

Women of Virginia Commemorative Commission
Executive Committee Meeting
Thursday, October 1, 2015
3rd Floor East Conference Room, General Assembly Building
Richmond, VA

Minutes

Members in Attendance:

Senator Mary Margaret Whipple
Lissy Bryan
Dr. Sandra G. Treadway

Susan C. Schaar
Jacqueline C. Hedblom
Lisa M. Hicks-Thomas

On Thursday, October 1, 2015 the Executive Committee of the Commemorative Commission to Honor the Contributions of the Women of Virginia was held in the 3rd Floor East Conference Room of the General Assembly Building in Richmond, Virginia. Vice Chair Senator Mary Margaret Whipple called the meeting to order a few minutes after 10:30 AM. She welcomed everyone and asked everyone present to introduce themselves. She welcomed John Crank, principal designer of The 1717 Design Group, and Elliott Schwartz, brother & partner of the artist, Ivan Schwartz (from StudioEIS) who could not attend the meeting. The main purpose of the meeting was to give and receive updates from the StudioEIS/1717 Design Group team since it had been 18 months since the last phase of the contract was completed.

Elliott Schwartz started off the meeting by stating his intent to implement the next phase of the contract but first wanted updates on the status of what the Commission had achieved as of late. Senator Whipple explained that several gifts were anticipated in the near future. She asked the two men from the design team what the next phase entails. John Crank said that the next part of the project would be to have an engineering firm come to the site to draw up the topographic map and come up with the plan pertaining to design issues – it would take about 3-5 months. He has already met with a couple of firms and received proposals from them. These were suggestions by the Department of General Services as companies that they have worked with in the past on other projects. When he approached these firms for proposals about 2 years ago, the cost was roughly \$101,000.

Elliott Schwartz then discussed the more design-oriented artistic aspects of the phase – including staging of the figures, coming up with the storyline of the figures, and the research that would be necessary to fully and correctly represent each figure. He said there would be a mock-up and photo shoot in New York at their studio where they would work to create the scene and establish what would work best in the plaza space – this would take roughly 3 days (he mentioned the photos would be a good promotional tool in fundraising efforts) and preparation/research would take around 4 months. He explained that he would need to rely on the Library of Virginia for as much of the research and information needed on each woman as possible – then would review it and come back with questions. Dr. Sandy Treadway told the members that she and her staff would handle the research and background information to make sure it is as historically accurate as possible – mentioning that she might need to employ the use of Jamestown historians for help with the earlier two figures, and that for some women there won't be exact images available so she would come up with an image of a similar woman from

the time period/region as a representation. Mr. Crank added that the Commission should come up with what age they want each woman to be portrayed as – Senator Whipple said that the inclination of everyone is that the women should be the age they were at the peak time of their achievements. She added as a side note that she was concerned about the height of each figure, that they might be too short compared to today's women. The two men responded that they could take some artistic license to heighten the figures if needed, but others at the table expressed a feeling that the figures should be accurately life-size to give a more realistic feel to the monument. Mr. Schwartz added that if figures were enlarged it would increase the cost of the project. He then went on to describe the photo shoot and mock-up process in detail, mentioning that costuming would require a lot of research as props and wardrobe details would need to be as accurate as possible – this would take some time but there would be plenty of opportunity for changes as needed between the shoot and the actual rendering of the figures for the monument. Susan Schaar mentioned for informational purposes that the Edgar Allen Poe statue located nearby the site on Capitol Square is in process of being evaluated for relocation so it won't feel "lost" among the new neighboring monuments.

In wrapping up the meeting with the design team, Mr. Schwartz asked if the next phase could be implemented - Senator Whipple responded "Yes." The conversation then transitioned into discussing fundraising. Alice Lynch from the Virginia Capitol Foundation led this discussion, updating everyone in attendance on where the project stands financially. She reported that so far, 1 million of the 10 million dollars needed for the Capitol Campaign has been committed – with \$339,000 pledged just for the Women's Monument project and roughly \$250,000 in hand. She said that at this point they are looking for entire corporations to "adopt" an individual figure or for several to come together to sponsor. She mentioned that Senator Donald McEachin has offered to help make some connections and create public interest in the project. She also updated everyone on contacts made to host events for the project, of which there have been two ladies (additionally, Senator Vogel – Commission Member) who have offered. Susan Schaar suggested sending a letter to the Steering Committee to update them on where the project is now.

Senator Whipple opened up the meeting for reports from any members. Lisa Hicks-Thomas informed everyone that she met with her sorority group (Delta Sigma Theta) in Loudon County and the ladies all seemed very interested in the Women's Monument – they were given postcards and informational packets regarding the project. Senator Whipple directed Alice Lynch to follow up with them. With no further business or public comment, the meeting was adjourned at 11:49 AM. A meeting of the full Commission would hopefully be scheduled in the coming weeks.