



Memorials Advisory Commission Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 20, 2020
Conference Room, City Hall, 715 Princess Anne Street
Fredericksburg, VA

Commission Members Present: Nancy Moore, Michael Spencer, Betty Massey, Pauline Felder, Jervis Hairston, Paula Raudenbush

Commission Members Absent: John Lyles, Tina Morris

Guests: John Hennessey, National Park Service and facilitator of the newly formed committee to interpret the Slave Block, Sabina Weitzman, member of same committee, Kate Schwartz, City Director of Historic Resources, Kate's intern

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

Approval of Minutes

Michael Spenser moved to approve the minutes from the September 19, 2019 meeting. Betty Massey seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

Discussion of Slave Block Study Committee findings—John Hennessey

Nancy Moore announced that the lawsuit brought against the city by the owners of the buildings near the slave block will be taken to the state Supreme Court. The owner of the hotel building has dropped out of the suit. John Hennessey has given The African American History Committee's [Committee] report to the Memorials Advisory Commission [Commission] (see attached) and the Commission will make a recommendation to the city regarding the next steps. These steps will include expectations and a timeline for an RFP to design and implement the desires of the Committee. John stated that the report reflects the sentiments of the Committee and includes several goals: 1) to interpret African history in Fredericksburg at large; 2) to apply this interpretation to the slave block and its surrounding area including the intersection of William and Charles Streets and all the approaches to that intersection; 3) information and direction is both interpretive and commemorative. After 4 meetings of the Committee, its report offers concepts as opposed to specific design ideas. John also reported that the Fredericksburg Area Museum is moving ahead with its interpretation of the slave block without waiting for the outcome of the lawsuit since it will have a display in the museum with or without the block itself. Nancy then asked Kate Schwartz to explain what the next steps are for moving ahead with the interpretation of the slave block. Kate explained that an RFP can be sent out as soon as the Commission is ready. Michael Spencer asked if the Commission would like to consider a competition and some discussion ensued about that. Pauline Felder asked about the budget and Nancy said we shouldn't set one. Nancy said that she, John and Kate should meet to discuss how best to get the RFP out to the public. Michael offered to contact design schools and get ideas for a competition. John reminded the Commission that the Virginia Department of Historic Resources needs to be informed and will be helpful to the project. Paula Raudenbush brought up the question of calling this African American History since it encompasses a time when not only

Africans, but all colonists were not yet Americans. There was some discussion but no new way of addressing the name was established. John will take it to the Committee. The Commission decided to add a meeting to vote on whether to make the RFP a competition or not. This meeting will be on March 19, 2020.

Strategies for the next phase—telling the complete story of African American history here

Nancy set the next meeting of the committee for March 12 at the Central Rappahannock Regional Library Headquarters at 7 p.m.

Status of Caretaker's Cottage

Nancy reported that the anonymous donor has a new idea for the building. Talks are ongoing.

New Business

Election of Officers

Jervis Hairston moved to keep the officers as follows: Nancy Moore, Chair; Michael Spenser, Vice-Chair, Paula Raudenbush, Recording Secretary. Pauline Felder seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Traipse App

Pauline Felder reported that there is a new free app for mobile phones that was initiated by the Visitor Center. Designed by a firm in Staunton, Va., this app is a two-part scavenger hunt (one based on local history and a second based on African heritage in the area). This is a very basic, commercial venture and there was concern expressed regarding several mistakes. Nancy will talk with Janelle Rose at the Visitor Center to offer suggestions on edits to the content. This app in no way replaces anything that the African History Committee will put in place in the future.

Meeting schedule for 2020:

March 19

February 20

April 16

June 18

September 17

November 19

Meeting was adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula Raudenbush, recording secretary