



Virginia Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission

July 24, 2019, at 2:00 p.m.

Pocahontas Building, Senate Committee Room A

mlkcommission.dls.virginia.gov

The Virginia Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission (the Commission) met in Richmond with Senator Jennifer L. McClellan, chair, presiding.¹ The meeting began with introductions and opening remarks followed by presentations and discussion. Materials presented at the meeting are accessible through the [Commission's website](http://mlkcommission.dls.virginia.gov).

History of Lynching in Virginia Work Group

The Commission's History of Lynching in Virginia Work Group (the Work Group) met at 12:00 p.m. prior to the Commission's meeting. Senator McClellan gave an overview of the Work Group's progress and of statewide efforts to recognize Virginia's lynching history. In 2019, the Work Group participated in events held by local organizations in Loudon County, Charles City County, and Albemarle County to recognize the lives of lynching victims in each locality.

In the 2019 Session, SJ 297 (McClellan) and HJ 655 (McQuinn) passed, acknowledging with profound regret the existence and acceptance of lynching within the Commonwealth. The Commission is charged in these resolutions with developing programming to bring awareness and recognition of the history of lynching to communities across the state. To this end, the Work Group will host programming this year in Harrisonburg at James Madison University on September 16 and in Culpeper in November. The Work Group has made preliminary plans to host additional programming in other regions of the state.

Presentation: Publication of *A Little Child Shall Lead Them*

Brian Grogan, Mercy Seat Films

Brian Grogan reported to the Commission on the publication of the book, *A Little Child Shall Lead Them*, documenting the struggle for school desegregation in Prince Edward County. The anthology was published in 2019 by University of Virginia Press and edited by Mr. Grogan and Brian J. Daugherty. The Commission and retired staff member Brenda Edwards collaborated on the development of the anthology in its early stages, and Mr. Grogan expressed his thanks to the Commission for its role in the project.

¹ **Members Present:** Senator Jennifer L. McClellan (chair), Delegate Betsy B. Carr, Delegate Robert M. Thomas, Jr., Reverend Ricardo Brown, Dr. Ronald L. Carey, the Honorable William C. Cleveland, Kirk T. Schroder, J.D., Ph.D.

Members Absent: Senator Mamie E. Locke, Senator Rosalyn R. Dance, Senator Frank M. Ruff, Jr., Delegate C. Matthew Fariss, Delegate Delores L. McQuinn, Delegate Thomas. C. Wright, Jr., Dr. Matthew S. Gibson, LTC Wesley H. Motley, Jr., Charles Withers, Juanita Owens Wyatt

Updates on Commission Programming

Senator Jennifer L. McClellan, Chair

Senator McClellan updated the Commission on the progress of programming for 2019 and 2020.

Commemoration of 60th Anniversary of School Closings

The Commission will support, jointly with the Brown v. Board of Education Scholarship Committee, two events in 2019 to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the school closings that took place in Virginia in the wake of the Brown v. Board of Education ruling. A September 10 event at the Robert Russa Moton Museum in Farmville will commemorate the Prince Edward County school closings, and a September 19 event at the Jefferson School in Charlottesville will commemorate the Charlottesville school closings.

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

The Commission will partner with the American Civil War Museum in Richmond to host a panel discussion at the museum on October 8, 2019, commemorating the 150th anniversary of Virginia's ratification of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution. Virginia ratified both amendments on the same day, October 8, 1869, and an exhibit at the American Civil War Museum explores this history.

King in Virginia Beloved Community Conversations

On May 21, 2019, at the city courthouse in Hopewell, the Commission held its twelfth Beloved Community Conversation, part of its King in Virginia project through which the Commission is hosting programming in every locality in the state that Dr. King visited. In fall 2019, the Commission will complete the project, hosting panel discussions at Mount Level Baptist Church in Dinwiddie and at Virginia State University in Richmond. The 12 past programs were recorded and livestreamed by WCVE PBS and are archived on the Commission's website.

HBCU Storytellers Project

The HBCU Storytellers Project, a project of the Nate Parker Foundation, has created a five-part documentary that aims to encourage dialogue surrounding racial reconciliation. The documentary features discussion of the Emancipation and Freedom Monument and footage of the Monument's maquettes at the Valentine. Commission members tentatively planned to host a screening of the documentary in Richmond in January 2020 to coincide with Martin Luther King, Jr., Day. The Commission will also take part in a screening of the documentary at Norfolk State University on September 25, 2019, as part of *1619: Making of America Summit*.

Emancipation and Freedom Monument

Several 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, were presented to the Commission. Work is currently in progress on the Monument, which will be installed on Brown's Island in Richmond.

Life-Size Clay Models and Update on Current Progress

The Commission reviewed photos from the Monument's artist, Jay Warren, showing his progress on the artwork for the Monument. Mr. Warren completed work on life-size clay models for the Monument in early 2019, and the figures were approved by the chair on behalf of the



Commission in March. The models were 3D scanned, enlarged, and 3D printed as casting patterns for 12-foot figures. In June, the 3D-printed patterns were sent to Artworks Foundry in Berkeley, California, and the foundry is in the process of casting bronze sections for assembly.

Site Development Updates

The Commission reviewed changes to the site of the Monument that were presented at the Commission's previous meeting on April 15, 2019, by Drew Harrigan of Four Winds Design. Placement of the Monument at the original planned site on Brown's Island would have constricted vehicular traffic on the island and posed a danger to the Monument. The new site planned for the Monument is set back from the pathway where the Monument would have originally been placed. Due to a slight incline at the new site, additional grading is required, and the new site design includes a granite retaining wall that will partially encircle the plaza to account for the change in grade. The sculpture itself and its orientation with respect to the Fifth Street pedestrian bridge leading onto Brown's Island remain unchanged.

The original contract with the artist, Jay Warren, specifies four payments to be made to the artist totaling \$765,000. The proposed changes to the site increase project costs by \$121,660 if the Commission chooses to include lighting at the site, or \$96,580 without lighting.

Pending Commission approval of the revised project costs and an amended contract with the artist, schematic design documents will be submitted for review by the Commission in consultation with the Department of General Services. The Commission has delegated authority to the chair to approve the schematic design documents on its behalf.

Role of Department of General Services

Joe Damico, Director of the Department of General Services (DGS), detailed the role of DGS as project manager in the planning, construction, and maintenance of the Monument. DGS's role includes administrative work, review of design documents as they are submitted to ensure accordance with the Virginia Statewide Building Code, and monitoring of the construction process to ensure that the Monument is built in accordance with specifications. DGS will maintain the Monument and plaza once constructed and will maintain lighting if lighting is selected by the Commission.

Commission members discussed whether additional lighting would be needed for the Monument, or whether existing lighting on Brown's Island would be sufficient. Senator McClellan, Mr. Damico, and staff agreed to coordinate a site visit prior to the Commission's next meeting to assess lighting needs for the Monument.

City of Richmond Approvals

Mark Olinger, Director of Planning and Development Review for the City of Richmond, detailed the approvals needed from Richmond City Council in order to proceed with construction on the Monument site. City Council previously approved four ordinances related to the Monument to allow for (i) transfer of property from the City of Richmond to the state; (ii) easement access; (iii) adjustment of the City's lease with Venture Richmond; and (iv) relocation of the Mill, the existing artwork at the Monument site. Due to the Monument's proposed site change, three of these ordinances need to be revised to reflect the new location, resubmitted, and approved by City Council. Prior to action by City Council, the Commission will need to approve amendments to the contract with the artist reflecting the new site and revised budget and timeline. The



Commission will need to make its approvals before mid-September for introduction to City Council on October 14 and a final vote from City Council on November 12.

Groundbreaking and Completion Timeline

Commission members tentatively planned to hold a groundbreaking ceremony in November 2019. Provided that necessary approvals take place on schedule, site work on Brown's Island is scheduled to begin in late 2019. The Commission is working with Venture Richmond to coordinate a timeline that will not conflict with currently scheduled events on Brown's Island. When a final timeline is confirmed, the Commission will plan a 2020 dedication ceremony.

Amendments to Artist Contract

The Commission's counsel, Kirk Schroder, is working with the artist, Jay Warren, to amend the Commission's original contract with Mr. Warren that went into effect on June 13, 2018. The amendments will reflect the changes in the budget and timeline necessitated by the relocation of the Monument site. The amendments will also reflect the Commission's decision on whether to include lighting at the site. As there was no quorum at the meeting, the Commission did not finalize any decisions.

Fundraising

The Commission is receiving donations through its fiscal agent, the Virginia Capitol Foundation, to cover expenses outside of the \$500,000 allotted for the Monument by the Commonwealth. The Commission has received \$78,265 in donations and \$25,000 in pledges in its early fundraising efforts. At its next meeting, the Commission will discuss the possibility of hiring a fundraising consultant and consider plans for a fundraising event.

Next Meeting

The Commission tentatively planned to meet in August to vote on necessary approvals to allow for progress on the Monument.

For more information, see the [*Commission's website*](#) or contact the Division of Legislative Services staff:

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