base of the sculpture. Wording was recommended for this area “In Honor of the Alumni of Douglass High School 1941-1968”).

Roll Call was taken and the Committee voted to accept the recommended language 12-0 with Gladys Burke, Mary Randolph, Larry Roeder, and Michelle Thomas absent for the vote

The Committee asked about the sculpture in the front plaza and the status. Donna Torraca provided an update that LCPS was working with procurement and creating a Call For Artists to go out soon. The Call is being drafted as a concept for the sculpture rather than providing any specific pictures. Tammy Carter stated that it should be noted that the sculpture depict African American high school students from that time period in the call and suggested that pictures be provided. The Committee discussed and felt that it would be better to provide a general concept

and let the artist create something rather than be directed or influenced by other sculptures and pictures. It was stated that the description should emphasize the desire to capture the struggle for education.

Amphitheater Subcommittee: Jim Roberts and Valerie Bush

The Subcommittee recommended that the founding members of the County-Wide League and those additional members that appear in the Deed to the School Board be placed on one of the five large panels that will appear along the edge of the amphitheater. It was suggested that research be conducted so that the full names of the original officers be noted. Names will acknowledge the office they held and/or if they were a signatory on the deed.

Roll Call was taken and the Subcommittee's recommendation and additional Committee recommendations were approved 12-0 with Gladys Burke, Mary Randolph, Larry Roeder, and Michelle Thomas absent for the vote.

In addition to the names noted in the panels the Subcommittee recommends that the history of the County-Wide League be placed in the panels, content to be provided and discussed at a later date.

Roll Call was taken and the Subcommittee's recommendation and additional Committee recommendations were approved 12-0 with Gladys Burke, Mary Randolph, Larry Roeder, and Michelle Thomas absent for the vote.

The Subcommittee recommended that the cities and towns the County-Wide League represented be reflected in the panels. After discussion the Committee decided to table this discussion for a later date.

Mural Subcommittee: Larry Simms, Larry Roeder and Joyce Jackson

At the April 18, 2022 meeting the Committee voted to have pictures and/or logos on 6 acoustical panels inside the gym. The Subcommittee has further recommended that 4 of these panels have pictures and 2 have logos. The Subcommittee also recommended that the four quotes approved by the Committee for the gym at the same meeting be placed on the wall opposite the bleachers.

Roll Call was taken for each item separately and both the acoustic panel and quote Subcommittee recommendations were approved 12-0 with Gladys Burke, Mary Randolph, Larry Roeder, and Michelle Thomas absent for the vote.

Also at the April 18th meeting the Committee voted to have a photo on the back wall of the Shop/Band Building (closest to Market Street). The Subcommittee has recommended that the photo be the historic photo shown in their report of men working in the shop area.

Roll Call was taken and the Committee voted 12-0 for the recommended picture with Gladys Burke, Mary Randolph, Larry Roeder, and Michelle Thomas absent for the vote.

In previous discussions the Subcommittee had recommended that there be a full size picture of Mr. Hankerson inside the shop building. The Committee discussed the options of a cropped

picture of Mr. Hankerson or a full picture of the band with Mr. Hankerson. After review of photos provided and discussion, the Committee selected a picture of the 1966 band to be placed on the center panel between the windows on the portion of wall measuring approximately 6'-9" wide and the photo size will be maximized as this appeared to be the clearest photo.

Roll Call was taken and the Committee voted 12-0 for the recommended picture with Gladys Burke, Mary Randolph, Larry Roeder, and Michelle Thomas absent for the vote.

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

At the March 28, 2022 Committee meeting the Subcommittee requested that LCPS draft a letter that would be sent to each represented organization outlining the time capsule project and invite the organizations to submit content for the time capsule. A draft letter to the DHS-CC represented organizations was reviewed by the full Committee and various changes were discussed and recommended to the letter as follows:

- State the letter for the capsule should be unfolded
- Specify that additional items should be no larger than what could fit in a regular standard #10 envelope (4-1/8" x 9-1/2").
- While the Board of Supervisors has already voted on items for inclusion in the time capsule the Committee felt the letter should also be sent to them, should they wish to amend the items they have voted for inclusion in the time capsule.
- Revise the final date to for submission of letters and items to August 1, 2022.

Sara will make the revisions to the letter as noted.

Kiosk & Computer Screen Subcommittee: Carlotta Coates, Valerie Bush and Tammy Carter
On October 18, 2021 the Committee voted to place a picture of Frederick Douglass at the back of the stage. The Subcommittee has recommended a progression of four photos depicting Frederick Douglass from a young man to elder statesman. Two options for the concept were presented for the Committees review. Melissa Tello shared that BBB could review pictures and provide a design at a later Committee meeting.

Roll Call was taken for the concept of the picture and the Committee voted 12-0 for the recommended picture/concept with Gladys Burke, Mary Randolph, Larry Roeder, and Michelle Thomas absent for the vote.

RECONCILIATION UPDATE

Charles and Erica noted that Loudoun County has appointed Shalom Black as Staff Liaison to the Reconciliation Subcommittee. A copy of the appointment is provided in the Committee packet. More information will be provided at the next meeting.

Closing: Charles thanked everyone for their time and reminded them that the next meeting is June 13th.