



Joint Meeting

MLK Commission, Emancipation Proclamation and Freedom Monument Subcommittee,
and King in Virginia Subcommittee

Senator Jennifer L. McClellan, Chair

Senate Committee Room, Pocahontas Building
Richmond, Virginia

Wednesday, September 20, 2017
1:00 p.m.

SUMMARY

With a quorum present, Chairwoman McClellan called the joint meeting of the Virginia Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission (the Commission) and its Emancipation Proclamation and Freedom Monument and King in Virginia Subcommittees to order.

Emancipation Proclamation and Freedom Monument

Members of the Emancipation Proclamation and Freedom Monument Subcommittee and its advisers provided updates on the status of the Emancipation Proclamation and Freedom Monument (the Monument):

- Kirk Schroder, the Commission's counsel, gave an update on the status of the contract with the Monument's artist, Thomas Jay Warren. Dr. Schroder will make minor changes to the existing contract and request the Attorney General's approval of the final draft. From the time of the signing of the agreement, the artist will have 18 months to complete the Monument.
- Christopher Beschler, Director of the Department of General Services (DGS), gave an update on costs for actions taken by DGS, which came in below estimate: \$7,500 for the land survey; \$2,800 for the Phase I Environmental Study (initially estimated at \$15,000); and \$1,950 for the title search. The estimate for DGS project management fees is \$5,000.
- Elyn Parker, Richmond City Public Arts Coordinator, updated the Commission on the status of the Mill, the existing artwork at the Monument site, which will be relocated prior to beginning site work. Relocation of the Mill will require authorization from the City Planning Committee. Following this authorization, Venture Richmond will begin the process of moving the Mill.

Commission members discussed the pending agreement between Venture Richmond and the Commission that will allow Venture Richmond to pay costs estimated at \$80,000 to be reimbursed by the Commission in order to move the Mill. The agreement will be submitted to the Attorney General and DGS for approval. The Commission voted to delegate authority to the chair to sign the final agreement with Venture Richmond to allow the Commission to reimburse costs of relocating the Mill.

An agreement to grant an access easement to the state is also underway and has received the Attorney General's approval.

Virginians on the Monument

The Virginians on the Monument Work Group (the Work Group), met at 11:00 a.m. on September 20, 2017, to make its final decisions on recommendations to the Commission for African American Virginians to feature on the base of the Monument. The Commission had originally approved including the names, portraits, and biographical information of eight African American Virginians on the Monument's base. Prior to the September 20 meeting, the chair consulted the artist, Thomas Jay Warren, who agreed to increase the number of individuals to 10—five to represent the period before Emancipation through 1865 and five from the period from 1866 to 1970—with the Commission's approval.

The Work Group recommended to the Commission the inclusion of the following individuals from the pre-Emancipation period for the Monument: Mary Elizabeth Bowser, William Harvey Carney, Gabriel, Dred Scott, and, with Commission approval of an additional individual, Nat Turner.

For the post-Emancipation period, the Work Group recommended the inclusion of Rosa Dixon Bowser, John Mercer Langston, Lucy Simms, Wyatt Tee Walker, and, with Commission approval, John Mitchell, Jr.

The Commission voted to accept the Work Group's recommendation and to approve the inclusion of two additional individuals on the Monument—adding to the originally approved eight—provided that the additional cost would not add more than \$75,000 to the project's total.

Members discussed the process of raising funds for the project, roughly estimated at \$800,000. The project currently has a Monument Fund of \$500,000 and will raise the remaining amount. A work group has been established to begin raising funds following finalization of the Monument's budget.

King in Virginia

Staff provided a timeline of Dr. King's visits in Virginia. Brenda Edwards and Rev. Tyler Millner updated the Commission on the status of their ongoing research, stressing the importance of identifying and interviewing people who interacted with Dr. King during his visits to Virginia. The research is part of a larger work plan created by Rev. Millner and adopted by the King in Virginia Subcommittee that involves identifying dates and locations of Dr. King's visits, interviewing individuals present for Dr. King's visits, and holding roundtable discussions throughout the state.

Chairwoman McClellan further outlined steps the King in Virginia Subcommittee plans to take in carrying out the King in Virginia project, which will involve making all research available on the Commission's website by April of 2018, collecting oral histories, and hosting community conversations in 2018.

Members discussed the 2018 community conversations, to be developed around the topic, "Where Do We Go from Here," the title of Dr. King's final book. Members discussed plans to hold roundtables in each of the locations Dr. King visited and, if possible in some locations, on anniversaries of Dr. King's visits. The Commission voted to authorize the King in Virginia Subcommittee to begin work on planning community roundtables throughout 2018 in each of the localities Dr. King visited.

Commission and Subcommittee members discussed collecting oral histories, which would be owned by the Commission and made available to the public in an online archive. Members discussed options for collecting oral histories, including seeking a waiver from the Virginia Public Procurement Act to contract with a private entity, issuing a Request for Proposal for a private enterprise to conduct the oral histories, or partnering with a state institution. Members agreed that the oral history project would begin in 2018 and would be ongoing.

50th Anniversary of King's Assassination

To mark the 50th anniversary of Dr. King's assassination on April 4, 1968, the King Center in Atlanta will host a series of commemorative events in the spring. Among its events, the King Center will host and encourage others to host roundtable discussions. Members agreed to tie the King in Virginia community conversations into the 50th anniversary commemoration.

Richmond Symphony's Tribute to Dr. King

David Fisk, Director of the Richmond 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, and Sunday, February 4, 2018, at the Carpenter Center in Richmond. Mr. Fisk requested that the Commission include the concert among its official events.

Other Business

Commission members agreed to meet again to plan for commemorating the 150th anniversaries of the Underwood Constitution (April 17, 2018) and the 14th Amendment ratification (July 28, 2018). Dr. Gregg Kimball of the Library of Virginia suggested involvement with a Library of Virginia and Virginia State Capitol exhibition commemorating the Underwood Constitution. Dr. Kimball added that 2018 is also the 50th anniversary of the *Green v. New Kent County* U.S. Supreme Court case.

At its next meeting, the Commission planned to discuss proposals on oral histories, anniversary commemorations, the 2018 VUU Community Leaders Breakfast, the Richmond Symphony concert, 2018 Commemorative Resolutions, and the use of Commission photographs and intellectual property. The Commission planned to meet again in October.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.