

21 June 2017

MEETING NOTES

RE: STRATFORD HISTORIC COMMITTEE MEETING #5
STRATFORD MIDDLE SCHOOL
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA
31406600



2121 WARD PLACE, NW, 4TH FLOOR
WASHINGTON, DC 20037
202 298 6700

Meeting Date & Time: 23 May 2017, 7:00-9:00 PM
Location: H-B Woodlawn Teacher's Lounge

Attendees:

Historic Committee

Susan Cunningham
Saundra Green
Michael Jones
Frank Wilson
Craig Syphax (via phone)

Staff

Ben Burgin – APS Assistant Director, Design & Construction
Bill Herring – APS Project Manager, Design & Construction (Project Point of Contact)
Theresa Flynn – APS Library Supervisor (via phone)
Rebecca Ballo – Arlington County Historic Preservation Program (HPP)

Design Team

Carl Elefante – Quinn Evans Architects
Devon Hogan – Quinn Evans Architects
Tevere MacFayden – Main Street Design
Lito Karatsoli-Chanikian – Main Street Design

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This was the fifth meeting of the Stratford Historic Committee. The Committee has been constituted by Arlington Public Schools to assist in the interpretation of the historic events that took place at Stratford.

Discussion points are summarized below. This summary presents Quinn Evans Architects' understanding of discussions, decisions, and recommended actions. We request that all attendees review these Meeting Notes and notify Quinn Evans with recommended revisions or questions within seven days of issuance.



1. WELCOME & HOUSEKEEPING

- a. APS thanks committee members Sandra Green and Susan Cunningham in volunteering to become co-chairs of the Historic Committee.
- b. Committee endorses the name 'Stratford Middle School', and believes it is important to keep the name consistent with when the school was first integrated
 - i. Committee notes that the APS consider a new name for the Stratford Program since it will not be back at the school after the renovation.
 - ii. This would help to avoid confusion when the program moves to the new site in Rosslyn.
- c. APS notes that ground breaking is being planned for February 2nd, 2018.

2. COMMEMORATION FRAMEWORK

- a. MSD provides a review of the past committee meetings and the process to date, providing context in regards to how committee has arrived at the current concepts.
 - i. Meeting 1 – Defined process, and the decision to hire interpretive planners was made.
 - ii. Meeting 2 - Presentation of historic events and context by Arlington County HPP staff. Discussion of history highlights, most important themes, etc.
 - iii. Meeting 3 - Review of key stories. Preferences for design and interpretive approaches.
 - iv. Meeting 4 - Initial concepts presentation. Discussion of including fine artwork.
 - v. Meeting 5 - Presentation of refined concepts. Illustration of how fine arts elements and approach are integrated.
- b. MSD reviews the proposed locations of interior and exterior interventions where the commemoration and interpretation take place with site location plan showing:
 - i. Gateways
 - ii. Historic Path
 - iii. Heart of School interior elements
 - iv. Stratford Self Portrait and gathering area elements
 - v. Time and Place architectural interpretation.
- c. Committee agrees that framework elements are according to earlier discussions.
- d. MSD notes that everything proposed thus far are still concept and will continue to evolve from what was presented.

3. FRAMEWORK PRESENTATION

- a. MSD reviews the components of the framework that the historic committee developed through the aforementioned process.
- b. Gateways:
 - i. Design elements that mark corners of the site. These elements focus on the events of Feb 2nd events and recollections of the 4 students.



- ii. Gateways "open doors". It is an element visitors can walk through and around, and can vary from one location to the next. Concept shown includes images and text using perforated panels or similar text.
- c. Historic Path
 - i. Four locations highlighted with interpretive elements: Massive Resistance; Brown v Board; Feb 2nd; Gathering Together
 - ii. 4 student monuments planned for at the end of the path. MSD notes that how the statues of the 4 students are arranged, and how images are rendered can be developed further from the concept shown. Can include text and images for more in depth interpretation.
 - iii. Pavers along path with text, highlighting, emotions not events, along with sculpture elements.
- d. Heart of School
 - i. Celebration of Diversity mobile with images hanging in atrium that rotates, allowing it to be viewed from multiple elevations.
 - ii. Heritage Wall with multiple levels of information, depicted through images and text, with a timeline from 1940-1980. Both linear and faceted approaches are presented.
- e. School Corridors & Gathering Spaces
 - i. Stratford 'Self Portrait' concept where space is designated for student art showcase above lockers, referencing the school's history as HB-Woodlawn. Concept presented with a faceted configuration as well.
- f. Time and Place
 - i. Progressive architecture for a progressive community. A series of touchable models accompanied by exterior interpretive graphics that trace the evolution of the site and building over time, highlighting Stratford's place in the progressive movement in education and its impacts on school design.

4. COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

- a. Committee generally believes everything presented looks good as a concept design level of development.
- b. QEA notes that this is a feasibility study, intended to confirm that all involved believe that interpretation of the history of the school, based on the proposed conceptual framework, is feasible and desirable.
- c. QEA notes that this is a framework that includes different lenses through which to view the interpretation.
 - i. Lens 1: Gateways; you know you're entering somewhere special.
 - ii. Lens 2: Pathway, a central moment, a symbolic representation of the integration process and moment.
 - iii. Lens 3: Stairwell mobile, central moment, symbolic celebration of diversity.
 - iv. Lens 4: Timeline, more of a museum exhibit, depth of content and story-telling.
 - v. Lens 5: Corridor treatments, ability to take aspects of the story and extend them into the life of the school, engaging students and staff.
 - vi. Lens 6: Architectural history exhibit, identifying the character defining features of the building, its history and its significance as a progressive design.
- d. Committee agrees with QEA's understanding of the framework, however questions how the framework is presented to the school board.
 - i. APS confirms that the presentations would be shared with the school board along with a narrative and budget.
- e. Committee is concerned that although the interpretive designers have captured a lot of things that the committee has expressed, if an artist is commissioned to do any one of the elements expressed within the framework that they may not capture the essence of the project that the committee has expressed which would weaken the interpretation.



- i. HPP notes that the County has a public art program with staff who are regularly send out RFPs and RFQs for public art installations. At an appropriate point in the future, HPP recommends that APS and the Committee reach out to public art staff for their guidance.
- f. HPP notes that they like the idea of creating the design brief in a way that captures the essence and ideas discussed with the committee to ensure that any artists that apply can have that context to energize them.
- g. Committee notes that they believe the framework is good. Expresses concern about what integration means to this generation, the generations before and the generations after. For some members of the committee, they've lived through segregation and desegregation, and worry that the impact and the meaning will be lost with time.
- h. Committee questions what pieces are absolutely core within the framework.
 - i. Committee agrees that they'd like to cross that bridge when the get there, as of now would like to assume they can achieve the entire framework by considering independent fundraising options if the cost estimate exceeds the funding previously approved by the School Board.
- i. APS notes that a benefit of the framework is that it creates a vision that can be achieved over time. Funds can be raised to meet the goal.
- j. QEA notes that there would be no better way to promote the story of Stratford than through getting the community involved with an open invitation public art commission.
- k. MSD also notes that the organized student art proposed within the corridors relates back to the HB Woodlawn period where students would paint along the walls, a period that had previously not been represented.
- l. Committee notes that the gateways adjacent to 23rd St and Vacation Lane near park at northwest corner of site should also address the history of those adjacent areas.
- m. Committee asks whether the interpretive monuments at the historic path can move closer to the actual transit ways which would be the sidewalk adjacent of the drive instead of the ADA path. Design team notes that the markers were placed with respect to the historic path and the seating areas.
- n. Committee notes that the granite material seems too heavy, evokes a tombstone or feel of a cemetery. Would like to see the materials complement or relate to what's on the building.
- o. MSD notes that the materials shown are still all in concept, and one solution would be to have a variety of alternative materials.
- p. There was discussion about whether this site should be tied into other Civil Rights sites along the Lee Highway corridor or in the County at large. Some strategies for achieving that was discussed vis-à-vis the signage. A committee member familiar with the Lee Highway Plan noted that type of heritage connectivity was a part of the plan, but not necessarily discussed early on as part of this project. The idea to link this site to other civil Rights sites was supported by the Committee, and strategies would be determined later.

5. NEXT STEPS

- a. APS notes that there are three meetings scheduled for the school board in June, and the design team's goal is to finish the report for school board by mid to late June or early July.
 - i. APS will let the historic committee know when it is on the agenda to meet with the school board.

END OF MEETING NOTES