

Commemorative Works Committee Meeting

October 15th, 2021

1:00 PM – 2:05 PM

Attendees:

Committee Members

Andrew Trueblood, OP, Chairperson
Dulce Naime, DPR
Marnique Heath, HPRB
Lauren Dugas=Glover, CAH
Otto Cotton, Citizen Member

OP Staff

Anita Cozart
Kim Elliot
Leslye Howerton
Chris Shaheen
Alisonya Poole

Minutes:

Chris Shaheen opened the meeting with an overview of the Darlington Memorial Foundation on the grounds of Judiciary Square before continuing onto the formal agenda:

- Shaheen shared what the Office of Planning (OP) is considering doing for commemoration in FY23 budget, which includes requesting funds for a grant program for communities to introduce commemorative works in neighborhoods.
- Shaheen requested Commemorative Works Committee members send him a short description of their professional expertise that qualified them to be a member of the Committee so that profiles of each member can be posted on the District's Commemorative Works Program website.
- Shaheen introduced Leslye Howerton and Alisonya Poole, new members of the Office of Planning that will be working on the commemorative works program.

A full quorum was then present, and Chairman Andrew Trueblood called the meeting to order. Marnique Heath moved that the Committee approve the agenda for the October meeting the minutes for the April and July meetings, which were seconded by Otto Condon. The agenda and minutes were passed unanimously. Trueblood noted that OP's proposal for the FY23 budget and the Mayor Bowser's was being prepared and will be presented to District Council.

The Committee discussed a recent article in the *Washington Post* about Columbian Cemetery and the collaborative work being done by Virginia, Maryland, and the District. The cemetery was originally African American, relocated to Maryland, and parts head stones were used to stabilize sections of the Virginia shoreline along the Potomac River. Some of the head stones have been recovered and returned

to Maryland. The newspaper article discussion a potential commemorative work related to this cemetery. Shaheen will send a link to the newspaper article to all committee members.

Shaheen continued with the agenda:

- Shaheen provided an update on the commemorative work location strategy and OP's plans to complete the broader vision strategy in by Winter 2022.
- Applications anticipated to be coming before the Committee at its next meeting is a final review of the Huseyn Javid proposal and a concept review for a Bernardo de Galvez proposal.
- Shaheen share further research on how staff will evaluate the subject of each application and how it reflects DC values.

Committee members discussed examples of past subjects that were commemorated in DC and were controversial, specifically referring to the statue of Albert Pike. Members also noted that the concept of creative "place-making" has become a euphemism for gentrification. Dulce addressed the term "place-keeping" could be re-defined as something that is historic in a community that is kept and preserved and that this is a term she has heard while the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) has been working on the master plan. Trueblood disagreed that the term place-making holds negative connotation but agreed with the idea of uplifting a community and preserving public space. Heath stated that place-making needs to include establishing the right context and the idea of remembering a place that respects and honors the history of a space. Condon stated there is a difference between "place-keeping" and "place-making", and that the valued for protecting an underlining "sense of place" need to be emphasized.

Lauren Dugas-Glover presented the work of the Commission on the Arts and Humanities (CAH) and how it intersects with commemoration. She stated there are two annual grant programs - the Civic Commission Projects Grants Program and the Public Arts Building Communities (PABC) – that can be used to fund commemorative works. The grants provide opportunities for artist to fabricate and install works of art in public spaces and competitive site-specific public art installation projects. The presentation raised questions about what a commemorative work is.

Shaheen asked Dugas-Glover what CAH does to consider the appropriateness of a public art subject. Dugas-Glover stated there is an internal review of the civic commission project and there are community members and artistic professionals on selection panels. She also stated stakeholders can be property owners and community organizations that are impacted by the works. Professional installation artists are included in these meetings and in the installation process. In the PABC program, this could include anything from murals, statues, etc.

Shaheen stated that due to time DPR and the Historic Preservation Office will present next Committee meeting.