



## **Memorials Advisory Commission Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, Sept. 13, 2017

Second Floor Conference Room, City Hall, 715 Princess Anne Street, Fredericksburg, VA

**Commission Members Present:** Nancy Moore, Michael Spencer, Jervis Hairston, Garnett Parker, John Lyles, Betty Massey, Paula Raudenbush

**Commission Members Absent:** Susan Spears

Chair Nancy Moore called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Jervis Hairston moved to approve the minutes from the May 17, 2017, meeting. Garnett Parker seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

### **Old Business**

**Wall of Honor Ceremony** to be held Oct. 24, 2017, at 7 p.m. The titles for the 3 recipients were discussed and will be listed as follows:

- Donna Cote, Library Director
- Robert Hodge, Historian
- Elnora Johnson, Community Leader

**Status of Memorials Policy.** Currently in limbo until slave block issue is resolved.

**Update on 1210 Sophia Street property.** Kate Schwartz, City Historic Preservation officer was in attendance and noted that the University of Mary Washington did a 3-D model of this 1894 building, built by Gilbert Walker which was in the Walker family until the 1980s. Archaeology and documentation has been done. This building will be razed to make room for additional parking for the Central Rappahannock Regional Library. A wayside panel will be erected near the site to interpret the area including this house. Nancy Moore requested oversight of the language on this panel by the Memorials Advisory Commission. Michael Spencer noted that Bill Shorter has a history of all city neighborhoods and would be a good source for information.

### **New Business**

**Interpretation of slavery and the contributions of free blacks in the community.** Blanton Massey was in attendance and gave a recap of his information about the John deBaptiste family that was presented at the previous meeting (see notes from last meeting) along with the update that two of John's sons, Benjamin and John, bought the building at the corner of William and Charles Streets across from the slave auction block. This black family owned one or two slaves between 1814-19. Jervis Hairston then gave a PowerPoint presentation of his tour of Fredericksburg black history (see attached DVD). Nancy

Moore noted that there is a need for more interpretation about black history in Fredericksburg—particularly regarding education. Michael Spencer noted that Katherine Fleming Bruce has been awarded the UMW book prize and will be speaking about the education of blacks at the university in the near future. Nancy Moore asked commission members for specific ideas for people and places for interpretation.

**The Slave Auction Block.** Nancy Moore stated that the Commission has no oversight on this subject but she wanted to open up a discussion among the members and guests. Guest, Corey Cooper, expressed his views regarding the slave block and felt strongly that it was too emotional for blacks to come across this artifact and it should be moved. He stated that he wanted to protect his children from seeing such a reminder. There followed more discussion among the members and Mayor Kathryn Greenlaw, who was also in attendance. Jervis Hariston stated that the black community is also divided on whether the block should stay or go but everyone agreed that if it stays, it should be better preserved and interpreted at the site. Mayor Greenlaw stated that from what she has heard, the division on what to do it divided more along age lines than race. The commission members were encouraged to respond as individuals to the online survey on the city's website.

**Next meeting** date will be January 17, 2018

Meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula Raudenbush, recording secretary