



Virginia Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission

Senator Jennifer L. McClellan, Chair

Senate Committee Room A, Pocahontas Building
Richmond, Virginia

December 11, 2018
1:00 P.M.

SUMMARY

Senator Jennifer McClellan, chair of the Virginia Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission (the Commission) called the meeting to order.

King in Virginia Project

In 2018, the King in Virginia Project completed 11 Beloved Community Conversations in locations in Virginia that Dr. King visited in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of Dr. King's assassination held. The chair gave an overview of the programs held at Virginia Union University in Richmond (March 1), the University of Virginia in Charlottesville (March 13), First Baptist Church in Farmville (April 24), First Baptist Church in Williamsburg (June 6), High Street Baptist Church in Danville (July 11), the Suffolk Center for Cultural Arts in Suffolk (July 24), E.C. Glass High School in Lynchburg (August 1), Hampton University in Hampton (September 26), First Church of Newport News in Newport News (October 23), New Calvary Baptist Church in Norfolk (October 30), and Gillfield Baptist Church in Petersburg (November 12). The Beloved Community Conversations, focusing on the theme of Dr. King's final book, *Where Do We Go from Here*, featured panel discussions, moderated by Senator Jennifer McClellan, examining where each community is today in achieving Dr. King's vision of a Beloved Community. When possible, events were held on or near the anniversaries of Dr. King's visits and in locations where he spoke. The programs were livestreamed and recorded by WCVE PBS and are posted on the Commission's website.

Members who attended the Beloved Community Conversations reflected on the 11 programs held in 2018. Senator Locke noted the value in hearing the perspectives of young people in each community, as well as the value in hearing the perspectives of those who interacted personally with Dr. King. Dr. Ron Carey emphasized the importance of encouraging such discussion on a continual basis.

Two Beloved Community Conversations remain to be held in 2019 in Hopewell and Dinwiddie. The chair noted that the Commission may consider continuing the series of panel discussions in coming years, holding similar programs in other locations around the state that Dr. King did not visit.

Emancipation and Freedom Monument

The chair presented updates on the status of the Emancipation and Freedom Monument (the Monument), dedicated to the contributions of African American Virginians in the fight for freedom, to be installed on Browns Island in Richmond in 2019.

Fundraising

The Commission is receiving donations through its fiscal agent, the Virginia Capitol Foundation, with the tentative aim of raising \$500,000 to cover expenses outside of the \$500,000 allotted to the Commission for the Monument by the Commonwealth. Currently, the Commission has \$522,666 available to cover costs associated with the Monument, and several requests to major donors are pending. The chair emphasized the importance of encouraging grassroots participation in raising funds and noted that two local NAACP chapters have made donations.

Maquettes of the Monument are currently on display in Richmond in the Valentine's exhibit "Monumental: Richmond's Monuments." The Valentine has offered space in the museum for the Commission to host a fundraising event while the maquettes are on display through January 20, 2019. The Commission is tentatively planning to host an event at the Valentine while the maquettes are on loan.

Construction and Installation Timeline

Members reviewed photos from the Monument's artist, Jay Warren, of his latest progress on the Monument figures. Mr. Warren is creating six-foot male and female figures in clay that will, upon completion and approval, be 3D-scanned, enlarged to 12-foot figures, and cast in bronze. The six-foot figures will be ready for approval in early 2019. Reviewing photos of progress on the models, members discussed the scale of the figures and directed staff to consult with Mr. Warren as to whether the baby held by the female figure is properly scaled. Members otherwise approved the design, and the chair will issue a final approval on the Commission's behalf upon completion of the clay models.

In early 2019, the Commission anticipates receiving schematic design documents, which the chair has been delegated authority to approve in consultation with the Department of General Services. Upon receipt of the documents, the Commission will disburse a payment of \$128,000 to Mr. Warren.

Virginia Union University Richmond 34 Project

On February 22, 2019, Virginia Union University will host an event honoring the Richmond 34, the group of Virginia Union University students who held a sit-in at the downtown Richmond Thalhimers on February 22, 1960. Amirah Salaam, Virginia Union University, invited members of the Commission to attend and participate in the event.

MLK Memorial Park Concept

Rick Tatnall, Replenish Richmond, detailed plans for the proposed Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Park Project, which is intended to transform the area surrounding the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Bridge in Richmond into a recreational area to include murals, a sculpture garden, an urban agriculture center, athletic facilities, and an outdoor museum. Mr. Tatnall plans to involve the Commonwealth and the City of Richmond in the process and will keep the Commission informed as to next steps for the project.

60th Anniversary of Brown v. Board

In commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the Virginia school closings in Arlington, Charlottesville, Norfolk, Prince Edward County, and Warren County in the wake of the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling, the Commission, together with the Brown v. Board of Education Scholarship Committee, will reconstitute the Joint Subcommittee on Public School Closings in Virginia that was formed in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the closings. The Subcommittee will host commemorative events in 2019 in the locations where schools were closed. Tentative plans have been made in partnership with the Moton Museum in Farmville for a commemorative event in Prince Edward County in September.

2019 Lynching Resolution and History of Lynching in Virginia Work Group

Commission members reviewed the History of Lynching in Virginia Work Group's proposed joint resolution acknowledging with profound regret the existence and acceptance of lynching within the Commonwealth. After

minor changes to the language, the Commission approved the final text. The joint resolution will be introduced by the chair in the Senate and by Delegate McQuinn in the House of Delegates.

As part of the History of Lynching in Virginia project, the Commission and History of Lynching in Virginia Work Group will host and partner in hosting programming relating to Virginia's lynching history. The Commission is tentatively planning to join the Department of Historic Resources on April 6 in Charles City at the dedication of the first historic marker in Virginia to document a lynching and will work with Zann Nelson to organize an event in Culpeper, among other events.

Commemoration of 150th Anniversary of Virginia's Ratification of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments

October 8, 2019, will mark the 150th anniversary of Virginia's ratification of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution. Commission members agreed to plan for an event to commemorate the anniversary.

Virginia Union University Community Leaders Breakfast

Members of the Commission agreed to purchase a 10-seat table for \$2,000 at the Virginia Union University Community Leaders Breakfast on January 18, 2019. The Commission annually purchases a table and members annually attend the breakfast.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.