



Virginia Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission

August 19, 2019, at 2:00 p.m.

Senate Room 3, The Capitol

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. Senator McClellan noted that there is a vacancy on the Commission following citizen member Charles Wither's move to Oregon and resignation. Materials presented at the meeting are accessible through the [Commission's website](#).

Emancipation and Freedom Monument

Senator Jennifer L. McClellan, Chair; Kirk Schroder, Counsel; Amigo Wade, Deputy Director, Division of Legislative Services

Several matters relating to the Emancipation and Freedom Monument (the Monument), dedicated to the contributions of African American Virginians in the fight for freedom, were discussed by the Commission. Work is currently in progress on the Monument, which is scheduled to be installed on Brown's Island in Richmond in 2020.

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 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

¹ **Members Present:** Senator Jennifer L. McClellan (chair), Delegate Betsy B. Carr, Senator Mamie E. Locke, Delegate Delores L. McQuinn, Senator Frank M. Ruff, Jr., Delegate Robert M. Thomas, Jr., Delegate Thomas C. Wright, Jr., Reverend Ricardo Brown, Dr. Ronald L. Carey, Dr. Matthew S. Gibson, LTC Wesley H. Motley, Kirk T. Schroder, J.D., Ph.D.

Members Absent: The Honorable William C. Cleveland, Senator Rosalyn R. Dance, Delegate C. Matthew Fariss, Juanita Owens Wyatt

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 additional lighting is included at the site, or \$96,580 without lighting.

The Commission reviewed photos of existing lighting on Brown's Island at the Monument site following a site visit by Joe Damico, Director of the Department of General Services; Senator McClellan; and staff. Members agreed that there appears to be sufficient lighting at the site and additional lighting is unneeded.

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. Mr. Schroder reviewed the amendments to be made to the contract, which will reflect the changes in the budget and timeline necessitated by the relocation of the Monument site.

Due to the budget increase, an amount of \$48,290 may be due immediately to the artist upon signing of the amended contract. The Commission determined that it currently has access to sufficient funds to cover this payment if needed. Mark Vucci, Director of the Division of Legislative Services, noted that donations made through the Commission's fiscal agent, the Virginia Capitol Foundation, are subject to appropriation and are not immediately accessible.

To ensure continued progress on the Monument between meetings, the Commission voted unanimously to authorize the chair, on behalf of the Commission, to approve (i) amendments to the contract with the Monument's artist reflecting changes to the site of the Monument, schedule of completion, and budget and the Commission's decision to not include lighting at the Monument site; (ii) changes relating to other contingencies that may arise regarding the Monument; and (iii) the Monument's site design documents.

Fundraising

The Commission is receiving donations through the Virginia Capitol Foundation to cover expenses outside of the \$500,000 allotted for the Monument by the Commonwealth. To raise funds and ensure receipt of pledged funds, Senator McClellan noted that the Commission may need to hire a fundraising consultant. Senator McClellan requested authorization from the Commission to request an exemption from the Virginia Public Procurement Act (§ 2.2-4300 et seq.) from the chair of the Senate Committee on Rules in order to hire a fundraising consultant, and the Commission voted to authorize the chair to make this request.

Groundbreaking and Completion Timeline

Commission members tentatively planned to hold a groundbreaking ceremony for the Monument in November 2019 and a dedication ceremony in June 2020. The Commission is working with Venture Richmond to coordinate a timeline that will not conflict with currently scheduled events on Brown's Island.



Updates on Commission Programming

Senator Jennifer L. McClellan, Chair

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

History of Lynching in Virginia Programming

The Commission's History of Lynching in Virginia Work Group is currently developing programming to bring awareness and recognition of the history of lynching to communities across the state. The Work Group will host programming this year in Harrisonburg at James Madison University on September 16 and in Culpeper on November 13. The Work Group has made preliminary plans to host additional programming in other regions of the state.

King in Virginia Beloved Community Conversations

The Commission will complete its King in Virginia Project in 2019, hosting panel discussions at Mount Level Baptist Church in Dinwiddie on September 30 and at Virginia State University in Petersburg in the fall. The 12 past programs were recorded and livestreamed by WCVE PBS and are archived on the Commission's website.

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.

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. Commission members watched a four-minute preview of the series, which 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 the 2019 Commemoration's *1619: Making of America Summit*.

Next Meeting

The Commission tentatively planned to hold its last meeting of 2019 in November or early December.

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

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