

Douglass High School Commemorative Committee

Location: Frederick Douglass Elementary School Library

APPROVED

MEETING MINUTES

October 25, 2021, 6:00 p.m.

ATTENDEES:

Committee Members:

Charles Avery, Erica Bush, Dwight Brooks, Gladys Burke, Valerie Bush, Gertrude Evans, Joyce Jackson, James Roberts, Larry Roeder, Larry Simms, Sylvia Smith

Absent:

Tammy Carter, Carlotta Coates, Margaret Good, Glory Howard, Mary Randolph, Michelle Thomas

Guests:

Thomas Payne, Nathan Bailey, Helen Avery, Janet Wiggins, Alvin Dodson, Reggie Simms

LCPS Staff:

Lottie Spurlock, Beverly Tate, Melissa Tello, Kathy Devens, Donna Torraca

Charles Avery welcomed the Committee and guests and talked about the mission and purpose. No public comments were made

Erica Bush asked if there were any public comments. Reggie Simms introduced himself as a 1955 Graduate. It was also shared that Mr. Simms is the former Vice President of LDAA and an artist. Thomas Payne introduced himself as an alumni of Douglass HS.

The Committee reviewed the minutes from the October 18, 2021 meeting. It was mentioned that of the 19 items the Committee approved as a part of the commemoration, the flagpole donation may need to be researched further. The flagpole could have been a replacement and Charles Avery asked the Committee to research further regarding the flagpole. A follow-up note will be made to the minutes. Valerie Bush made a motion to approve the minutes. Jim Roberts seconded.

The Review of Site Construction with LCPS Architects was presented by Melissa Tello and Kathleen Devens. A copy of the PowerPoint is attached to these minutes. Ms. Tello shared with the group the site and building status, changes that have occurred, and those that are forthcoming. There was a discussion regarding the monument sign and the amphitheater. Ms. Tello shared that should the Committee be interested in changing the sign or its location that can be accommodated. She stressed that the amphitheater is small and described the general size. It was asked if walking or standing areas can be provided behind the amphitheater and it was confirmed that was possible. Valerie Bush asked if the amphitheater is definitely going to happen. Ms. Tello confirmed that is in the approved site plan. If the Committee is opposed something different can be entertained in this area. It was shared that the space is community-oriented and was something that was suggested from initial community meetings. Parks & Recreation could use for small group events, readings, and discussion for children. Gert Evans shared that there used to be a small pavilion in this location.

Ms. Tello reviewed the landscaping plan for the site, focusing on trees, and discussed why some trees would need to be removed, where there needs to be landscaping in accordance with Town regulations, and where landscaping could be removed from the plan, should the Committee so

desire. The Tobler and Lloyd memorial rocks have been removed to a secure location during renovations.

Inside renovations were reviewed in the 1954 and 1960 portions of the building, including gym renovations, sound systems, HVAC, and improvements to restroom facilities in the lower level. Most demolition has been done on the inside of the building. Ms. Tello stressed that the only work being done in the 1941 portion is lead-based paint abatement. AC units have been removed from the windows.

LCPS continues to work with the consultants to investigate the time capsule in the cornerstone as well as a potential time capsule at the flagpole. The flagpole is to be secured and removed from the site for reinstallation at a later date to the front of the building. Relocation of the entrance on Sycolin Road and the location of additional parking was also discussed. Ms. Tello will have more information on November 8 regarding monthly photos that can be shared with the Committee and will appear on the Construction webpage.

There were questions regarding the auditorium and the flexibility of use during the day. There will be some storage behind the stage and storage of furniture. Lighting will be upgraded and will function similar to that in LCPS elementary schools. A projector screen and projector will also be installed on the stage. It was suggested that the lighting in the Frederick Douglas ES multi-purpose room could be shown on November 8th.

The Committee thanked Ms. Tello and Ms. Devens for providing an update and overview.

Oral History Project:

Larry Simms provided an update of the project, sharing that a videographer, Corey Gray, has been hired by LCPS. The first session of interviews has been scheduled for 1:00 pm on November 10th at Carver Elementary School. Larry is working with Mr. Roberts and a group of alumni, Charles Avery and a group from the class of 1968 and then a group of students from 40's, 50's and 60's. Mr. Simms is also working to schedule a group of 4 teachers.

Time Capsule Update:

Charles asked that the Committee continue to think about items for a Commemorative Committee time capsule along with a location on the site.

Review of Robert Russa Moton Museum Site:

The Committee reviewed the Moton Museum website, the museum's mission and vision, and then watched a video about the museum. After this review there was discussion regarding what the Committee wants to tell visitors to Douglass. Larry Roeder stated, "ordinary people doing extraordinary things". Dwight Brooks shared that Douglass would not really be a museum but a "Living Monument" about what has transitioned from the past. Charles Avery asked what inspired the Countywide League and what stories can we share with the public.