

Commemorative Works Committee Meeting

July 31, 2020

WebEx Virtual Meeting

3:30 PM to 4:30 PM

MEETING MINUTES

Attendees

Andrew Trueblood, Chair, OP
Lauren Dugas Glover, DCCAH
Dulce Naime, DPR
Kathleen Beeton, DCRA
Otto Condon, Public Member
Yohance Fuller, DGS
Anna Chamberlin, DDOT
Chris Shaheen, OP Staff
Anita Cozart, OP Staff
Eddie Luthy, OP Staff
Malaika Scriven, OP Staff

Minutes

Andrew Trueblood convened the meeting at 3:35 PM and welcomed members who introduced themselves. Trueblood moved to approve the minutes from the March 27th Commemorative Works Committee (Committee) meeting and it was seconded by Lauren Dugas Glover (DCCAH). The Committee unanimously voted to approve the minutes.

Updates

Chris Shaheen reviewed the agenda for the meeting and desired outcomes. Trueblood gave an update on recent Council legislation proposing eight new commemorative works, a task force to assess commemorative works in the District of Columbia and making changes to the members of the Commemorative Works Committee. He stated Chairman Mendelson is interested in combining the two pieces of legislation into one in Fall 2020.

Malaika Scriven gave an update on Mayor Bowser's DC Facilities and Commemorative Expressions (DC FACES) Working Group that was recently established to assess all named buildings, facilities, commemorative works and statues on DC-owned property. She explained that the working group had seven members from District agencies and was charged with making sure individuals for which buildings are named represent District values. The working group has three focus areas: policy, engagement, and research. The working group will make recommendations to the Mayor based on its findings by the end of August.

Shaheen reported on plans to update the Office of Planning's Commemorative Works Program webpage in response to questions raised at a recent Council hearing. The first phase includes adding a more thorough overview of the program, a clearer description of the responsibilities of the Committee, an

application for a sponsor proposing a commemorative work, contact information for anyone interested in proposing a commemorative work, and the Commemorative Works Amendment Act of 2000. These changes have already been made. A second phase will include adding information on the current work program to develop a location strategy and long-range vision for commemoration in the District of Columbia, profiles on commemorative works that have been approved, and additional resources. These updates are planned to be made in Fall 2020.

Location Strategy

Shaheen gave an overview of the current work plan and dates for deliverables that have changed from what had been reviewed at the March Committee meeting. The project schedule still calls for a location strategy to be released by the end of September. Plans to develop a scope of work for a vision strategy has been pushed back to begin in November and to be completed by July 2021.

Shaheen reminded the Committee why the location strategy is being developed first:

1. It shifts the work of the Committee to something that is proactive;
2. Identifies potential sites for prospective sponsors and applicants; and
3. Guides commemorative works to locations where they can achieve multiple goals and benefits.

He also reviewed the three-step methodology for identifying locations that was presented at the March meeting. The first was to develop concepts the Committee endorsed at their last meeting: 1) Ceremonial Corridors; 2) Community Spaces; and, 3) Shared Spaces. The second step was to identify the types of places in the city plan appropriate for commemorative works including small parks and open spaces, wide sidewalks, civic buildings and spaces, and larger parks, waterfronts, and plazas. The third step was to identify where these spaces aligned with the three concepts.

Using this methodology, OP identified over 1,300 potential commemorative sites:

1. 721 potential sites were identified along Ceremonial Corridors, with most of them (612) being small parks and open spaces. Based on feedback from the working group gathered at an April meeting, potential sites along secondary corridors will be moved and identified as potential Community Spaces. This will result in a decrease in the number of sites found along Ceremonial Corridors and an increase in the number of sites identified as Community Spaces.
2. 242 potential sites were found in areas identified as Community Space, with most of them (142) being small parks and open spaces. This number will increase based on the decision to move potential sites from along secondary corridors to Community Spaces.
3. 348 potential sites were identified in Community Spaces, with most of them (205) being small parks and open spaces. This number is unlikely to change.

The Working Group has also identified a format for a profile sheet on each site to be included in the inventory. The sheet includes maps showing the site's location in the city and immediate context, the concept it is associated with, a description of the site and commemorative opportunity, and specific information about its physical characteristics, urban context, site accessibility, ownership, visual qualities, and associated historic resources. Shaheen explained the goal is to finish the location strategy

by the end of September 2020. Based on this timeline and staff capacity, the strategy will either have more sites but less information on each profile sheet, or fewer sites with more in-depth information. He explained sites not included in the first release of the strategy can be added over time as staff capacity allows.

Committee members and others attending the meeting shared their thoughts on the location strategy work that has been completed so far:

Otto Condon (Public Member) stated that he preferred having more sites – around 20 – as part of the first release. He supported the level and type of information provided for each site in the profile sheet.

Dugas Glover asked where the strategy would be made available and how it would be used. Shaheen explained the location strategy would be posted on the Office of Planning website and made available to commemorative work sponsors who already have a project and are looking for a specific site. Glover stated that it would also be helpful if OP could provide information that would help sponsors understand the costs associated with constructing and maintaining a commemorative work, how to develop a budget, the review process, and fees associated with permitting. Shaheen stated this is something staff will investigate developing.

Kathleen Beeton (DCRA) suggested added square footage of each site and zoning as information on each site to the profile sheets.

Condon agreed with the criteria suggested to identify preferred sites (high visibility, mature trees/shade, and good accessibility) and suggested using the potential for a partner that could help maintain a commemorative work as another criteria to identify preferred sites.

Scriven asked who is responsible for maintaining commemorative works. Shaheen explained that sponsors of each commemorative work are responsible for its construction and maintenance, and the application filled out by a sponsor requires information demonstrating it has the financial means to maintain each commemorative work submitted for consideration.

Dugas Glover asked who would use the location strategy. Shaheen explained the strategy is intended primarily for sponsors that have a subject already in mind but have not identified a site. For example, he explained that pending Council legislation proposes a statue for Dr. Houston but does not specify a site. The strategy will list sites that can be evaluated for their relevance to Dr. Houston's life and accomplishments. Dugas Glover stated the District may find unlikely sponsors coming forward with commemorative work proposals based on the current, ongoing national conversation and that information on potential locations in the strategy will be helpful for sponsors not familiar with the District of Columbia. She stated this is something that the DC Commission on Arts and Humanities is currently thinking about.

Trueblood thanked everyone for their comments and let Committee members know they can continue to send in comments on the location strategy next week.

Vision Scope of Work

Shaheen explained that the timeline to develop a scope of work for a future vision of commemorative work in the District of Columbia has shifted to begin in November 2020 and conclude in July 2021. This timeline is to develop a scope work only, not to develop the vision. He explained the key milestones anticipated to be included in the scope included a summary of best practices and current events, a draft scope of work, review of the scope by District agencies and partners, refining the draft scope of work, presenting the scope of work to the Committee, and refining the final scope of work.

Committee members and others attending the meeting shared their thoughts on developing the commemorative works visioning scope of work:

Dulce Naime (DPR) asked if assessing capital improvements projects that could potentially incorporate a commemorative work would be part of the scope. Trueblood stated this is an opportunity for DPR and DGS to look at potential sites, but that these would not be identified in the scope of work. Naime also suggested DPR may want to change the name of some of their triangle parks.

Beeton suggested broadening the type of sites the scope of work considers to include any public facility, and that the vision should include commemoration on both public sites and private property. Shaheen stated the scope of work will include contemplating commemorative works on public and private spaces.

Naime asked how the scope of work will take into consideration other District agency initiatives, like the Department of Parks and Recreation's program that sponsors festivals. Shaheen stated this is the type of feedback staff will be looking for from District agencies as the scope of work is circulated for review and comment.

Next Steps

Shaheen stated a Working Group meeting to continue refining the location strategy will be scheduled sometime in August and the next full Committee meeting is scheduled for September 25th.

Trueblood thanked everyone for participating in the conversation. The meeting adjourned at 4:35 PM.