

Women of Virginia,  
Commemorative Commission  
March 28, 2012

**Minutes**

Members in attendance:

Secretary Lisa M. Hicks-Thomas  
Senator Ryan McDougle  
Mrs. Em Bowles Locker Alsop  
Mrs. Mary Blanton Easterly  
Alice Lynch

Delegate Jimmie Massie  
Paul Nardo  
Lissy Bryan  
Sandra G. Treadway

The meeting was called to order by Secretary Hicks-Thomas. Commission members introduced themselves. Secretary Hicks-Thomas welcomed the newest member to the commission, Senator Ryan McDougle. She also recognized the retirement of staff member Angi Murphy and welcomed her replacement, Maribeth Turner. The minutes of the last meeting on November 21, 2011 were adopted. Linda Wettstone, Senior Systems Analyst from the Senate Clerk's Office, was introduced by Secretary Hicks-Thomas.

Linda Wettstone presented the Women's Commission website in efforts to gain its approval in becoming accessible to the public via internet. She explained the home screen, its modules, and took suggestions on how to improve the site before its launch. Ms. Bryan asked that the "Request a Speaker" module be clarified, as it is only intended for groups requesting that a member of the commission to come speak to them, and not as a general function of the public. She also suggested that the website contain a link for artists and useful information about the project for them. Mr. Nardo recommended posting the minutes of each meeting on the website, labeling them appropriately for organizational purposes. Ms. Bryan then inquired as to who the "contact" was at the moment for the "Who to Contact" module, and Secretary Hicks-Thomas explained that she is receiving all phone calls while Ms. Lynch's office at the Capitol Foundation is receiving the e-mails. It was established that any further comments on the website be directed towards Mrs. Wettstone, and Secretary Hicks-Thomas approved the website going live once the previous recommendations are addressed.

Once Secretary Hicks-Thomas reviewed the mission statement of the commission, she introduced the speaker, architect Mr. Byron Dickson. He gave a brief history of his work on the D-Day Memorial in Bedford, and gave suggestions for this project. Ms. Bryan asked him how they came up with the design for the monument, and he said that he did as the architect, and Ms. Easterly asked him if he liked the proposed site and he said he did, that it has "slope" (it will be easy to make improvements to accommodate handicapped accessibility) and good "flow" for water drainage. He suggested placing a model or drawing of the monument on the site because it would be good for drawing public attention. Secretary Hicks-Thomas asked how long it would take for construction of a monument like that and he gave a timeline of 18 months of construction. He further

explained that his monument took 11 years to conceive money and ideas and then construct. He also gave a timeline of steps that should be taken before hiring an architect. He clarified that the monument would be owned by the state, but all monies should be raised privately.

Once Mr. Dickson gave his suggestions for the monument, Ms. Lynch gave her subcommittee report on fundraising. She said that over \$100,000 has been raised so far and the Capitol Foundation is holding the funds at no charge for right now. Ms. Alsop requested a way for the names of donors to be placed on the monument somehow, if at all possible. There was some discussion between Ms. Alsop, Ms. Easterly, and Ms. Lynch about how the funds they had raised were being used. After some extensive dialogue about this matter, Ms. Bryan suggested to form a smaller group get together and discuss how the funds are being appropriated.

Ms. Bryan then gave her subcommittee report on the formation of the RFP. She said that an RFP is possible, and she hopes to have it done by mid-April. She discussed the idea of advertising for the project in several magazines that are sold internationally, but then raised the point of the desire for the artist to be from Virginia. Her wish was to go ahead with the RFP then proceed with advertising discussions at the next meeting. She said that she felt like someone was needed to further push this issue, that maybe an executive committee could be formed for this matter.

The RFP process was further discussed by Mr. Steve Owens from the Attorney General's office, and Mr. Bert Jones from the Department of General Services. Mr. Owens explained the Virginia Public Procurement Act and that the commission is subject to this act. He told the members that it is their responsibility to define to the public what the goal of this monument is. Mr. Jones followed up on this statement, cautioning that a clear idea of what is to be achieved will curb any troubles or hurt feelings among the public. He also gave some examples through the discussion of the process of the Public Safety Memorial and recommended an RFP. Secretary Hicks-Thomas asked if we could limit our selection of an artist to just submissions from Virginians, and Mr. Jones replied that we could not disqualify an artists' submission based on this alone.

At this point, questions were raised about forming an executive committee for several issues, including the artist selection process. Several members of the committee were in favor of this plan, but Secretary Hicks-Thomas advised that an executive committee could not be formed at the time because there was not a quorum. Mr. Nardo asked if the potential executive committee to be formed could have final say over things or if any decisions had to go to the committee, and Mr. Jones answered that the executive committee could make decisions alone.

Ms. Judy Hart gave public comment on the idea of sticking with a "program." She advised that there is a great deal of emotion among the public about this monument and having a clear path laid out will help quell any negative emotions that could come from an unorganized idea.

Secretary Hicks-Thomas adjourned the meeting, with no set date for the next meeting. She said that the members would be polled and the next meeting would then be set.