

FINAL MINUTES

COMMISSION FOR HISTORICAL STATUES IN THE UNITED STATES CAPITOL

JULY 24, 2020, 9:30 A.M.

COMMISSION MEMBERS:

Dr. Edward Ayers

Dr. Colita Fairfax

Senator Louise Lucas

Delegate Jeion Ward

Dr. Fred Motley

Chief Anne Richardson

Ms. Margie Vanderhye

Ms. Julie Langan, Ex Officio

ATTENDEES:

Governor Ralph Northam

Deputy Secretary Joshua Saks

DHR STAFF:

Ms. Stephanie Williams

Mr. Jim Hare

Ms. Jennifer Pullen

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Langan called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. She reminded the members and attendees that the meeting would be recorded, that it had been properly noticed, that it was being held virtually and that minutes would be taken. Attendance was taken by roll call. Chief Anne Richardson joined the meeting at 9:55 a.m.

APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Ms. Vanderhye. Senator Lucas seconded. The vote passed unanimously and was taken by roll call.

APPROVAL OF JULY 1 MEETING MINUTES

Dr. Fairfax requested that Jennifer's name be spelled out before approving.

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Dr. Ayers. Delegate Ward seconded the motion. The vote, taken by roll call, passed unanimously.

ELECTION OF CHAIR

Dr. Fairfax made a motion to elect Senator Lucas as Chair. . The motion was seconded by Delegate Ward. The vote, taken by roll call, passed unanimously.

Ms. Langan 'passed the gavel' to newly-elected Chair Lucas.

ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

Dr. Fairfax made a motion to elect Delegate Ward as Vice- Chair. The motion was seconded by Dr. Ayers. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

OVERVIEW OF COMMISSION RESPONSIBILITIES

Ms. Langan presented an overview of the Commission's responsibilities as outlined in HR 1406. They include: appointment of 3 citizen members; deciding whether the Lee statue should be removed; determining the disposition of the statue, selection of the subject for a replacement statue, selection of an artist, and raising of the necessary funding. (see PowerPoint)

OVERVIEW OF STATUARY HALL AND ROBERT E. LEE STATUE

Jim Hare presented a historical overview of the Statuary Collection at the United States Capitol and the history of the Lee statue. (see PowerPoint)

OVERVIEW OF STATUE REMOVAL PROCESS

Ms. Langan presented the statue removal process which consists of ten discreet steps. At various points throughout the process, approvals from the Architect of the Capitol, who oversees the process, are required. She estimated that the entire process, from start to finish, could easily take two years. (see PowerPoint)

GOVERNOR RALPH S. NORTHAM

Governor Ralph Northam welcomed everyone and thanked the Commission members. He spoke briefly about the divisiveness of the Lee statue and the need to create a more welcoming, inclusive statue to represent Virginia.

Chair Lucas thanked the Governor and called for the public comment portion of the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Langan discussed how public comment will be taken and how the public pre-registered to speak.

Four of the eight who pre-registered spoke, all of whom were in favor of the removal of the Robert E. Lee statue. Speakers included:

Jessica Jackson

David Jenkins

Joshua Griset

Kristopher Reinard

OVERVIEW OF WRITTEN COMMENTS

Ms. Langan shared that the Commission received 49 written comments via the Commission's email address, uscapitolcommisson@dhr.virginia.gov, 48 of which supported the removal of the statue. Ms. Langan summarized the common themes from those who supported removal and presented, in its entirety, the one objection (see PowerPoint).

COMMISSION COMMENTS

Chair Lucas asked Commission members for their comments and thoughts regarding the removal of the Lee statue from the Statuary Hall collection. All who spoke favored removal.

Dr. Fairfax presented a motion to remove the Robert E. Lee statue from the U.S. Capitol that was seconded by Vice Chair Ward. - By a roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

NEXT STEPS

Ms. Langan presented next steps for the Commission which include meeting in August to review the staff-prepared interim report to the General Assembly. (see PowerPoint)

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Lucas called the meeting to adjourn. Dr. Ayers made a motion which was seconded by Vice Chair Ward.

MEETING ADJOURNED at 10:46 a.m.