



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

April 30, 2021, at 3:00 p.m.

Electronic Meeting

[mlkcommission.dls.virginia.gov](http://mlkcommission.dls.virginia.gov)

The Virginia Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission (the Commission) met electronically with Senator Jennifer L. McClellan, chair, presiding.<sup>1</sup> The meeting began with introductions and opening remarks followed by discussion. Materials presented at the meeting are accessible through the [Commission's meetings webpage](#). Video of the meeting is archived on the [Senate of Virginia's Video Stream](#) page.

### **Emancipation and Freedom Monument**

*Amigo Wade, Acting Director, Division of Legislative Services*

Amigo Wade updated the Commission on several matters relating to the Emancipation and Freedom Monument (the Monument), dedicated to the contributions of African American Virginians in the fight for freedom. The project to construct the Monument began in 2012 and is scheduled for completion in fall 2021. Mr. Wade noted that the work of Joe Damico at the Department of General Services and Katheryn Surface Burks and Catherine Shankles at the Office of the Attorney General has been integral in bringing the project to its final stages.

#### *Property Conveyance*

The Commonwealth now owns the property on Brown's Island in Richmond where the Monument will be installed. Transfer of ownership of the property from the City of Richmond to the Commonwealth was delayed in 2019 by the need to relocate the Monument's site on Brown's Island and again in 2020 by the discovery of contaminants in the soil on Brown's Island, necessitating development of a soil management plan. Following agreement between the Commonwealth and the City of Richmond on a sitewide soil management plan, the property transfer was completed.

#### *Transportation of Bronze Figures to Department of General Services Warehouse*

The Monument's artist, Thomas Jay Warren (the Artist), completed work on the bronze figures comprising the Monument in 2020, and the statues were kept in storage at Artworks Foundry in Berkeley, California. In early 2021, the foundry could no longer continue to store the statues, and

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<sup>1</sup> **Members Present:** Senator Jennifer L. McClellan (chair), Delegate Delores L. McQuinn (vice-chair), Senator Adam P. Ebbin, Senator Mamie E. Locke, Delegate Betsy B. Carr, Delegate Joshua G. Cole, Delegate C. Matthew Fariss, Delegate Roslyn C. Tyler, Delegate Thomas C. Wright, Jr., Rabbi Bruce Aft, Dr. Ronald L. Carey, Dr. Matthew S. Gibson, Dr. Laurant L. Lee, and Kirk T. Schroder, J.D., Ph.D.

**Members Absent:** Senator William M. Stanley, Jr., Reverend Ricardo Brown, and Edward McCoy

in a letter agreement dated March 24, 2021, the chair, on behalf of the Commission, and the Artist agreed to the transportation of the statues to a Department of General Services warehouse in Virginia. The statues arrived at the warehouse on April 19, 2021, and will remain in storage for a period of no longer than nine months until they are installed on Brown's Island.

#### *Review and Approval of Bronze Figures*

The Commission reviewed photographs of the Monument's completed bronze figures and pedestal, which include a female figure holding an infant, a male figure, and plaques on the pedestal depicting notable African American Virginians. The Commission voted to formally approve the bronze figures, as required by the Commission's contract with the Artist.

#### *Anticipated Brown's Island Site Work*

The Department of General Services has coordinated with the Monument's landscape architect and contractor to establish a construction schedule on Brown's Island. The construction schedule accounts for Venture Richmond's previously planned events on the island, which will require construction to stop and restart several times during the summer. The contractor is prepared to begin work on May 3, 2021, and to complete construction of the Monument's plaza and installation of the statues by September 30, 2021.

#### *Costs and Funding Update*

Due to delays in the schedule, the terms of the soil management plan, the need for an elongated work schedule, and other contingencies, costs for the construction and installation of the Monument increased by \$126,313. In an amendment to the Commission's agreement with the Artist executed April 29, 2021, the chair, on behalf of the Commission and in consultation with state agencies, agreed to the new construction schedule and additional costs.

The Commission is receiving a budget appropriation of \$100,000 for fiscal year 2021 to pay for the costs of soil management and is anticipating receipt of several grants that will, in combination with existing donations for the Monument held by the Virginia Capitol Foundation, cover the remaining costs for the project.

#### *Resolution to Authorize Monument Approvals*

At its meeting on August 19, 2019, the Commission authorized the chair to approve, on the Commission's behalf, changes relating to contingencies that may arise regarding the Monument. To reaffirm this authorization, the Commission voted unanimously by voice vote to approve a written resolution ratifying agreements and approvals made by the chair on its behalf, which have included: (i) execution of an amended agreement with the Artist dated November 29, 2019; (ii) execution of a letter agreement with the Artist dated March 24, 2021; (iii) approval of schematic design documents and site development documents; and (iv) execution of an amended agreement with the Artist dated April 29, 2021. The Commission also reaffirmed by way of the resolution its authorization of the chair to continue, in consultation with state agencies, to make agreements and approvals on the Commission's behalf to facilitate the completion of the Monument.

#### *Monument Dedication and Unveiling*

A work group of the Commission will meet to make plans for the dedication and unveiling of the Monument, in anticipation of the September 30, 2021, completion date. The work group will present its plans to the Commission at a later meeting in 2021.



## Tribute to Senator Yvonne B. Miller

*Senator McClellan, Chair*

Senator McClellan reported that the Commission is receiving a \$50,000 budget appropriation for fiscal year 2022 to begin planning a memorial tribute to Senator Yvonne B. Miller to be placed in Capitol Square or another location chosen by the Commission. Following completion of the Emancipation and Freedom Monument, the Commission will consider the form that this tribute might take, which may include a statue or bust, a portrait, or inclusion in the Virginia Women's Monument on Capitol Square. A work group will be appointed at a later meeting to begin this planning.

## History of Lynching in Virginia Work Group Updates

*Senator McClellan, Chair*

The History of Lynching in Virginia Work Group (the Work Group) met at 2:00 p.m. prior to the Commission's meeting. Senator McClellan updated the Commission on five events that the Work Group has planned in locations across the Commonwealth for 2021:

- **Richmond:** A professional development session for teachers will be held in Richmond in late summer.
- **Danville:** A session on teaching Virginia's lynching history will be offered to Danville-area teachers as part of History United's Teacher Content Academy in August.
- **Hampton Roads:** A panel discussion will be held in Hampton Roads in September.
- **Culpeper:** A program to recognize local lynching history will be held in Culpeper, with the participation of surrounding counties, in October or November.
- **Northern Virginia:** An educational program at George Mason University for students, faculty, and the wider public is planned for October or November.

The Work Group is also working on updating and enhancing its website and is planning to host an art and essay contest for students in the spring semester of the 2021–2022 school year.

## Next Meeting

Members will be polled for the date of the Commission's next meeting, which will be held in summer 2021.

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

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