

Douglass High School Commemorative Committee

Location: Frederick Douglass Elementary School Library

MEETING MINUTES

November 14, 2022

APPROVED

ATTENDEES:

Committee Members: Charles Avery, Gladys Burke, Valerie Bush, Tammy Carter, Gertrude Evans, Mary Randolph, James Roberts, Larry Roeder, Larry Simms

Absent: Erica Bush, Dwight Brooks, Carlotta Coates, Glory Howard, Joyce Jackson, Sylvia Smith, Michelle Thomas

Guests: 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 to the meeting. No public comment was offered.

Review of Meeting Minutes:

The Committee reviewed the October 25th meeting minutes. Valerie Bush made a motion to approve the minutes as drafted. Larry Simms seconded.

Presentation by Jeff Hall:

Charles welcomed artist Jeff Hall whom the Committee selected to create the sculpture in the front plaza area. Mr. Hall shared a clay model of the sculpture with the Committee and discussed the age of the children, clothing, placement of the sculpture in the plaza, and the potential for verbiage on the base of the sculpture. The Committee recommended that the girl hold the books closer to her chest and not be carrying a book bag and that the boys' jacket be a sweater. In the future, the Committee will have to decide at which angle the sculpture should be placed and an inscription on the base of the sculpture or on a plaque to be attached to the front.

Playground Update:

Sara Howard-O'Brien reviewed the revised playground local heroes panel with the Committee which incorporates the changes recommended at their October 25th meeting. Three corrections to the verbiage on the panel were recommended:

1. Gertrude Alexander – 1st line at the end should be supervise rather than supervisor
2. Gertrude Alexander – 2nd line “black” should be capitalized
3. Mary Medley Howard – change champion improvements “to” to state “for”

Douglass Commemorative Consortium:

Valerie Bush reported that the Consortium met via Zoom on November 1st and discussed ideas for a dedication ceremony and agreed that each group would create a brochure regarding their organization which would be available in the new space.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

Mural Subcommittee: Larry Simms, Joyce Jackson, Larry Roeder

Larry Simms reported that the Subcommittee has been unable to meet since the October 25th meeting. He asked if anyone had questions regarding the submissions. Donna Torraca provided a brief recap of the 7 murals submitted noting the different proposals for either painting, digital imagery, or mosaic.

Larry Simms asked if each Committee member would review the submissions and rank each 1-7 for preference and provide that feedback to Donna and Sara by November 18th. The Subcommittee will meet on November 18th or shortly thereafter and be prepared to provide a recommendation at the December meeting for the Committee to consider and vote on an artist.

Sara Howard-O'Brien informed the Committee that it has been determined by the Town of Leesburg Zoning Administrator that the Town mural guidelines do not allow murals on property other than Town-owned buildings or those that fall under the Private Mural Initiative Pilot Program. Town Staff is working with LCPS to develop changes to the pilot program to allow murals on public buildings, similar to those outlined in the pilot program currently in place. Town Staff will be presenting suggested changes to Town Council on Tuesday, November 29th. LCPS Staff will be in attendance at the meeting and has asked Gert Evans, Jim Roberts, Mary Randolph, and Larry Simms to attend in support of the request.

Timeline Subcommittee: Gert Evans, Gladys Burke, Dwight Brooks

Gert reviewed the revised timeline from BBB which incorporates the changes requested from the October 25 meeting. After a review of the "lightened" years within the pictures or shown below in the timeline, the Committee agreed that the years should be along the bottom of the timeline and not in the pictures.

Kiosk Subcommittee: Carlotta Coates, Valerie Bush and Tammy Carter

Valerie reported that the only requested change to the suggested items in the kiosk was to add LDAA photo information that will be located in the back timeline. No other suggestions were offered. The Subcommittee asked Donna and Sara to resend the lists in a separate email to the full Committee requesting comments, after amending to add the LDAA suggestion.

Reconciliation Subcommittee:

The Reconciliation Committee has met twice since the October 25th meeting. The meetings were productive and the Subcommittee discussed the timing of providing a recommendation of reconciliation to the School Board and Board of Supervisors. The Subcommittee felt that more information should be provided to the community as a whole regarding the history of Douglass and the plans for the current building and property. They suggested a media campaign be done prior to providing reconciliation ideas. The recommendation is to invite the staff media group to attend the December meeting to provide guidance on how and when to roll out such a campaign. Gert and Larry Simms both agreed that it was necessary to get their story out to prepare the community ahead of any reconciliation recommendations.

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Gladys asked if an expert had been hired with expertise in reconciliation and Charles shared that Walter Hogan was assisting and providing guidance. She also inquired if the Subcommittee is looking at how other jurisdictions have handled reconciliation and it was confirmed that they were indeed doing that.

Gert Evans reported that the Board of Supervisors will have an item in front of them at their December 5th meeting to begin a full equity and segregation study. Carl Rush, Equity Officer for the County of Loudoun, will be leading that larger study.

Closing: Charles thanked everyone for their time and reminded them that the next meeting is Monday, December 12, 2022. He also noted that the 2023 Meeting Schedule was in the packet of information, reducing the meetings from two to one meeting per month. He also asked members to consider whether they would like to be a part of a smaller subcommittee to assist with planning a dedication some time in 2023.

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