

Commemorative Works Committee Meeting Minutes

November 10, 2021

1:00 PM – 2:05 PM

Attendees:

Committee Members

Andrew Trueblood, OP, Chairperson

Dulce Naime, DPR

Jay Coleman, Citizen Member

Lauren Dugas-Glover, CAH

Marnique Heath, HPRB

Otto Condon, Citizen Member

OP Staff

Alisonya Poole

Anita Cozart

Chris Shaheen

Kim Elliot

Leslye Howerton

Vivian Guerra

Presenters

Christopher Anglim, UDC

Sandra Jowers, UDC

Minutes:

Welcome and Call to Order

Andrew Trueblood welcomed committee members and called the meeting to order. Chris Shaheen shared information on the little-known Maine Lobsterman statue at the Wharf. The Committee voted to approve the October meeting minutes and the agenda for the November meeting.

University of the District of Columbia Presentation

Dr. Sandra Jowers with the University of the District of Columbia (UDC) presented information on an ongoing effort to complete a report recommending subjects for up to 12 commemorative works that honor remarkable, diverse native Washingtonians, a charge given to UDC as part of the *Diverse Washingtonians Commemorative Works Amendment Act of 2020*. UDC is required to submit this report to the Mayor and District Council by December 31, 2021. Jowers stated she recently hosted a panel discussion about the effort on UDC's program *UDC Forum*. The process to identify individual and places for commemoration has been organic and drawn from feedback from UDC students. She stated Washingtonians do not always look at or think of public commemoration for District people, places, or events, and efforts to prepare the report has raised awareness of opportunities for local commemoration. She stated it prompted participants in the study to consider different ways to commemorate other than a statue of someone on a horse and that the process has broadened participants concept of what public commemoration can and should be. She stated UDC faculty

participated in preparing the report and used its development as part of coursework during the past semester, including students writing about commemorative works in their neighborhood. UDC is in the process of preparing the report and appreciates the support they have received from OP.

Anita Cozart asked what UDC found to be the most surprising thing heard as part of gathering information for this report. Jowers stated some students have a negative connotation with commemoration, particularly in Wards 7 and 8. UDC faculty shared with residents there is important history in all parts of the District worthy of recognition, such as activists that brought about change locally – subject of commemoration do not have to be of national significance. She stated students were encouraged to think about what neighborhood history and to rely on themselves to understand that something could have happened locally that is important to the District. Jowers was surprised that discussing commemoration could instill such critical discussions and emotions about where people live and what is important to them.

Jay Coleman stated he appreciated the discussion of equity that came about as part of UDC's study, particularly in Ward 7.

Shaheen stated he will continue working with UDC to identify possible locations consistent with OP's work on the commemorative work location strategy. Christopher Anglim stated a number of potential locations have been identified and will be forwarded to OP.

Dulce Naime asked what other types of commemoration students thought of and how they could take advantage of new technology. Jowers stated students wanted to see things they could come across while walking through their neighborhoods – like a bench or plaque with information they could learn from. Jowers stated students wanted to be asked about what commemoration they wanted instead of told what would be installed.

Bernardo de Galvez – Concept Review

Shaheen stated the next item on the agenda is an application from the Embassy of Spain. He reminded the Committee it will review the proposal twice – once as a concept review and the second time as a final review. He noted the commemorative work was already installed because the embassy was not aware of the required review process. Many of the applications required reviews have been completed, but the application still needs to be forwarded to the National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission for their review and comment.

Shaheen described the proposal for a statue of Bernardo de Galvez located at the entrance to the Chancellery at the Embassy of Spain at 2375 Pennsylvania Avenue NW. The sponsor is the Spain-USA Foundation. He stated there is already a statue of Bernardo de Galvez on Virginia Avenue NW at 22nd Street. The proposed statue depicts Galvez in military dress and is 39 inches high and 18 inches wide. The proposal includes a plaque and interpretive panel with information on Galvez and his contribution to the US Revolutionary War. Galvez is most known for leading Spanish troops that captured Pensacola and the Florida Peninsula from British troops who had control of these territories.

Shaheen stated staff recommends the application be approved in concept with additional information brought to the Committee at final review including a simplified landscape plan for the area surrounding the statue, more information on lighting of the statue, specifications on interpretive sign panel, resolution on whether or not lighting will be provided, website content accessed through a QR Code on the interpretive sign, and more information regarding who is responsible for maintaining the associated website sponsoring information access through the QR code.

Leslye Howerton asked each of the committee member for feedback and comments on the application. Marnique Heath stated this is a special case where the work is already installed and agrees with staff comments. She stated there were issues with the size and scale of the commemorative work - particularly the relationship of the statue to the base - and more information on the landscape plan and accessibility was needed.

Coleman agreed the scale of the statue was an issue and asked the Committee what should be done when a commemorative works is already installed. Trueblood stated if the statue was denied the District could require the statue be removed since it is unpermitted and in public space. In this case, Trueblood recognized that the process for commemorative works was not fully in effect when the statue was installed and the process to permit commemorative works may not have been fully in operation. He recommended the Committee provide comments to inform staff on what they are interested in seeing in this and future applications.

Naime stated she agreed with previous comments regarding issues of the scale of the statue with the base. She stated she wanted more information on the interpretive sign and on the maintenance for the website behind the QR code.

Otto Condon stated he agreed with previous comments in terms of the scale of the statue and the base, the landscaping, and signage. He noted the signage seemed out of place in terms of its scale, design, and relationship to the fence.

Lauren Dugas-Glover stated she agreed with previous comments and she would typically not support this commemorative works, noting issues with the signage, scale of the statue, and landscape plan. She stated the landscape as it exists could present an overgrown effect and if not properly maintained and detract from the statue. She stated the QR code included on the interpretive sign is an expansion of communication that is – today - a must-have since it is in the public domain.

Andrew Trueblood stated agreement with previous comments and noted materials used for the interpretive sign are incompatible with what is being proposed. He stated the text of the interpretive sign should include something on the existing statue of Galvez on Virginia Avenue, noting this is an opportunity to include interpretation of the existing statue and contextualize the relationship between both commemorative works.

Shaheen summarized the Committee's comments on the application:

1. The scale of the statue and its relationship to the base;

2. Clarification and more information regarding the landscape plan;
3. Accessibility to the statue and the site;
4. Maintenance of the interpretive sign, materials used for the interpretive sign and how they relate to the fence; and;
5. Incorporation of interpretation about the Galvez statue on Virginia Avenue.

Naime asked about the width of the adjacent sidewalk and if locating the interpretive sign at the back of the sidewalk would cause people stop and read sign, potentially blocking the sidewalk. Shaheen stated staff will work with the applicant on the location of the interpretive sign as part of redesigning the landscape. She continued to question how the corner landscaped area could be redesigned to limit interference with pedestrian traffic, like designing the site as a small garden and landscaped area that is an extension of the sidewalk with the interpretive sign closer to the statue.

Shaheen stated he understood these comments to say that the landscape plan should be redesigned to create a holistic site plan and context for the statue. He said this could also provide seating, better frame the commemorative work, and create a small space for informal gatherings. Heath and Dugas-Glover supported this idea.

Chris called for a vote on the motion and re-summarized the Committee's comments to incorporate the last part of the conversation regarding looking at the area around the statue more holistically with the goal of creating a space specifically for the statue and taking into consideration how it is experienced by people walking through the space, observing the statue, incorporation of the interpretive sign, ADA accessibility, and scale of statue and base. He stated additional issues to be resolved included maintenance of the interpretive sign, incorporation of information on the Galvez statue on Virginia Avenue into the interpretive sign, and more information on specifications of the interpretive panel and how it fits into the overall design of the corner.

Trueblood moved to support the recommendations in the staff report and to have the comments as summarized by Shaheen incorporated as additional recommendations. Heath seconded the motion. All members voted to support the comments to the applicant and the motion was approved.

Historic Preservation Office Presentation and Adjournment

Shaheen noted that discussions agenda items went longer than anticipated and stated the presentation from the Historic Preservation Office will be postponed to the December meeting. The meeting adjourned at 2:05 PM.