

CHARLOTTESVILLE HISTORIC RESOURCES COMMITTEE
Meeting Notes: Friday February 14, 2020 * 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Neighborhood Development Services Conference Room * 610 East Market Street

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HRC Members:

Madeleine Hawks, Chair
Genevieve Keller, Co-Chair
Alissa Diamond, Co-Chair
Jalane Schmidt
Sally Duncan
Jordy Yager
Heather Hill

Margaret O’Bryant
William Clay III
Ellen Wagner

Absent:
Dede Smith

Staff:
Missy Creasy

Guests:
Molly Conger
Liz Russell
Philip Cox

11:00 a.m. Madeleine Hawks called the meeting to order and opened the time for public speakers.

Molly Conger – noted that the HRC should take a stance on the State House and Senate bills concerning statues. She outlined concerns with the Senate bill language.

Liz Russell – from the Albemarle County Historic Preservation Committee - stated she was here to listen and learn.

Philip Cox – county resident and member of Alb HPC subcommittee - was interested in hearing about impacts to the court space.

Ms. Diamond made a motion to add the slave auction block and the state legislation item to the agenda. Ms. Schmidt seconded. All voted in favor.

Slave Auction Block Plaque Recommendation

Ms. Hawks reviewed notes provided by Jeff Werner in advance of the meeting. Ms. Keller noted the importance of having descendent groups be included in the discussions. Though that had been noted for the court square markers, it is important that any permanent marker obtain feedback. Ms. Schmidt agreed and noted that a temporary marker should move forward. She pointed to the example provided in the packet materials. It was clarified that this example meets ADA requirements and language should note that this would be temporary. There was discussion about how to move forward.

Ms. Hawks summarized the discussion: A small group of the HRC (Court Square Marker Subcommittee) will work on a Google Document over the weekend to share with the full HRC. This will result in a recommendation to provide for the February 18, 2020 Council meeting. Discussion followed on the materials, funding and placement of the temporary marker. It was clarified that it would be freestanding and fit into the current location and not be made of stone. The subcommittee will be meeting on February 24, 2020 and they will reach out to the descendent community to gather feedback for moving toward a permanent marker.

Vinegar Hill Park

Ms. Hawks noted the email with the draft posters that were forwarded and then moved to discussion of the draft letter. Mr. Yager noted that Robert suggested a few ways to circulate the memo noting that having it available at the African American Heritage Center to pass out would be helpful. He noted that as efforts move forward, a formal Vinegar Hill group will need to be established.

Ms. Diamond noted the importance of HRC communicating to Council but wanted to have feedback from the residents. A printing in the gas bill may not be the best way to communicate this targeted mailing. Mr. Keller noted that not everyone receives a gas bill. Mr. Yager noted that churches could be a good location to get the word out and there could be forums to gather history. He noted the Heritage Center doesn't have the capacity to organize forums but could assist with getting the word out. Ms. Diamond noted it is important to determine who should sign the letter and provide next steps for response. Ms. Hawks asked what are the hopeful outcomes/feedback from the letter. She noted that perhaps a survey instrument with a stamped envelope. Following discussion it was determined that the letter would be edited and reformatted to provide to Council with a signature from Chair Hawks and a subcommittee (including a resident of the area) would be formed. This was moved by Ms. O'Bryan and seconded by Mr. Clay. All voted in favor.

Court Square Markers

Ms. Hawks provided an overview of the item. Ms. Duncan noted that the subcommittee approved the schedule and mission statement provided in the materials packet and plan to have the marker language completed by May 2020. Ms. Diamond added that between stage 3 and 4 of the project, the full HRC will be brought in to comment on the drafts. The temporary marker we talked about earlier will lengthen the schedule slightly. Ms. Hawks reminded members that there were estimates for the markers from 2012 but it is likely that a new process would need to take place. Ms. Hill noted it would be important to be able to produce soon after the wording is complete. Ms. Hawks noted that she would have Jeff and Robert begin working on quotes for marker fabrication.

Ms. Diamond asked to see a comp of the mock up provided by Fred Wolf and it was noted that could be forwarded.

There was discussion of coordination of this effort with the Court Square project as well as the County Court project. The HRC plans to keep working on this effort while coordinating with other efforts. It was clarified that materials will be internal until all of the draft markers are developed.

Liz Russell suggested that the first meeting may be more successful if there is something to react to and it would be helpful to see the markers in context of one another.

For the first meeting of the subcommittee on Feb 24, 2020 the discussion will be on language for the slave block plaque and number nothing.

Jeff and Robert will be directed to obtain quotes for fabrication of the signs individually and in batches and to confirm the procurement levels.

An additional meeting of the full HRC will be scheduled on May 18, 2020 from 10am-noon to discuss the final language for the markers.

Ms. Hill moved for approval of the mission statement as proposed and the motion was seconded by Ms. Diamond. All voted in favor of adoption.

Walking Tour

Mr. Yager noted he had a spreadsheet of each existing site with data as available. He noted that all the sites to include on the map would increase numbers from 36 to 49 sites but they have some which could be consolidated into centralized areas. Mr. Clay confirmed the overview and it was noted that Robert will have more information on the schedule for the map. The next subcommittee will be dedicated to producing options.

Senate Bill Language

Ms. Schmidt emailed a draft to everyone and read the language out loud of a version of a letter that she would be sending to the legislature on behalf of other groups. Lisa Robertson was aware of this draft. HRC members expressed concern with the draft noted and the group decided to narrow it to the core issues.

Ms. Keller made the motion with Ms. Diamond seconding. The following draft language would be edited and shared with the full HRC next week:

We, the Charlottesville City Council-appointed Historic Resources Committee are concerned with the amendments which have been attached to SB 183. Charlottesville has been uniquely affected by the lack of local authority to deal with our own monuments. We feel that the language of SB 183 is burdensome. We encourage localities to undertake their own process of historical evaluation. We strongly support retaining the language, unaltered, of HB 1537.

The language will be placed on HCR letterhead for signature by Chair Hawks with cc to Council and Lisa Robertson and forwarded to appropriate legislators. All members voted in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 12:45pm.