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## Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission

*Senator Jennifer L. McClellan, Chair*

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Senate Committee Room, Pocahontas Building  
Richmond, Virginia

Wednesday, November 29, 2017

1:00 p.m.

### SUMMARY

With a quorum present, Chairwoman McClellan called the meeting of the Virginia Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission (the Commission) to order.

#### **Richmond Symphony's Tribute to Dr. King** (February 3 and 4, 2018)

David Fisk, Executive Director of the Richmond Symphony (the Symphony), presented information on the Symphony's upcoming concert dedicated to Dr. King, "Remembering 1968: A Tribute to MLK." The Symphony, in its 60th Anniversary Season, will perform the concert on Saturday, February 3, at 8:00 p.m. and on Sunday, February 4, at 3:00 p.m. at the Carpenter Theatre in Richmond. Mr. Fisk requested that the Commission include the concert among its official events. Members voted to approve involvement by designating the concert as an official event of the Commission. Mr. Fisk also noted that the concert will have a narrator and asked members to reach out to any significant figures who might be interested in filling the role.

#### **Virginia Union University Community Leaders Breakfast** (January 12, 2018)

Virginia Union University will hold its 40th annual Community Leaders Breakfast on January 12, 2018, at the Downtown Richmond Marriot. The 2018 program will commemorate the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The Commission has purchased tickets annually to support the event. Members discussed budget needs of the Commission, and the chair noted that the Commission's primary expenses are meetings, mileage, and events, with additional monetary requests handled on an ad hoc basis; in years past, the Commission has easily stayed within budget. Members voted to approve the purchase of a 10-seat Community Sponsorship table at the 2018 Community Leaders Breakfast for members of the Commission and its subcommittees.

#### **Emancipation Proclamation and Freedom Monument Updates**

Christopher Beschler, Director of the Department of General Services, updated the Commission on approvals needed regarding the site of the Emancipation Proclamation and Freedom Monument (the Monument). A paper will go before Richmond City Council to request that the City of Richmond (the City) convey an access easement on Brown's Island to the state in order to allow access to the Monument site, which is encircled by property belonging to the City. A second paper will go before City Council to modify an existing agreement between the City and Venture Richmond. Venture Richmond currently manages Brown's Island in its entirety for the City, and the modified agreement will exclude the Monument site to place it under state control. The papers are expected to be introduced to City Council on February 12, 2018, and approval is anticipated on February 26, 2018.

Venture Richmond is taking steps to move the currently existing artwork, the Mill, from the Monument site. At its last meeting, the Commission delegated authority to the chair to sign a reimbursement agreement with Venture Richmond to cover the costs that Venture Richmond will incur in moving the Mill. The Commission discussed delegating authority to the chair to authorize costs to move the Mill but deferred a decision to the next meeting in order to obtain a more detailed estimate of the costs.

Dr. Kirk Schroder reported that revisions to the contract with the Monument's artist, Thomas Jay Warren, are nearly complete. The changes address comments from the Attorney General's Office and do not include substantive changes from the draft contract previously shown to the Commission. At its March 27, 2017, meeting, the Commission delegated authority to the chair to sign the final contract. Once the contract is signed, the artist's timeline for completion of the Monument is roughly 18 months. Noting the 18-month timeline, members agreed to tentatively target the Juneteenth holiday—Wednesday, June 19, 2019—as the date for the Monument's unveiling.

A final budget for the Monument is pending. The Commission has a \$500,000 budget allotment and will solicit private funds, using the Virginia Capital Foundation as fiscal agent, to cover as much of the cost of the Monument as possible. The Monument fund has begun accepting donations. Upon finalization of the budget, the Commission's Fundraising Work Group will meet to adopt its fundraising strategy.

### **King in Virginia Project Updates**

The chair updated the Commission on the work of the King in Virginia Subcommittee (the Subcommittee), which met earlier on the same day at 12:00 p.m. The Subcommittee reviewed research into Dr. King's known visits to 12 localities in Virginia from 1953 to 1967 and began planning for community conversations to be held in each of these localities in 2018. The community conversations, focused around the theme, "Where Do We Go from Here," the title of Dr. King's final book, will serve as a means to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Dr. King's assassination and as a forum for discussing his continuing legacy in Virginia. The Subcommittee made tentative plans to hold the first event in Richmond at Virginia Union University in late February or early March, another event in Charlottesville at the University of Virginia in mid-March, and a third event at First Baptist Church in Farmville in late April. The Subcommittee expects to finalize a full schedule before the next Commission meeting. The Subcommittee also discussed the development of an ongoing oral history project documenting stories related to Dr. King's time in Virginia.

### **150th Anniversary of the Constitutional Convention of 1867–1868**

Dr. Gregg Kimball described upcoming 2018 programming to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Constitutional Convention of 1867–1868 and the April 27, 1868, signing of the Underwood Constitution. The Capitol Square Preservation Council and the Library of Virginia will collaborate to host a series of events and to develop an exhibit in the Capitol Extension to which the Library of Virginia will loan its original copy of the Underwood Constitution. Programming will include a February 15 unveiling of the original Underwood Constitution in the Old House Chamber, events featuring historians and historical interpreters, and an April 17 panel discussion at the Library of Virginia, marking the 150th anniversary of the signing of the Underwood Constitution and focused on placing African American suffrage in a contemporary context.

Dr. Kimball requested the Commission's involvement in the programming and requested permission to use material from the Commission's African American Legislators Database, which was developed in collaboration with the Library of Virginia. The Commission voted to participate in the programming and to allow the Capitol Square Preservation Council and the Library of Virginia to use the Commission's intellectual property as part of the programming.

### **Other Anniversary Commemorations**

The year 2018 will mark the 50th anniversary of the 1968 Supreme Court case *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County* and the 150th anniversary of the 1868 adoption of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. The Commission voted to hold events to commemorate both anniversaries. The events will likely take the form of panel discussions followed by receptions. Dr. Kimball noted that the Library of Virginia may be able to collaborate on a *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County* event by tying it into existing programming.

## **2018 Commemorative Resolutions**

Commission members voted to put forth three commemorative resolutions in the 2018 legislative session. Legislative members agreed to sponsor resolutions for the 50th anniversary of *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County*, the 150th anniversary of the adoption of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, and the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

## **Use of Commission Photographs and Intellectual Property**

Members discussed the general use of Commission photographs and intellectual property and the need for quick turnaround in regard to certain requests for use. Members agreed that the Commission would develop a formal policy to be reviewed at its next meeting in order to approve use of its photographs and intellectual property in cases where such information is not part of the public domain. Dr. Schroder noted that news outlets' right to use Commission photographs and intellectual property is protected under fair use.

## **Next Meeting Date**

The Commission's next meeting was tentatively scheduled to immediately precede the King in Virginia community conversation in Charlottesville to be held in March.

## **Other Business**

Brenda Edwards noted that the King Center in Atlanta and the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis will hold a series of events, in which members might wish to participate, surrounding the anniversary of Dr. King's assassination.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.